

# SWHRA

## Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan

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Transportation Planning Area: Southwest TN Rural Planning Organization & Jackson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Planning Jurisdiction: Southwest TN Rural Planning Organization & Jackson Municipal Regional Planning Commission

Lead Agencies: Southwest Human Resource Agency (SWHRA) & Jackson Transit Authority (JTA)

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### Stakeholders

SWHRA and JTA agreed to combine their efforts for the Madison County, Tennessee Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. The Southwest Tennessee Rural Planning Organization (RPO) and the Jackson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) are also included as stakeholders along with the Tennessee Department of Transportation, Office of Public Transportation.

Below is the list of area agencies that were identified as helpful in identifying the needs of the target population, the needs of the community/region, the transportation services available, and the identification of new solutions.

### Coordination Checklist

Alexandria Place of Jackson  
Carl Perkins Child Abuse Prevention Center  
Cerebral Palsy Association  
City of Jackson/Parks & Recreation  
City of Jackson/Planning Department  
Cumberland Heights Outpatient Services  
Diamond Cab  
Family Counseling Center  
Family First Council  
Forest Cove Nursing Center  
Goodwill Industries  
Jackson Center for Independent Living  
Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce

Jackson Housing Authority  
Jackson Meadow Retirement Residence  
Jackson Madison County African-American Chamber of Commerce  
Jackson Madison County General Hospital  
Jackson Madison County School Bus Transportation  
Jackson Oaks Senior Living Community  
Jackson State Community College  
Kiwanis Center for Child Development  
Lakeside of Jackson Outpatient Counseling Center  
Laurelwood Healthcare Ctr.  
Madison County Emergency Management Agency  
Madison County Health Department  
Madison Haywood Developmental Services  
Medical Center EMS  
Mission Convalescent Center  
Morningside of Jackson  
New Southern Apartments  
Northbrooke Healthcare Ctr.  
Pathway's  
Quinco Counseling Center  
Regional Hospital of Jackson  
Regional Interfaith Association-FISH  
Safe Shuttle  
St. Mary's Manor  
SW Community Services Agency  
SW Department of Children's Services  
SW Development District Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities  
Star Center  
State of TN Vocational Rehabilitation Office  
Tennessee Voices for Children  
TennCare/SWCSA  
TN Department of Human Services  
TN Department of Human Services-Adult Protective Services  
TN Dept of F & A, Division of Mental Retardation Services  
TN Department of Veteran Affairs  
Veterans of Foreign Wars/Post 6496  
West Madison County Senior Citizen Center  
West Tennessee Career Center  
West Tennessee Healthcare Foundation  
West Tennessee School for the Deaf

Sponsors:

TN Department of Transportation  
Jackson Transit Authority  
Southwest Human Resource Agency  
Jackson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Southwest TN Rural Planning Organization

## **Description of Convening of Stakeholders**

The first stakeholder meeting was for identified agencies listed above. The agencies were invited by mail with a follow-up phone call. The meeting was from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm, with lunch provided. The meeting place was accessible, on a JTA fixed route, and one block off 45-

Bypass. 9 agencies attended the meeting plus a representative from JTA and SWHRA, and two representatives from TDOT.

The meeting started with introductions and a request to skip formalities and speak openly without worry of an agenda or timeline.

Ms. Sherri Carroll, TDOT started the meeting with an overview of the Job Access and Reverse Commute Grant and how the Coordinated Plan fits into the new transportation program.

Ms. Turner, SWHRA, facilitated the discussion and workbook exercise from the Framework for Action Self-Assessment Tool. The workbook exercises were collected and the agencies in attendance would get a tally of the results by mail.

Both JTA and SWHRA representatives discussed their transportation programs and handouts were available.

In April, once the tabulation of the self-assessment survey was completed, another meeting was announced. The meeting was held on April 25, 2007, 9:30am to 11:30am at the Jackson City Hall Gathering Room, 101 E Main Street, Jackson, TN 38301. The meeting began with discussion of the Agencies Survey, followed by a review of the Draft Human Services Transportation Plan. Attendees were asked to make additions and corrections to the information compiled. Then discussion followed as to the project criteria process and selection.

