

Chapter 8. Identification of Coordination Strategies

Introduction

Chapter 7 outlines unmet needs and service gaps in New York City's transportation network for the three target populations of older adults, persons with disabilities, and persons with low income. The strategies proposed in this chapter respond to those needs and gaps with strategies designed to support New York City's unique characteristics while drawing on successful examples from across the country.

Like all other elements of this plan, numerous stakeholder interviews, community meetings, workshops, and focus groups with the target populations provided input into formulating these strategies and tailoring them to the city's specific needs. After the initial strategies were developed, members of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee held a working session to review the city's unmet needs, brainstorm additional strategies, and address implementation details for some of the more complex projects on the list.

A brief overview of needs and gaps is below, followed by individual descriptions of the 16 strategies developed to address them. Each strategy includes information about the benefits, challenges, and costs of implementation.

Summary of Unmet Needs

Though each target population group experiences different types of gaps in the city's transportation network, the unmet needs for all three populations can be grouped into four general categories: limited travel options; need for more information and awareness; lack of accessible infrastructure; and more support for local community transportation providers.

Limited Travel Options

While New York City offers a plethora of transportation services for the target populations, for persons with special transportation needs mobility is still challenged by accessibility, affordability, eligibility, and service levels. Many programs such as Medicaid or program-specific transportation associated with specific social services often have eligibility restrictions that limit who can use the service and where people can travel.

Flexibility is also a concern. Access-A-Ride provides demand-response service for persons who are ADA paratransit eligible, but does not accommodate their same-day requests, noting that same-day service is not required by the ADA. Also, several customers who were in the study's focus groups - and some of the stakeholders who provide social services to these customers - voiced a perception that the Access-A-Ride system had difficulty consistently meeting their recurring travel needs in terms of timeliness, reliability, and flexibility. AAR also cannot provide the higher level of assistance required for clients who are frail or have severe physical disabilities.

Many services, including some fixed-route public transit services, do not run on late nights or weekends to far-flung neighborhoods, limiting residents' options for job access outside of peak daytime hours. Other services, such as community car services, are not affordable for many members of the target populations.

Information and Awareness

In general, New York City is developing and pursuing many innovative programs, including services that will improve mobility for older adults, persons with disabilities, and persons with low income. Likewise, there are a wide variety of community service providers, many of whom are involved in transportation issues, services, and outreach. Despite these efforts, however, and potentially in response to the magnitude of options, there is a lack of awareness and understanding about what is available. The lack of awareness is between and among agencies as well as between service providers and customers. For example, despite a range of individual listings for certain populations, like the Department for the Aging online directory for senior transportation services, there is no single source of information for individuals seeking information on their transportation options. Finding an appropriate transportation service requires difficult and time-consuming searches through sometimes confusing information and eligibility requirements.

Lack of Accessible Infrastructure

As this writing, 83 of New York City's 468 subway stations are accessible for individuals with limited physical mobility.¹ Escalators do not provide ADA-compliant accessibility for vertical movement between levels in a station, but they do provide accessibility to many elderly and disabled customers who do not require elevators and are provided in many stations that are not labeled "accessible." However, the elevators and escalators frequently face reliability and operational issues."²

All buses in the city's fleet are equipped with wheelchair lifts and a kneeling feature to make them accessible. Access to the bus stops is a different story, however, and the availability of accessible paths and pedestrian amenities near and approaching bus stops varies widely across the boroughs.

The option of accessible taxis and community cars is largely unavailable for individuals using wheelchairs. Only two percent of the city's yellow cabs are wheelchair-accessible, and community car service vehicles offer even fewer options.

Lack of Support for Local Providers

Small providers of transportation services such as senior centers or community centers face chronic funding shortages and a lack of operational support. Some of these organizations operate a single vehicle as an ancillary service to the agency's primary mission. As a result, they often lack administrative and operational support. Affordable vehicle storage, staffing issues and lack of mechanical/operations information can keep these organizations from providing higher levels of service for their clients.

Strategies for New York City

The subsequent pages show summary tables of the strategies with a listing of details for each. Following the table are individual strategy descriptions. For each strategy a lead agency or "champion" has been suggested to initiate action. The agencies listed are merely possible lead agencies and should in no way preclude other agencies or organizations from leading an effort to address a particular strategy. The implementation timeframe estimates the time required to implement the strategy, after funding has been secured. Costs are also broadly estimated to give

¹ MTA website – Accessibility section

² "\$1 Billion Later, New York's Subway Elevators Still Fail." May 19, 2008.

potential grantees an idea of what to anticipate in terms of a financial commitment. Potential funding sources refer to the funding programs for which projects are likely to be eligible. These have been determined based on experience from across the nation to provide examples of cities where similar programs have been implemented.

Figure 8-1 Summary of Potential Strategies

The following summarizes potential strategies that will help improve mobility for older adults, persons with disabilities and persons with low income.

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Estimated Costs (Capital or Operating)	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
Mobility Managers – Information Outreach, and Trip Planning	NYC – Various departments Offices of the Borough Presidents Community Boards Non-profit organizations	6 – 12 months	Annual full-time salary between \$60,000 - \$75,000	JARC New Freedom Municipal, state, or federal agency funding Foundation funding	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.
Mobility Managers – Operational Support	NYC – Various Departments Offices of the Borough Presidents Community Boards Non-profit organizations	12 – 24 months	Annual full-time salary between \$75,000 - \$85,000	JARC New Freedom Municipal funding Misc. transportation funds	Build on mobility management system to support existing operators with a physical resource center that offers support services for smaller operators. Potential support services may include trip scheduling; driver training; vehicle storage; maintenance, etc.
Mobility Manager Training and Support	MTA NYS DOT Offices of the Borough Presidents Non-profit organizations	3-9 months	Annual costs between \$50,000 - \$100,000	New Freedom Other Federal transportation funds	Obtain technical training for Mobility Manager, especially relevant if mobility management system is implemented in several areas and/or different agency types. Training could provide Mobility Managers with background skills and networking opportunities.
Accessibility Improvements at Non-Key Rail Stations	MTA NYCT NYC DOT	> 24 months	Accessibility improvements at stations are high. Costs vary by station	New Freedom	NYC subway system is not consistently and reliably accessible, limiting persons with disabilities from using the system. Projects which create more accessible facilities and/or improve the reliability of existing system would improve mobility.