The first public meeting was held April 25, 2007, 1:30pm to 2:30pm at the Jackson Transit Authority Transfer Center, 431 E Main Street, Jackson, TN 38301. The meeting began with an overview of why the Human Services Transportation Plan has to be completed and the different types of funding opportunities. Discussion followed as to how a change in current funding would affect current service, and how new funding could add to service levels for the disabled, elderly and low income.

## Data and Information

Common origins and destinations for people with special transportation needs are many in Jackson/Madison County. The county is a regional medical center with 2 hospitals, many walk-in clinics, over 50 professional clinics including psychological, cancer and rehabilitation, nursing homes, long term care facilities, and Alzheimer wards. The county is also home to the West Tennessee Cerebral Palsy Center, Madison Haywood Developmental Center, and Goodwill. Also the county has many educational facilities including Lane College, Lambuth University, Union University, Jackson State Community College, The Star Center, the Technology Center and West Tennessee Business College. Work sites for the people with special transportation needs are numerous all over the county.

People with special transportation needs are people "including their personal attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation."

Census 2000 has Madison County with an estimated 2005 population of 94,916. The chart below is from the Census 2000.

DISABILITY STATUS OF THE CIVILIAN NONINSTITUTIONALIZED POPULATION		
<b>Population 5 to 20 years</b>	<b>22,206</b>	<b>100.0</b>
With a disability	2,202	9.9
<b>Population 21 to 64 years</b>	<b>51,367</b>	<b>100.0</b>

With a disability	10,768	21.0
Percent employed	57.8	(X)
No disability	40,599	79.0
Percent employed	79.2	(X)
<b>Population 65 years and over</b>	<b>10,576</b>	<b>100.0</b>
With a disability	5,129	48.5

## Common Origins

There are many common origin locations in the community including group homes, assisted living centers, nursing homes, group homes, half-way houses, public housing and areas with affordable housing.

Where are people with disabilities located in your planning area?

People with disabilities are throughout Madison County and the City of Jackson. In Madison County the population is spread over a large area with small towns and no particular area could be identified. In Jackson, approximately 75% of the disabled live in a 5 mile area, north of the Forked Deer River and south of I-40. There are a few group homes but they are spread throughout the city and county.

Where are people of low income located in your planning area?

People of low income are located throughout Madison County and the City of Jackson. In Madison County the population is spread over a large area with cheap housing and mobile homes as primary residents. In Jackson, approximately 80% of the low income population is mostly in the mid-town area. Public Housing and Section 8 housing are found on JTA bus routes North Royal, Hollywood, East Jackson and East Chester.

Where are young people and the elderly located in your planning area?

Young people and the elderly are spread throughout the county and city with no pattern. There are no clusters of young people except Youth Town in Madison County. The only large population of elderly is in Nursing homes and Residential homes. These homes are spread throughout the City of Jackson, with a few locations in Madison County.

Are there any of these locations which are common to all or some of the subgroups which constitute people with special transportation needs?

The location of low income housing such as public housing brings together all of the factors; disabled, low income, young people and elderly.

## Common Destinations

There are many places that may constitute common destinations. This includes entry level employment opportunities, financial institutions, childcare facilities, medical centers, schools/colleges/universities, and shopping centers.

Where do people with disabilities in your planning area need to get to?

People with disabilities and low income people need to go where people without disabilities and not-low income people need to go. Employment, financial, medical, educational,

shopping and recreational needs should be met to afford all persons with quality of life concerns. Government offices such as Social Security Administration and the TN Department of Human Services are used by the persons with disabilities. There are a few locations that are specifically for the disabled. They are the Madison Haywood Developmental Center, the Star Center and the West Tennessee Cerebral Palsy Center.

#### Where do people of low income in your planning area need to get to?

People with disabilities and low income people need to go where people without disabilities and not-low income people need to go. Employment, financial, medical, educational, shopping and recreational needs should be met to afford all persons with quality of life concerns. The Jackson Housing Authority provides low income housing. There are a few agencies that provide goods and services including the Goodwill, Salvation Army and Regional Interfaith Association (RIFA). Government offices such as Social Security Administration and the TN Department of Human Services are used by the people of low income. The Department of Human Services certifies low income persons for State aide including food stamps and TennCare.