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Estimated Costs (Capital or Operating)	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
Develop Accessible Wayfinding System	MTA NYCT NYC DOT	6-18 months	Varies by location and technology	New Freedom	Identifying accessible infrastructure at subway stations and platforms is not readily apparent and creates confusion for people relying on such infrastructure. Installing signage and wayfinding systems would make using the system easier.
Improve Access to Fixed-Route Bus Stops	NYC DOT	> 24 months	Signals range from \$8,000 - \$12,000; Shelters \$3,000 - \$5,000; Curb cuts up to \$1,5000	New Freedom	Older adults and persons with disabilities can more easily use the bus system if there are safe passages to and from bus stops and if they have a place to sit at a waiting area sheltered from the weather.
Accessible Information Systems	MTA NYCT	6-18 months	Varies by technology	New Freedom	MTA already has a notification system to announce travel delays on the subway system. This system could be expanded to announce malfunctions in the accessible infrastructure to interested travelers. A reliable announcement system could increase accessibility and encourage use of existing systems.
Taxi/Community Car Subsidy Programs	Medicaid Hospitals Non-profit organizations Community Transportation Providers	3-6 months	Administrative costs between \$50,000 - \$125,000; Subsidy costs vary by amount and number of participants	JARC New Freedom	Provide reduced fare vouchers to older adults, persons with disabilities and persons with low income to allow for more trip flexibility and increased travel coverage as needed; may also be used to support off-peak employment opportunities. Encourages use of lower-cost travel modes and supports expansion of accessible and community car fleet.

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Estimated Costs (Capital or Operating)	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
Centralized Resource Directory	NYC – Various Departments Non-profit organizations	3-9 months	Development costs for basic directory \$50,000 to \$75,000	JARC New Freedom	Centralized resource directories are very helpful to consumers, human service agency staff, and advocates who need to find and/or arrange transportation for members of the target populations (low income, seniors, and persons with disabilities).online
Travel Training	NYC – Various Departments Non-profit organizations Workforce One Centers	3-9 months	Varies by program – with Mobility Manager in place simple programs as low as \$5,000	JARC New Freedom	Design programs to train individuals to use public transit. Increasing use of public transit will increase mobility for individual and reduce reliance on higher cost transportation modes. Some travel training programs exist already – potential to build on these efforts.
Bus Buddy program	NYC – Various Departments Non-profit organizations Workforce One Centers	3-9 months	With Mobility Manager in place, may be as low as \$5,000	JARC New Freedom	Refers to a highly individualized training program that assigns ‘buddy’ to help a new user of the public transportation network. A bus buddy program is more hands on and intensive as compared with travel training.
Volunteer Driver Program	Non-profit organizations Community Transportation Providers	6-12 months	With Mobility Manager in place, may be as low as \$5,000	New Freedom	Set up a network of volunteer drivers to help transport individuals with special needs or those traveling longer distances. Strategy may be most effective in more suburban parts of New York City.
Job Access Strategies	NYC DOT Transportation Management Associations Workforce One Centers	12-24 months	Operating costs for shuttle services are typically between \$55 and \$65 per hour.	JARC New Freedom	Create and operate specialized transportation services to create direct links between neighborhoods and key hard to reach employment markets

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Estimated Costs (Capital or Operating)	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
Vehicle Acquisition	Community Transportation Providers	0-6 months	Small accessible vans between \$40,000 and \$60,000; Buses range from \$100 - \$500,000 per vehicle	New Freedom JARC	Supplement 5310 funding to accommodate more applicants and provide more accessible vehicles. Develop strategies to reward agencies actively working to coordinate services.
Transit service expansion and improvements	MTA NYCT Community Transportation Providers	12-24 months	Public Transit – up to \$100 per hour; Van/shuttle service – between \$55 and \$65 per hour	JARC	Create new services and/or expand existing services to provide service to new areas, expand service hours and/or expand options in area 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.

Mobility Manager – Information, Outreach and Trip Planning MM

Designating a Mobility Manager to support service coordination is a relatively new concept that has developed as part of the SAFETEA-LU transportation legislation. Using New Freedom and JARC funds, many areas have funded Mobility Managers to support community transportation services. A Mobility Manager could be an individual, a group of individuals or an organization that provides mobility management functions for consumers and provide a range of services, such as:

- Develop, maintain, and disseminate a centralized directory of community transportation resources;
- Staff a help line and provide trip planning services;
- Provide ride-matching functions;
- Organize and manage a taxi subsidy program on behalf of sponsoring organizations; and/or
- Lead coordination planning efforts, potentially organizing (or chairing) a coordination council.

A Mobility Manager, therefore, may take on a variety of different functions and/or be sponsored by a variety of organizations. Mobility Managers are typically found at the county or regional level; however, there is nothing to preclude Mobility Managers serving sub-county areas (that may or may not straddle county or municipal boundaries) or non-profit organizations. In addition, consideration could be given to establishing Mobility Managers at large agencies that have a de-centralized approach to transportation.

For reference, coordination and mobility strategies included in this report that may be supported or led by a Mobility Manager are denoted with the following Mobility Manager icon. **MM**

Expected Benefits / Needs Addressed

- Ensures staff resources are available to implement mobility and coordination strategies.
- Creates community resource to promote existing and available resources.
- Can highlight mobility challenges and opportunities and raise awareness.
- Implementing programs and creating awareness can result in improved effectiveness and efficiency.
- Can support other regional priorities such as workforce development.

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- Mobility Managers with full range of required skills may be difficult to find.
- Individual will need to adopt an entrepreneurial approach and be well supported by key institutions and organizations to be effective.
- Individuals will likely need training and support.
- Requires matching funding from sponsoring agency.

Application for New York City

Several of the functions that a Mobility Manager might undertake throughout the region are reflected by several of the following strategy sheets (marked with the MM icon). In particular,

despite the fact that there are several ongoing programs aimed at supporting older adults, persons with disabilities and persons with low income, there is often little knowledge and understanding that these programs exist and/or how they work. One potential application in New York City is to establish neighborhood-based Mobility Managers deployed to inventory and understand existing resources and then expand awareness of these options. Another potential application of a Mobility Manager in New York City is to assign staff in key city departments to advocate for community transportation and accessible services and infrastructure as transportation programs and services are designed. Depending on where a Mobility Manager is housed, they may also function as an ombudsman and/or third party service evaluator.

Examples of Best Practices

The State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation is using New Freedom funds to sponsor several Mobility Managers around the state and is supporting them with ongoing technical training and networking sessions. Wisconsin has created a flexible program that allows a variety of agencies to sponsor Mobility Managers; in this way individual counties and communities are allocating resources that best meet their local challenges and opportunities. As a result, Mobility Managers are being sponsored by organizations and agencies ranging from county offices on aging, regional planning commissions, healthcare resource centers and non-profit organizations. The role of the Mobility Manager also varies by location; some Mobility Managers are focused on local trip coordination efforts while others are setting up coordinated service networks and structures. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has also set up a year-long series of training sessions to ensure Mobility Managers have access to technical skills and resources.

Costs

The annual salary cost of a (single) Mobility Manager in New York City (overhead and program function cost additional) might range between \$60,000 and \$75,000. Depending on the Mobility Manager's exact assignments, it may be staffed as a part-time position reducing annual salary costs to between \$30,000 and \$35,000.

Potential Funding Sources

The cost of funding a Mobility Manager is allowed under both Section 5316 (JARC) and Section 5317 (New Freedom) under the presumption that the Mobility Manager provides functions pertinent to each program. 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. Wisconsin DOT was able to use other Federal transportation programs, including the Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) to help establish, train, and support its network of Mobility Managers.