#### Where do young people and the elderly in your planning area need to get to?

Young people and the elderly need to go where all people need to go. Employment, financial, medical, educational, shopping and recreational needs should be met to afford all persons with quality of life concerns. Young people need to attend school until graduation. At age 16 many will seek employment and many will want to enjoy recreation and shopping centers. Elderly people may not need to go to employment sites or educational facilities, but they still need the medical, shopping and recreational facilities that are for all people. Government offices such as Social Security Administration and the TN Department of Human Services are used by the people of low income.

#### Are there any of these locations which are common to all or some of the subgroups which constitute people with special transportation needs?

Locations which are common to all people are financial, medical, shopping and recreation. For the elderly/disabled/low income, there is the Social Security Administration and the Department of Human Services.

### **Existing Transportation Services**

**Southwest Human Resource Agency (SWHRA):** provides service in the rural areas of Madison County, as well as the counties of Chester, Decatur, Hardin, Hardeman, Henderson, Haywood, and McNairy. All trips are demand-response, commonly known as “Dial-a-Ride” service. SWHRA also provides paratransit service for the disabled citizens in the region. We operate (44) lift equipped vans, (47) 15-passenger vans, and (6) 25-passenger busses.

Hours of operation are 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday. SWHRA only provides dialysis service on federal holidays. Fares are \$6.00 round trip to travel in the county of origin, \$10.00 round trip to travel outside of the county of origin, but in our 8-county region, and \$20.00 to travel outside of our 8-county region, but within West Tennessee. We have van service to Nashville and the surrounding area several times per week. The cost for this service is negotiated at the time of the request. All trips must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance of

the appointment. A greater notice is encouraged. If someone requires an escort or personal care attendant, the escort may ride for free. SWHRA operates charter service in the region for individuals, companies or local governments that are not able to find a willing private provider to assist them in their service needs.

SWHRA staffs an office in each of the 8 counties. Business hours for the transportation offices are 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. In Madison County the office is located at 525 East Main and the phone number is 731-427-1233. A list of the other county offices is attached. SWHRA has a maintenance garage for its fleet. The garage is located adjacent to the SWHRA Central Office, 1527 White Avenue, Henderson.

**Jackson Transit Authority:** provides fixed route, ADA paratransit and special services to the City of Jackson. JTA operates Monday through Saturday from 6:00 am to 10:30 pm. JTA buses do not operate on Sundays, New Year's Day, Observed Dr. King holiday, Memorial Day, Observed Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Observed Christmas Day.

Fares for the Fixed route are: Adult \$1.00; Student (with photo ID) \$.75; Senior Citizen/Disabled/Medicare (with JTA ID or Medicare card with an ID) \$.50. Children 4 and under ride free with a paying adult and transfers are free (for the next connecting bus).

Fares for the ADA paratransit service "The Lift" is \$2.00 each way. The Lift is an application, reservation, origin to destination service. A person must have a completed and approved application on file before setting up an appointment. The appointment must be made the day before, at the minimum. Two day notice prior to the reservation is encouraged. An answering machine is available for late night (after 10:30pm) and weekend calls. If an escort or PCA (personal care attendant) is needed for the certified client, the PCA will ride free.

Special services are provided for individual and companies who cannot find a willing and able private provider to assist them with their service needs. JTA only does special services in the City of Jackson and does not go out into the county. Special services include charters and shuttles. JTA does provide charter services to the government agencies in Jackson, including schools and universities.

JTA customer service and business hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. JTA's phone number is (731) 423-0200, then press 0. Before 8:00 am or after 5:00 pm a Road Supervisor answers the phone. JTA's administrative and maintenance office is at 241 East Deaderick Street, Jackson, TN 38301. JTA's Transfer Center is at 431 East Main Street, Jackson, TN 38301.

**Jackson Madison County School System:** provides bus service for students from designated stops to designated stops (i.e. home or school). This service is for the traditional school year, August to May. The system also provides extra trips for students, such as band and sports team travel and field trips. During summer break, special education service was provided. A non-English speaking class was held in the summer of 2006 serviced by 2 buses. Standard service hours are 5:15am to 8:30 am and 1:30pm to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday.