Possible Lead Organizations

- NYC – various departments
- Offices of Borough Presidents
- Community Boards
- Non-profit organizations
- Workforce One Stop Centers

Mobility Manager - Operational Support MM

Mobility Managers may be used to provide operational support for existing community transportation providers and help agencies coordinate on key operational functions. Many community-based transportation providers are small shops with a single transportation coordinator who oversees scheduling, operations, maintenance and management of the service, typically a single vehicle and driver. This individual frequently has limited resources and often only limited experience in transportation operations. Despite successfully operating their service, small shop operators may benefit from a centralized resource center that supports them operationally with resources to help with functions such as (for example) vehicle maintenance, driver training, fuel purchasing, coordinating back-up drivers and vehicles, scheduling software, vehicle storage, etc. A Mobility Manager who created this type of centralized resource center would effectively consolidate key functions across agencies, helping individual operators realize service efficiencies.

Expected Benefits / Needs Addressed

- Enhances existing community transportation resources
- Creates more efficient transportation operations and supports local operators to help them use their resources more effectively.
- Will result in improved effectiveness and efficiency.

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- Mobility managers with full range of required skills may be difficult to find.
- Individual will need to adopt an entrepreneurial approach and be well supported by key institutions and organizations to be effective.
- Operationally-oriented Mobility Managers would ideally have background in transportation operations.
- Requires matching funding from sponsoring agency.

Application in New York City

There are many organizations in New York City that provide community transportation as an ancillary service to their primary function. A senior center, for example, may operate a van so that their clients can get to their location. Transportation services, therefore, are a secondary function and oftentimes, agencies have little technical support for the individual assigned to operate the service. While many providers have no operational needs, others could benefit from working with other operators to share experiences and resources. Setting up a community-based transportation resource network that included operational support with back-up drivers, driver training, fuel purchasing assistance, advice on vehicle maintenance and repair, etc. could greatly improve the efficiency of the existing network.

Examples of Best Practices

In Madison, Wisconsin, for example, a Mobility Manager working for the Department of Aging facilitates vehicle sharing and route planning across multiple community transportation providers..

DARTS, a non-profit agency operator in Dakota County, MN, established a Vehicle Maintenance Services (VMS) subsidiary that maintains vehicles for 80-90 organizations. DARTS recognized the need for reasonably priced, high quality maintenance services and in an effort to offset

internal maintenance costs, marketed maintenance services to other community transportation providers.

Costs

The annual salary cost of a (single) Mobility Manager with a skill set sufficient to support vehicle operations would likely demand an annual salary on the order of \$75,000 and \$85,000.

Potential Funding Sources

The cost of funding a Mobility Manager is allowed under both Section 5316 (JARC) and Section 5317 (New Freedom) under the presumption that the Mobility Manager provides functions pertinent to each program. 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. Wisconsin DOT was able to use New Freedom funding to help establish, train, and support its network of Mobility Managers.

Possible Lead Organizations

- NYC – various departments
- Offices of Borough Presidents
- Community Boards
- Non-profit organizations

Mobility Manager Training/Support MM

Individuals or organizations that are hired to provide mobility management functions are often assuming new responsibilities and implementing new programs. The job, therefore, requires an entrepreneurial approach and assumes a significant amount of on-the-job training. As a result, Mobility Managers typically benefit from ongoing technical support and opportunities to meet with and learn from other Mobility Managers. Training and networking opportunities may be sponsored by the agency or organization funding a Mobility Manager position, or consortium of agencies benefiting from Mobility Manager's efforts.

Expected Benefits / Needs Addressed

- Ensures staff has skills and resources to do their jobs.
- Supports coordination across mobility programs.
- Can highlight mobility challenges and opportunities and raise awareness.
- Implementing programs and creating awareness can result in improved effectiveness and efficiency.

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- Training requires additional funding.
- Requires sponsoring agency with resources to coordinate training program across disparate agencies.

Application for New York City

Mobility Managers in New York City could potentially be deployed to accomplish a variety of functions and programs (see strategy sheets). Ultimately, however, all managers would be working towards the same goal. A training and networking program, therefore, could be used to set up an over-riding structure for a mobility management program as well as support individual Mobility Managers. A training program may provide training in a variety of topics, recognizing that in some cases training programs may only be applicable to a subset of the wider group of Mobility Managers. Regularly scheduled meetings can be used to create networking opportunities and likewise can provide an opportunity for Mobility Managers to teach others about their successes and influence on mobility in their community. On-going training programs to support Mobility Managers will improve the success of the individual managers and strengthen the wider mobility management program.

Examples of Best Practices

Recognizing that many Mobility Managers were new to their position and hence require training and support to be effective, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation drew upon different Federal funding programs, including Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) funds, to create an ongoing technical training and networking sessions for its county and regional-based Mobility Managers. WisDOT developed a human service transportation planning toolkit for Mobility Managers and set up a series of day-long training sessions on topics such as cost-allocation, scheduling, networking and outreach. WisDOT has also sponsored out-of-state training for Mobility Managers, including attendance at relevant national conferences.

Costs

The cost to train and support several Mobility Managers is estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year. Sponsoring coordination and networking meetings can be accomplished for less.

Potential Funding Sources

Depending on the type of training and mobility management function, Section 5316 (JARC) and Section 5317 (New Freedom) may both be used to support training programs.

Possible Lead Organizations

- MTA
- Non-profit organizations
- Offices of Borough Presidents

Accessibility Improvements at Non-Key Rail Stations MM

Making accessibility improvements to transit and inter-modal stations not designated as key stations is considered to be eligible for New Freedom funds, as long as the projects are clearly intended to remove barriers that would otherwise have remained, as long as such improvements were otherwise not planned. Improving the accessibility of non-key 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 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.

Expected Benefits

- Increases mobility and travel options for persons with disabilities
- Reduces demand for ADA paratransit service

Potential Obstacles

- Improvements are typically expensive
- Improvements require long lead time with potential for disruptions to existing service and travelers

Application to New York City

The New York City subway system has 468 stations, of which (as of August 2008) 83 are accessible (18% of system). New York State law requires MTA to make 100 key stations accessible by 2020, meaning there are many non-key stations that could be upgraded with accessible infrastructure. One potential application is the Mets-Willets Point Station in Queens on the Number 7 subway line. The station is the closest subway stop to the new New York Mets CitiField. While accessible infrastructure and improvements are scheduled for the surrounding area, no plans to upgrade Mets-Willets Point Station are scheduled. Making this station accessible would help persons with disabilities travel to/from one of the city's key recreational destinations.

Examples of Best Practices

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Boston, MA – Boston has the oldest subway system in North America, thus a prime candidate for accessibility upgrades. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) started working toward achieving station accessibility in 1990. Since that time, MBTA has made 73 of its 80 key stations accessible, allocated the construction funds for the remaining seven, and has begun making dozens of non-key stations accessible as part of station modernization projects. In 2006, the MBTA entered an agreement with the Boston Center for Independent Living that called for increased funding for elevator improvements, accelerated purchases of low-floor buses and buses with lifts, management and training initiatives, and new public address systems.

MTA-Long Island Rail Road – The LIRR is currently using New Freedom funding to improve accessibility at 11 non-key stations in the system.

Costs

Costs to improve accessibility of non-key stations are expensive, especially at older, underground NYC subway stations. Station improvements may also disrupt regularly scheduled service.

Potential Funding Sources

- New Freedom

Possible Lead Organizations

- Metropolitan Transportation Authority New York City Transit (MTA NYCT)
- New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT)

Develop Accessible Wayfinding System MM

Most passengers first experience public transportation when they enter a station of some kind. For many, finding the right entrance or platform can be difficult even in the best of circumstances. Persons with disabilities or mobility constraints are often particularly challenged to navigate a station because stations entrances with accessible infrastructure may not be clearly marked, nor is signage always available to guide them to the appropriate entrance or location.

Installing a wayfinding system that identifies the location of accessible entrances and guides persons with disabilities to available accessible infrastructure can significantly improve the overall accessibility of a transport system. Signage and wayfinding can also ease traveler concerns, make the system more understandable, thereby encouraging use. Wayfinding systems would need to use accessible signage technologies and ideally, like other transport networks, offer dynamic signage to announce system malfunctions and alternate routing.

Expected Benefits / Needs Addressed

- Improve traveler comfort with system
- Reduce reliance on ADA paratransit (Access-A-Ride).
- Create travel options and improves mobility for persons with disabilities.

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- System would need to be coordinated with many stakeholders so that wayfinding can be expanded to multiple stations and across modes.
- Will require agreement among multiple agencies, organizations and advocacy groups.
- Wayfinding system must comply with local signage ordinances.
- Potential for high costs.

Application for New York City

New York City has many station and intermodal terminals that are challenging to navigate, even in the best of circumstances. Individuals with disabilities are further challenged because accessible infrastructure is typically only available at specific exits or entrances and there is no system to guide them. There is potential, therefore, to design an accessible wayfinding system that would greatly improve the usefulness of the subway system. Wayfinding tools would direct individuals with disabilities to the appropriate entrances, exits, information kiosks, etc. A system may be best tested as a pilot project to determine which types of signage and information systems are most useful to persons with disabilities.

Examples of Best Practices

Vancouver and Edmonton International Airports, Canada – In an effort to make airports more accessible, Transport Canada sponsored an accessible infrastructure wayfinding system at two of Canada’s largest airports: Vancouver International Airport and Edmonton International Airport. This pilot project tested a number of innovative features in the terminals to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, including accessible counters, tactile signage, amplified handsets, open and closed captioning on television monitors, text telephones and volume control public

telephones, high contrast pathways, visual messaging systems, help telephones, and fully accessible information desks.

MTA-Long Island Rail Road – The LIRR installed a Talking Kiosk at Penn Station. This is the second generation of the pilot with improved wayfinding technologies such as high visual contrast, voice and locator sounds, and touchpad location navigation.

Costs

Accessible wayfinding system costs will likely vary considerably depending on the type and extent of signage/wayfinding technologies deployed. A pilot project may be used to evaluate the cost and effectiveness of different technologies.

Potential Funding Sources

- New Freedom

Possible Lead Organizations

- Metropolitan Transportation Authority New York City Transit (MTA NYCT)
- NYC DOT

Improving Access to Fixed-Route Bus Stops MM

Improving the accessibility of and access to fixed-route bus stops involves first examining bus stops (and especially those used by or potentially used by significant numbers of older adults and/or persons with disabilities) and evaluating if improvements could help make stops more accessible. Potential infrastructure improvements may include removing barriers on sidewalks, improving or adding sidewalks, adding curb cuts, adding or improving pedestrian crossing and signals (including accessible signals and countdown signals), and adding signage, lighting, benches, shelters, and other pedestrian enhancements, especially in the vicinity of bus stops. In addition, technological solutions akin to wayfinding devices might help persons with visual impairments locate bus stops

Expected Benefits

- Encourage use of fixed-route system
- Reduce reliance on paratransit service
- Secondary impacts associated with community development and enhanced safety

Potential Obstacles

- Physical improvements require financing and typically have a long lead time
- Many improvements require prioritization, funding and commitment from local authorities.

Application to New York City

In many parts of New York City, including Staten Island and many other ‘suburban’ areas in the outer boroughs, street accessibility could be enhanced with improvements such as sidewalks, crosswalks, curb cuts, and lighting. Bus stops also influence the overall accessibility of the bus system. Older adults and persons with disabilities can more easily use public bus transportation if stops are equipped with benches, shelters and information systems. In other cases, accessibility would benefit from improved maintenance. As is the case with non-key rail stations, New Freedom funding may be used to advance projects that would enhance the accessibility of the fixed-route bus system.

Examples of Best Practices

An Easter Seals Project ACTION project developed a Bus Stop Accessibility and Safety Toolkit that is designed to help transit agencies develop an inventory of bus stops, assess the accessibility and safety of each bus stop and access to that bus stop, and create an action plan to address shortcomings. HART in the Tampa area has recently used this toolkit to put together such an inventory. DART in Dallas is in the process of surveying all of its bus stops, including taking a photograph of each stop location.

Costs

Costs to improve access to bus stops will be determined by the type of improvements undertaken as well as site specific factors. As a point of reference, traffic signals typically cost between \$8,000 and \$12,000; shelters \$3,000 to \$5,000 and curb cuts from \$1,500.

Potential Funding Sources

- New Freedom

Possible Lead Organizations

- NYC Department of Transportation (NYC DOT)

Accessible Information Systems MM

For persons with disabilities to use public transportation systems, they require information about the systems to be in accessible formats and they also need information about the system’s accessible infrastructure. For example, existing systems that are used to inform travelers of station construction and service delays should be available in accessible formats and could also be used to inform persons with special travel needs of malfunctions in the accessible infrastructure. These types of improvements could effectively enhance system reliability and encourage more travelers with special needs to use the system.

Expected Benefits / Needs Addressed

- Enhance traveler comfort.
- Improve system reliability.
- Reduces reliance on ADA paratransit systems (Access-A-Ride).

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- Tracking malfunctions in accessible infrastructure across this system can be challenging.
- It can be challenging and expensive to ensure all information systems are accessible to all users.

Application for New York City

New York City’s transit system employs a variety of advanced technologies to improve traveler convenience. Some technologies, however, are only available for mainstream infrastructure and in mainstream formats. Pilot projects that test the effectiveness of certain technologies, such as using cell phone technology to announce broken elevators at subway stations to travelers with disabilities, could be examined. Other technologies, such as induction loop technology, have already begun in some MTA subway stations, and could be more widely disseminated.

Examples of Best Practices

Trip Planning 511NY already includes a “Special Needs” option of “Wheelchair” for individuals needing wheelchair-accessible stations. This trip-planning would need to be integrated with real-time information about elevator and escalator outages across the system.

MTA E-mail and Text Message Alert Systems in New York City are already in use for other real-time transit announcements, including emergencies, delays or scheduled maintenance that may alter services. Individuals can choose which bus, subway or bridge announcements they would like to receive to either their e-mail address, mobile device, or both.

Costs

Some measures, such as creating accessible online information or real-time information about elevators and escalators, can be implemented by expanding existing systems and therefore will be less costly. Capital investments required for other technologies, however, are more expensive.