School service is free, and a cost to the individual school or class for extra trips. Service is provided by 90 regular school buses, with 50 passengers, 72 capacity, and 23 special education buses, with up to 24 passengers with wheelchair spaces from 2 to 5.

The transportation office is located at 59 Harts Bridge Rd., Jackson, TN 38301. Phone number is (731) 988-3890. The School Bus Transportation Supervisor is Mr. Grant Ward.

**Northwest Human Resource Agency (NWHRA):** is similar to SWHRA in that it provides public transportation to a designated area. NWHRA provides service from their area into Jackson/Madison County, primarily for medical appointments. They don't provide trips within Madison County.

**Greyhound:** Below is the information found on Greyhound.com

JACKSON GREYHOUND STA  
407 E MAIN ST  
Jackson, TN 38301

**Telephone Numbers**

Main: 731-427-1573  
Greyhound Package Express: 731-427-1573  
Greyhound Charter: 800-454-2487

**Hours Of Operation**

Hours of operation subject to change. Please call to verify hours before making travel arrangements.

**Station** Monday-Sunday: 7:00 am-8:00 pm  
Holiday: 7:00 am-8:00 pm

**Ticketing** Monday-Sunday: 7:00 am-8:00 pm  
Holiday: 7:00 am-8:00 pm

The bus service cost is based on trip length.

**Madison Haywood Developmental Services (MHDS):** provides work for the disabled in Madison County. Their clients go to their worksite at 38 Garland Drive, 8:00am to 3:00pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. MHDS provides in-house transportation and uses the JTA bus services, fixed route and paratransit. MHDS has 28 vans with 12 or 7 passenger capacity and 4 of which are wheelchair accessible. MHDS provides transportation to and from work and also provides recreational trips, including vacations. The disabled worker is not charged for transportation under their state funding support plan. The funding for the workers if from a Medicare waiver is through the Tennessee Department of Human Services.

**TennCare Transportation Services:** is the State of Tennessee transportation program for individuals who qualify for state medical aide. The TennCare medical transportation program is free to the client and only for medical trips. This service is monitored to ensure compliance. TennCare provides this transportation for their clients from many vendors. JTA and SWHRA are vendors to TennCare.

List of TennCare Transportation providers in Madison County:

Southwest HRA, Northwest HRA, Delta HRA, Tri-County Transportation, BTW Transportation, Diamond Cab, Jackson Transit Authority, Joy Transportation, Med Care Ambulance, Hardeman County Ambulance, Haywood County Ambulance, Ambulance Service of McNairy, Hardin County EMS, Ambulance Service of Lexington, Lauderdale County Ambulance, Decatur County Ambulance, Ambulance of Dyersburg, Ambulance of McKenzie, Crocket County EMS, Henry County EMS, Gibson County EMS, Lake County EMS, Medical Center EMS Weakley County EMS.

**Other Transportation Services**

\* Medical Center EMS provides ambulance service in Madison County, 24/7.

- \* Coach USA provides charter service in Madison County. There service is fee based. The service vehicles are the standard over-the-road bus.
- \* Many churches have van(s) that pickup people for church. The vans are used for their parishioners.
- \* Some Nursing homes and Residential homes have van(s) for their residents to use for shopping and medical trips. The trips are usually preset for everyday in the week.

## **Funding**

FTA (Federal Transit Administration) and TDOT (TN Dept. of Transportation) provide funding for the Job Access Reverse Commute, United We Ride, and the New Freedom Program. This funding for Madison County is authorized by the Governor of Tennessee through TDOT.

## **Identify Unmet Transportation Needs**

Identifying the various types of transportation challenges and "gaps" in existing transportation services can be a challenge. From time to time there is a 'gap' which is a one time, doesn't happen again, type event.

**SWHRA known "gaps":** No Sunday and holiday service.

**JTA known "gaps":** No Sunday and holiday service; no service Midnight to 6:00am and 10:30 pm to Midnight, Monday through Saturday.

## **Technology**

Transportation providers use the latest in technology for scheduling and dispatching trips.

## **Develop Transportation Alternatives**

Alternatives to be developed will be an on-going basis with input from human service providers, transportation providers and the public.