Potential Funding Sources

- New Freedom

Possible Lead Organizations

- Metropolitan Transportation Authority New York City Transit (MTA NYCT)

Taxi/Black Car Subsidy Programs MM

Taxi subsidy programs typically involve an arrangement between a sponsoring organization (or its agent) and participating taxi companies or other private-for-hire vehicle services. These programs accept and accommodate requests from sponsored customers, clients, or residents and/or accept subsidies provided by the sponsoring organization to riders as partial payment for the trip. Most such subsidy programs focus on seniors and/or persons with disabilities residing within the sponsoring municipality (or agency service area), but some are available to general public residents as well. Human service agencies that employ this strategy generally limited taxi subsidies to agency clientele or program participants.

Expected Benefits

- Provide same-day if not immediate service
- Effective for unanticipated travel and evening and weekend hours
- Effective for trips outside of service area or “under-served” areas
- Effective way to “divert” more expensive paratransit trips to a less expensive mode
- Can set/control subsidy per trip and/or overall budget
- Opportunity to infuse accessible vehicles into the market

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- Requires well-managed / controlled taxi and black car companies
- Few accessible taxicabs and black cars
- Participation of non-employee drivers is dependent on their not losing revenue by participating (vs. general public patrons)
- Requires good communication among all parties
- Need to establish fraud-protection mechanisms

Application for New York City

Taxi subsidy programs, as part of municipal dial-a-ride services, are a staple in urban settings in several states. While not as prevalent, there are a growing number of human service agencies tapping into such programs as well. In New York City, taxis are incorporated with the Access-A-Ride service as a back-up resource, rather than as a supplementary subsidy program, similar to programs available in metropolitan areas like Chicago, Houston, and Denver (see best practice below). There is also a plentiful supply of taxis in Manhattan. While there are far fewer cabs in the outer boroughs, there is a substantial supply of community car services. Taxi companies and car services will be most interested in such a program where the programs can deliver a steady stream of business and where the administrative requirements are not overly cumbersome for the driver and the company. As part of such a program, the City or any sponsoring organization may wish to acquire accessible vehicle(s) and provide them to the companies that agree to participate in the program. Such a program can make demand for wheelchair-accessible cabs more obvious to taxi company owners and thus create more incentive to acquire more accessible vehicles.

Examples of Best Practices

access-A-Cab (a-a-C) in Denver. The Regional Transportation District (RTD) in Denver established the access-a-Cab service in response to a high denial rate on paratransit services and to reduce the per trip cost of its ADA paratransit service. Customers call RTD’s ADA paratransit call center to request a trip. Requests are then forwarded to the taxi company of choice. Passengers pay the flag drop of \$2.00, which was equivalent to the a-a-C fare. (This base fare has since been increased to \$2.50 to match the increase in the flag drop.) The

Regional Transit District (RTD) would then cover up to the next \$7.00 of the fare (which at the taxi meter rate of \$1.60 per mile could get a customer a trip of up to 4.4 miles in length), with passengers paying the portion of the fare over \$9.00 (for longer trips). Hence, the maximum subsidy ceiling for the RTD was \$7.00. This has since been changed with the RTD paying \$7.00 for all trips. With centralized call intake, RTD has been able to decrease the administrative labor required to oversee this program. And, while it has set a daily budget in terms of number of trips allowed, the number of requests has never approached this ceiling.

METROLift Subsidy Program (MSP) in Houston. METRO Lift contracts with five taxi companies and supplies them monthly with a limited number of blank vouchers, which in turn are supplied to the drivers. Customers are free to call any of the companies for service with one-hour advance notice. If a voucher is available (see below), and the customer is qualified, the trip is dispatched. The customer then pays the first \$1.00 of the fare, METRO pays the next \$8.00, and the customer pays the balance of the fare in excess of \$9.00. To address fraud, METRO Lift issues each of the five taxi companies a specific number of randomly-generated voucher numbers per day that may be used during specific times of the day. Once the vouchers for a specific time slot are used up, customers are refused service and must call for the next time slot. However, each rider is guaranteed a ride home at any time if they receive a voucher on their origin trip. METROLift is given a 4 percent discount on their meter fare portion. METRO also provides a \$2.00 premium to the companies for trips requiring wheelchair accessible cabs to help cover the additional capital/operating costs of these vehicles.

The DuPage County (IL) Pilot II Subsidized Taxi Service is a nearly countywide, user-side taxi subsidy program. Each sponsor (municipalities and human service agencies) defines its eligibility criteria and decides how much to charge for a voucher/coupon that is worth \$5.00 towards a taxi fare. Service is available countywide 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

Costs

The cost to administer such a program might be between \$75,000 to \$125,000 for a larger program, assuming that added on to a contract such as that which the MTA NYCT has with First Transit to manage and staff the Access-A-Ride call center (following the Denver model). A more localized program that is a part of a borough-based mobility management effort might cost between \$50,000 and \$75,000 to administer. The subsidy cost depends on the detail of the subsidy per trip, which ranged between \$5.00 and \$8.00 among the three examples above. The total available budget for taxi or car service subsidies can be controlled with a daily ceiling, allowing trips on a “first-come, first serve” basis, as per the policy in Denver.

Potential Funding Sources

Perhaps the most obvious sources of funding to implement such a program are Section 5317 (New Freedom) as such a program is a new program and does go beyond the minimum requirements of the ADA, in offering same-day service and service beyond the ADA service area. Section 5317 funding is also available for a Mobility Manager, noting that the Federal share of mobility management costs may not exceed 80 percent of the net cost of the activity. Section 5316 may also come into play if this service offers access to/from employment services or training (e.g., guaranteed ride home or as a feeder service to a train station).

A potential sponsor might also look at this as a way to reduce the current cost of paratransit if it believes that it can divert trips to such a service.

Possible Lead Organizations

- Medicaid
- Hospitals
- Non-profit organizations
- Community transportation providers
- Workforce One Stop Centers

Centralized Resource Directory MM

Centralized resource directory programs are designed to assemble information about available public, non-profit, and private sector transportation resources in a single location, source, or directory. In many communities, there are many available services for low income individuals, seniors, and persons with disabilities, but it is up to the consumer to find out hours and days of operation, availability, eligibility, and how to access such services. In a centralized resource directory, information regarding all available providers is assembled in a single place. The directory can be in written, published form or in a searchable online database format. Centralized directories serve as a tremendous resource for consumers, human service staff and case workers, and advocates.

Expected Benefits / Needs Addressed

- Provide a “one-stop” resource for all public and private transit services and human service agency transportation
- Provide easy contact and eligibility information enabling consumers and advocates alike to identify potential service providers for specific members of the target populations.
- Readily embraced by most coordination committees as a non-threatening strategy that promotes enhanced mobility.
- Particularly useful in larger communities with a large number of public and private sector transportation resources.

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- Requires a comprehensive data collection effort to create the directory
- Keeping the directory up-to-date has proven problematic in other areas
- Consumers must be aware that the directory exists in order to be useful
- Comprehensive directories may contain many listings, confusing consumers
- Directories only alert consumers to the availability of a service provider; consumers and/or advocates must still inquire about eligibility and arrange for services.

Application for New York City

New York City has several databases of community transportation service providers, but none provide a comprehensive listing of available transportation services for the entire city or even neighborhood. Instead, the existing directories tend to be oriented around a specific population such as older adults. In addition, there are few resources that provide a full description of available services, and include information on eligibility and access.

A centralized directory of community transportation services may be a published document or database of transportation services that can easily be accessed by individuals seeking services, and/or by agencies seeking to advise clients about resources. As necessary, the centralized information may also be available in a variety of formats, such as large print, multiple languages and accessible formats for the blind. An agency looking to create a centralized directory can build on transportation inventories prepared as part of the NYMTC Coordinated Plan.

Examples of Best Practices

Community Information & Referral, Maricopa County, AZ. Community Information & Referral (CIR) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation established in 1964 to help residents in the Greater Phoenix area by gathering and making available information about vital community resources.

CIR operates a 24-hour “hotline” in a 10 county region of Arizona. CIR annually publishes its Maricopa County *Directory of Human Services and Self-Help Support Groups*. While this directory is comprehensive in its coverage, transportation resources are included. Additionally, LIFE (formerly Easter Seals Arizona), recognizing the value of CIR’s comprehensive published and online directory, developed a *Directory of Transportation Services* in 2006. This directory provides information on voluntary, public, non-profit and private for-hire transportation services. In 2007, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), as part of their SAFETEA-LU public transportation/human services coordination plan, adopted a recommendation that would bridge the data contained in these existing directories with existing public transit services information. The resulting directory would be published online. In a 2008 update to this plan, the directory is being integrated in the 211 information system for the area.

The Seattle Crisis Resource Directory. The Seattle Community Network (SCN) is a free public-access computer network. The organization began in 1994 as a partnership with the Seattle Public Library. SCN was originally a project of the Seattle Chapter of Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility (CPSR) and was later incorporated in 1995 as the Seattle Community Network Association (SCNA). SCN is an all-volunteer non-profit organization funded wholly by donations. While the resource directory references a number of community services, transportation resources are one of the main services listed on the organization’s web-based directory. The directory includes references and links to all existing public transportation services in the Seattle area, as well as information of various human service agencies that also provide transportation.

Potential Funding Sources

Central resource directories facilitate enhanced access to services by the general public, including the elderly, low income, and persons with disabilities. This activity is expressly permitted under FTA Section 5317 “New Freedom” Program funding as a mobility management strategy. Additionally, the program circular specifically lists 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. Identical language appears in the program guidance for the FTA Section 5316 JARC Program. Importantly, as a mobility management strategy, this activity could be funded with 80 percent Federal participation.

Possible Lead Organizations

- New York City – Various Departments
- Workforce One Stop Centers
- Non-profit organizations

Travel Training MM

People who have never used public transportation often have real concerns and fears about using the public transportation network. A training program that teaches consumers how to use public transportation and become confident transit riders can help encourage use of public transit. Travel training may be promoted as a marketing strategy to encourage key consumer groups (i.e., older adults) to use public transit; or it may be targeted towards frequent users of paratransit to encourage individuals to use lower-cost fixed-route services, as appropriate to the individual's circumstances.

Expected Benefits / Needs Addressed

- Encourage and support use of local fixed-route services
- May reduce demand for paratransit services
- Increase awareness and use of a variety of community transportation services
- May support other regional priorities, such as workforce development

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- Some audiences and individuals may require specialized training
- Requires multiple-agency cooperation to identify training opportunities
- Training may require support from agencies that perceive no, or minimal, long-term gain

Application for New York City

Travel training has multiple applications in New York City. Despite the abundance of public transit systems in the city, the size and complexity of the system means many residents have limited experience or understanding of how these systems work. Developing and marketing training programs to key transit markets, such as older adults, may help encourage transit ridership. Transit agencies may also work with the Department of Motor Vehicles to reach individuals who have just lost their licenses. Travel training can cover basic transit skills such as reading a schedule, paying fares, and transferring between services.

A second opportunity for travel training is to train frequent paratransit patrons to use fixed-route services as appropriate to their individual circumstances. Critical training issues for some populations, especially wheelchair users, may be using wheelchair lifts and safely securing wheelchairs inside transit vehicles. Encouraging use of lower-cost fixed-routes over higher cost paratransit services, however, may work to preserve transit agency resources and potentially lead to more services.

Some agencies have further supported wheelchair users riding transit with a wheelchair breakdown service. Similar to a Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program, this service would provide a ride home for wheelchair users experiencing mechanical problems with their wheelchairs. Much like GRH, the service is typically not widely used by individuals, but does provide people an extra measure of confidence. Thus, wheelchair users are more confident relying on fixed-route public transportation over paratransit, knowing they can get picked-up if necessary. Individuals who are able to use fixed-route service are often encouraged by an increased sense of freedom and flexibility.

Examples of Best Practices

New York City Department of Education District 75 (City-wide) Travel Training Program,

The Department of Education provides one-on-one travel training for eligible high school students with severe mental or physical disabilities throughout the city. Members of the staff accompany the student on their specific commuting route, up to a 2-hour trip each way, for up to two weeks. The program generally serves 30 students per month, including those with severe mental disabilities, learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, autism, emotional distress, other physical disabilities and hearing impairment. Up to ten years afterward, approximately 87 percent are still traveling on public transit alone. Since 1970, the program has served 11,000-12,000 people with severe disabilities.

MTA – New York City Transit. The Metropolitan Transit Authority has travel training programs through several of its subsidiaries, including its commuter rail services and New York City Transit. MTA NYCT's program is available only to Access-A-Ride eligible individuals and offers one-on-one training. The duration depends on the individual's ability to master trip planning, safety and other basic traveling skills.

Out and About Travel Training Program, Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA) "The Ride," Ann Arbor, Michigan - AATA/The Ride offers free, personalized, one-on-one travel training instruction for seniors and/or people with physical or mental disabilities who want to learn to ride AATA buses. Group orientation sessions are also available. Topics in the training include requesting information, trip planning, reading schedules, boarding and exiting from buses, using the wheelchair lift and securement system, fare discounts, payment and stranger awareness

Road to Independence, CSTA, Frederick, Maryland – CSTA holds half-day training sessions that teach people with disabilities how to use public transportation. The program includes a short video and a personalized training session to review transit schedules and fares. Participants "graduate" from the class with an accompanied trip on the bus.

Potential Funding Sources

- New Freedom (if specifically oriented towards persons with disabilities)
- JARC (if designed to support employment)

Possible Lead Organizations

- NYC – Various Departments
- Workforce One Stop Centers
- Non-profit organizations

Bus Buddy Program MM

In some cases individuals rely on paratransit because they lack confidence or experience to use the fixed-route system. To support individuals transitioning away from paratransit to fixed-route, some transit systems have instituted a highly personalized travel training program, frequently referred to as “bus buddy.” A “bus buddy” program involves not only training individuals to use fixed-route but also pairing individuals with a “bus buddy” who will travel with them on the bus or subway until the individual gains sufficient confidence to travel independently.