## **Coordination**

Coordinated transportation will be utilized as transportation alternatives, such as persons that are going to share rides or at least use the same vehicle at different times become know. Working together to reduce administration costs and rider confusion is a goal. When applicable there will be a sharing of dispatch or a mobility coordinator who can help find individuals transportation solutions or assist in travel training.

## Community Priorities

Priorities will be identified and describe and rank by the community. The priorities will be a brief description of the proposed solution and its estimated cost and how you will know if the solution has worked.

## Prioritization

### Project Selection Criteria

Transportation projects are selected and prioritized by the MPO Staff based on the project's overall effect of meeting the goals and objectives contained within the Long Range Transportation Plan, and by using the following evaluation criteria derived from the planning factors contained in SAFETEA-LU.

### Category 1 – Economic Vitality

	Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency.	Assign score 0, 1, 2, or 3
A	Promotes general economic development	
B	Specifically improves or enhances tourism	
C	Specifically improves or enhances the movement of freight and services	
D	Improves or enhances the movement of workers	
E	Provides new access to jobs and opportunities	
F	Improves the value of residential and non-residential properties	
G	Enhances welfare to work trips	
H	Improves access to terminal (sea, air, multimodal)	
I	Enhances the ability of the freight system to support produce exports/imports	

### Category 2 – Safety

	Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized uses.	Assign score 0, 1, 2, or 3
A	Reduce vehicular accidents	
B	Increases access to accident incidences and/or disabled motorists	
C	Enhances or adds to the system of bike lanes and sidewalks	
D	Enhances the public safety of pedestrians	
E	Contributes to a reduction in traffic volume	
F	Improves the handling of hazardous materials movement	
G	Separates vehicular or non-vehicular	

### Category 3– Security

	Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized uses.	Assign score 0, 1, 2, or 3
A	Denies unauthorized access to the system	
B	Assists the monitoring or patrolling of the system	

### Category 4 – Accessibility and Mobility

Increase the accessibility and mobility options to people and freight.		Assign score 0, 1, 2, or 3
A	Provides enhanced or new capacity or mobility to the transportation system to move people	
B	Provides enhanced or new accessibility to the transportation system to move people	
C	Provides enhanced or new capacity or mobility to the transportation system to move freight	
D	Provides enhanced or new accessibility to the transportation system to move freight	
E	Enhances the range of freight service options available to local business	
F	Ameliorate size and weight restrictions for freight vehicles	

**Category 5– Environmental/Energy/Quality of Life**

Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation and improve quality of life.		Assign score 0, 1, 2, or 3
A	Reduces vehicle emissions	
B	Reduces vehicle noise	
C	Decreases fuel consumption	
D	Adds to the convenience or efficiency of the system	
E	Specifically protects wetlands or other natural habitats	
F	Decreases air or water pollution	
G	Promotes non-motorized travel	
H	Promotes traffic calming	
I	Supports cultural and/or historic property retention or development	
J	Supports community cohesion and design	
K	Promotes environmental equity	
L	Enhances development of brown fields	

**Category 6 – Integration and Connectivity**

Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes for people and freight.		Assign score 0, 1, 2, or 3
A	Improves intermodal connectivity for non-freight vehicular traffic	
B	Improves the integration/connectivity for non-freight vehicular traffic	
C	Improves intermodal connectivity for the freight transportation system	
D	Improves the integration/connectivity within a freight serving mode	
E	Enhances the networks that integrate freight movement	

**Category 7– Efficient System Management**

Promote efficient system management and operations.		Assign score 0, 1, 2, or 3
A	Uses ITS Technology	
B	Reduces transportation system cost	
C	Offers value (congestion) pricing	
D	Contributes to better vehicle tracking	
E	Enhances administrative productivity/efficiency	

F	Enhances electronic processing of vehicle information	
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**Category 8 – System Preservation**

Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.		Assign score 0, 1, 2, or 3
A	Contributes to better system maintenance	
B	Emphasizes system rehabilitation rather than expansion	
C	Incorporated new technologies	
D	Maximizes existing capacity	
E	Alerts freight providers to road conditions/alternate routes	
F	Optimizes use of existing infrastructure to enhance freight service	

**Category 9– Local/Regional Factors**

Factors of local and regional importance.		Assign score 0, 1, 2, or 3
A	Conformance with long range transportation plan	
B	Project ready for implementation	
C	Advances smart growth objectives	

## **Summary of Federal Requirements Associated with the Development of a Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan**

From Federal Register Vol. 71, No. 50 Wednesday, March 15, 2006

Elderly Individuals & Individuals With Disabilities, Job Access & Reverse Commute, New Freedom Programs, & Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plans.