Expected Benefits / Needs Addressed

- Reduce demand for paratransit services by increasing consumer knowledge in using and independently navigating the fixed-route system
- Build good community will through the establishment of a corps of volunteers who act as advocates for the transit system

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- The individualized nature of these programs makes it difficult to assess overall impact on paratransit usage
- There is a need to provide administrative support and create the initial training regimen to be followed by the bus buddy volunteers
- Volunteer retention can be an issue, creating an ongoing need to train new volunteers

Application for New York City

The magnitude, complexity and dynamic nature of New York City’s public transportation system can intimidate even experienced public transportation users. A “bus buddy” program, therefore, can help new riders build confidence with the system over time. New York City also has an extensive network of community-based organizations that could help build a network and develop a “bus buddy” program.

Examples of Best Practices

Lane Transit District Bus Buddy Program. Lane Transit District (LTD) in Eugene, OR, operates a one-on-one training initiative called the Bus Buddy Program. The Program teaches seniors how to ride the bus in a relaxed way by breaking down barriers and building confidence. LTD recruits regular bus riders to serve as volunteers, known as Bus Buddies, and partners with local senior centers to match individual seniors with these volunteers. Bus Buddies teach seniors about the LTD transit system, as well as how to plan trips and navigate routes. Each Bus Buddy and senior then ride the bus together. Afterward, the pair discusses the trip and the Bus Buddy answers any remaining questions about using public transportation in Eugene.

Paratransit, Inc. Mobility Training Program. Paratransit, Inc. operates a Mobility Training Program that offers specialized training for seniors and people with disabilities who may have difficulty traveling on Sacramento Regional Transit (RT) buses and light rail vehicles. Training is usually provided in a one-on-one setting, but is also done in small groups for facilities such as senior housing complexes. Training includes familiarization with the Sacramento RT system, route planning, use of wheelchair lifts and securement devices, landmark identification, bus rules, and safety issues. The agency has six full-time trainers who teach hundreds of individuals each year how to ride the bus and use light rail.

Costs

If the Lane Transit District approach is followed, there are relatively little ongoing operating costs associated with this program. There will be some initial training curriculum development costs; these costs can be offset, in part, by adopting the techniques used by other transit systems that have implemented a “bus buddy” program.

Potential Funding Sources

If the program is designed specifically to benefit persons with disabilities, New Freedom funds could be used to pay for the improvement. If the program was specifically designed to help people access jobs, JARC funding could be applied. Otherwise, this type of enhancement would be funded as a routine operating expense.

Possible Lead Organizations

- New York City – Various Departments
- Non-profit organizations
- Workforce One Stop Centers

Volunteer Driver Program MM

Volunteer drivers are individuals who volunteer to drive people who lack other mobility options. A sponsoring organization, such as a transportation provider, human service agency or other entity often helps match volunteer drivers with individuals who need rides. A volunteer driver will typically use their private vehicle but will be reimbursed, usually based on mileage driven, by the sponsoring agency. Sponsoring agencies may also arrange for insurance coverage. Volunteer driver programs have proven to be an effective and important resource to help supplement community transportation programs.

Expected Benefits / Needs Addressed

- Provide low cost transportation option.
- Some programs will reimburse friends or family members for providing rides.
- Volunteers can provide a flexible source of transportation that can be useful for longer distance, out of area trips.

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- Setting up a volunteer driver network requires time and effort to recruit, screen, train, and reward volunteer drivers.
- Riders need to be introduced to and appreciate concept of volunteer drivers.
- Real or perceived driver liability and insurance issues.

Application for New York City

Volunteer driver networks are likely most appropriate in the more suburban parts of New York City, such as Staten Island, and parts of Queens and the Bronx, where there are fewer public transportation options and a need to travel longer distances, and potentially cross city boundaries.

Examples of Best Practices

Independent Transportation Network (ITN), Maine. ITN was first established in Portland, Maine as a means of providing seniors with rides in exchange for trading in the cars they rarely used. The value of the donated car is credited to the senior's debit account, which is drawn on each time a ride is requested (averaging \$8 per ride). The account can be contributed to by family members or friends through cash donations, volunteering their time or donating their own cars. Seniors who are still able to drive may volunteer and receive credit for future rides when they are no longer able to drive themselves, a sort of "transportation social security." The rides may be used for medical appointments, shopping trips or social visits or events. Maine has enacted legislation that enables ITN to sell its surplus vehicles and reinforces an earlier law prohibiting insurance companies from raising premiums for volunteer drivers.

Community Inclusion Driver (CID). The Community Inclusion Driver strategy was developed for Easter Seals Project ACTIN as a way to make use of volunteer drivers in a rural setting. While the CID strategy focuses on increasing mobility for persons with disabilities in rural areas, the approach could be used for seniors and persons with disabilities in urban areas as well. The CID strategy involves a partnership between a transportation providers, a customer and individuals who are willing to act as volunteers drivers. The provider establishes program and eligibility guidelines, information materials, training, record-keeping, and reimbursement payments. The customer is responsible for identifying suitable volunteer drivers (although the

transportation provider may assist or recruit drivers themselves). The volunteer driver is responsible for providing proof of a valid license and a properly registered and insured vehicle.

Costs

If the Lane Transit District approach (detailed on page 8-29) is followed, there are relatively little ongoing operating costs associated with this program. There will be some initial training curriculum development costs; these costs can be offset, in part, by adopting the techniques used by other transit systems that have implemented a bus buddy program.

Potential Funding Sources

Like a bus buddy program, if the program is designed specifically to benefit persons with disabilities, New Freedom funds could be used to pay for the improvement. Otherwise, this type of enhancement would be funded as a routine operating expense.

Possible Lead Organizations

- Non-profit organizations
- Community Transportation Providers

Job Access Strategies MM

This strategy focuses on linking people, and especially those with low income, with job opportunities. Some possible strategies include establishing shuttle services that link transit hubs to employment sites/areas; and ridesharing and vanpool services, along with supporting strategies such as guaranteed ride home services and child transportation services.

Expected Benefits

- Opens job markets to low income and other transit-dependent individuals
- Partnerships with employers may provide opportunities to reduce costs
- Directly supports other regional priorities, such as workforce development
-

Potential Obstacles

- Most strategies can be relatively easily implemented but require financing
- Certain strategies may require partnerships with employers

Application in New York City

JARC funds have been used in the past to sponsor a shuttle route connecting the industrial center in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, with a nearby subway station. The shuttle was operated through a local non-profit development corporation involved in neighborhood workforce issues. Other areas of high employment, including the airports and industrial areas in Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx, are difficult to access from both other boroughs and neighborhoods within the boroughs. Residents from neighborhoods wishing to work in these areas could benefit from a shuttle service, vanpool or employer-partnership connecting to nearby transit stops.

Examples of Best Practices

Feeder/Distributor Shuttles at Suburban Chicago Rail Stations. Metra operates the P-8 free shuttle from an origin within $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile of a non-accessible station to the next accessible station, enabling persons with disabilities access to the rail services.

Reverse-Commute Vanpools in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Unemployment Project (PUP) operates a reverse commute vanpool program. PUP pays for gas and insurance; vans are driven by vanpool members.

Child Transportation Services. The Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) provides demand-response transit service to day care facilities and to schools. Vans are equipped with on-board monitors to protect young children traveling to and from day care without parents.

MTA-Long Island Bus. Long Island Bus has received JARC funds to increase transportation availability during peak hours to several of its stations.

Costs

Costs for shuttles vary greatly depending on operating characteristics. Hourly operating costs for shuttle services typically range between \$55 and \$65 per hour. Operating costs include driver wages, gasoline, light maintenance, management/supervision and basic level of dispatch.

Potential Funding Sources

- JARC
- New Freedom

Possible Lead Organizations

- NYC DOT
- Workforce One Stop Centers

Vehicle Acquisition MM

Human service agency programs provide an important complement to publicly provided demand response and complementary paratransit services. Often providing critical access to programs and services, these organizations play a key role in ensuring mobility for low income persons, seniors, and persons with disabilities. When coordinated with publicly provided transportation, human service agency transportation can reduce the overall demand for ADA complementary paratransit services. As capital acquisition is often undertaken from operating funding, the purchase of new or replacement vehicles is problematic for organizations facing fiscal constraints. The Federal Transit Administration’s Section 5310 Program is specifically designed to provide a source of capital funding for these organizations and will remain an important component in regional efforts to improve transportation services to the target populations. However, other funding programs, including JARC and New Freedom may be used to purchase capital equipment.

The number of agencies that apply for 5310 funding in New York City greatly exceeds the available funds. This strategy would support the use of JARC and New Freedom to expand existing capital funding programs. It will also develop incentives for agencies who are actively working to coordinate services, especially existing service providers working within highly coordinated networks.

Expected Benefits / Needs Addressed

- Creates travel options and choices for consumers.
- Capital funding supports the maintenance of existing community transportation services
- Section 5310 creates opportunities for funding partnerships with HHS programs, with FTA supplying capital funding and HHS providing vehicle operations support
- 5310 resources support existing (and growing) networks community transportation networks.
-

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- Ensuring 5310 vehicle allocation system supports other coordination efforts and activities.
- Establishing a fair, understandable and reliable system that supports existing operators as well as supports new service providers.
- Ensuring mechanism that is accountable and enforceable.
- Using JARC and New Freedom funding for capital equipment reduces available resources for other programs, such as operations and planning.

Application for New York City

Section 5310 is a longstanding FTA program that provides capital funding for various non-profit and public agencies. Community organizations that directly serve members of the target populations rely on this program to purchase vehicles. Agencies that operate transportation for older adults, persons with disabilities and/or individuals with low income and address one or more of the unmet needs addressed in Chapter 7 will be deemed consistent with this locally-developed coordination plan, consistent with NYSDOT guidelines, especially if they coordinated services with other providers and institutions.

The need for additional capital funding in New York City is acute. Using portions of JARC and New Freedom to fund vehicle acquisition may be warranted as additional capital grants will support community transportation providers, by enabling them to continue providing service

(replacement vehicles) or expand service. New vehicles may also support service efficiency as new vehicles typically have lower operating costs.

Examples of Best Practices

Senior Transportation Connection (STC), Cuyahoga County, OH is a community-based organization that is responsible for coordination of community-based senior transportation services in the Greater Cleveland area. The organization, working cooperatively with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and a network of municipal and non-profit service providers, coordinates the centralized functions of paratransit reservations and scheduling for eight county subregions. The MPO, which has responsibility for soliciting and evaluation Section 5310 applications in the metropolitan area, will only fund those organizations that participate in the STC network, and that are deemed to be coordinating services to a sufficient degree to warrant funding. In this manner, capital requirements for persons with disabilities are primarily financed from the urban formula program while capital for seniors is funded under Section 5310.

Costs

Successful applicants for capital assistance are eligible to buy vehicles procured by NYSDOT under a statewide contract. For FY 2009, four types of accessible, body-on-chassis type vehicles were available. Costs are determined by state contract price and available options specified by the successful applicant. NYSDOT uses Federal Section 5311 funds to pay for 80 percent of the cost of the equipment; applicants must pay for the remaining 20 percent from local sources.

Outside of the NYSDOT purchase order, accessible vans and small passenger vehicles range between \$40,000 and \$60,000 while buses may cost between \$100,000 and \$500,000 depending on vehicle size, engine technology and other components.

Potential Funding Sources

- New Freedom (if specifically for persons with disabilities)
- JARC

Possible Lead Organizations

- Community transportation providers

Transit Service Expansion and Improvements

The benefits of service expansion are quite clear. Members of the three target populations would be able to access more services, more programs, more job opportunities and be able to take more trips for shopping, recreation, social services and attend faith-based activities.

The most common types of service expansions include: (1) Temporal expansion of service – expanding the days and/or hours of service; and (2) Spatial expansion of service – expanding the service area for pick-ups and drop-offs, and/or adding destinations beyond the established pick-up area.

Expected Benefits / Needs Addressed

- Expanded travel opportunities.
- Enhanced customer accessibility, mobility and convenience.
- Potential to expand travel opportunities for members of general public as well as target populations

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- Service improvements require ongoing operating costs (as compared with capital projects which are largely one-time expenses), therefore, agencies may be reluctant to start new services.
- Transit services are expensive to operate, ranging from \$55-\$65 per hour for small vehicles and up to \$100 for NYC Transit service.
- Requires educating and training staff and customers to maximize benefits.
- Some members of the target population will not be able to use fixed-route type of services.

Application for New York City

New York City's transit system covers a vast number of the city's neighborhoods, but many who live in the more remote sections of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and even Manhattan can find it difficult to travel on public transit during later hours and on the weekends. For some, this limits their ability to access job opportunities at other than peak periods. Many residents of these neighborhoods must make multiple transfers to access central business districts or activity centers, a prospect limited by affordability and physical mobility. Enhanced express services to some of these neighborhoods could shorten these trips and make them less onerous.

Examples of Best Practices

Temporal expansion of service. The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit Authority (AC Transit), CA extended the hours and days-of-week operations for five bus routes connecting low income areas of Oakland with employment centers near the Oakland International Airport and downtown.

College of Staten Island JARC route, NY As part of the 2007-2008 JARC program, funds were awarded to operate a shuttle bus between the Staten Island Ferry and the College of Staten Island (CIS). Funds were approved to operate weekday service with 30 minute headways between the ferry terminal and the CIS campus, serving to increase employment options as a JARC route. The service is scheduled to operate during the academic semesters only.

Costs

New York City bus service costs approximately \$100 per hour to operate. Smaller van services operated by independent vendors are typically lower and range between \$55 and \$65 per hour.

Potential Funding Sources

- JARC (if used to support employment or set up reverse commute travel opportunities)

Possible Lead Organizations

- Metropolitan Transit Authority New York City Transit (MTA NYCT)
- Community transportation service providers