The following reviews certain sections of the federal register of which some rulemaking is final while other sections are still under comment.

The fundamental message is that under SAFETEA-LU funding for - New Freedom, Job Access & Reverse Commute, and Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities programs, require that projects selected be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit human services transportation plan. And, that plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public.

A coordinated plan is defined as a unified comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs to individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes; lays out strategies for meeting those needs; and prioritizes services. Coordinated plans should seek to maximize local programs collective coverage by minimizing duplication of services. In addition, FTA proposes that a coordinated plan should incorporate activities offered under other programs sponsored by Federal, State, and local agencies.

While SAFETEA-LU does not specify the required elements of a coordinated plan, FTA recommends drawing on the United We Ride initiative and framework. FTA also recommends the plan include the following elements:

- Assessment of transportation needs for individuals who are disabled, older adults, and persons with low incomes;
- Inventory of available services that identifies areas of redundant service and gaps in service;
- Strategies to address the identified gaps in service;
- Identification of coordination actions to eliminate or reduce duplication in services and strategies from more efficient utilization of resources; and
- Prioritization of implementation strategies.

A good faith outreach effort needs to occur in developing the plan. FTA recommends including area transportation planning agencies, transit riders and potential riders, non-profit transportation providers, other government agencies that administer health, employment, or other support programs, non-profit organizations, advocacy organizations, security and emergency management, community based organizations, job training and placement organizations, and elected officials among others.

FTA proposes that the coordinated plan follow the update cycles for metropolitan plans (every four years in air quality non-attainment areas). SAFETEA-LU requires the initial plan be in place for FY 2007 funding. This requirement allows time for the development of a coordinated plan and permits projects to be funded under the New Freedom and the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities programs in FY 2006 even if a coordinated plan is not yet in place. FTA encourages designated recipients to conduct coordinated planning activities and consultation with planning partners before the selection of FY 2006 projects.

With Job Access & Reverse Commute programs, however, there is no delay in the requirement that projects be derived from a coordinated plan, since a similar requirement was in place under TEA-21. For

areas that previously received JARC funding, the previously required JARC plan may satisfy the coordinated planning requirement for FY 2006. In areas with no current JARC plan, for FY 2006, the planning partners should at a minimum be consulted about projects.

The Governor must designate a local recipient for JARC and New Freedom Funds (not necessarily the urban area designated recipient). FTA will accept FY 2006 grant applications for JARC and New Freedom from the designated recipient for urbanized areas pending formal designation by the Governor. However, if the designated recipient will not be the same agency as the designated recipient for Section 5307 funds, the new recipient must be officially designated before applying for FY 2006 funds. It is required that for FY 2006 the designated recipient competitively select projects for funding under JARC and New Freedom. This process must be documented. The competitive process is separate from the planning process. Previously funded JARC projects may continue to receive funding. However, projects must be derived from the coordinated planning process, which means local areas will decide if previously funded JARC projects should be continued.

The competitive project selection process should:

- Assure greater inclusion at the onset of the coordinated planning process to allow private sector participation or participation by others who have not been involved in the RPO/MPO planning process to alleviate concerns about a level playing field;
- Provide transparency and document the coordinated planning process and the competitive selection process;
- Publish an announcement that lays out program requirements and the process for receiving funds;
- Conduct the competitive selection process in cooperation with the RPO/MPO to capitalize on the each organization's experience in project evaluation and selection;
- Rank projects using – peer review, third party review, best practices advice, or a panel of planning partners, and then publish a list of selected projects for each locale;
- Evaluate who should provide services and ensure fair and equitable competition by allowing communities to build on transit agencies' experiences with third party contracting for specialized services; and
- Additional criteria (suggested) should include selecting projects that (1) address gaps in current service provisions for targeted communities, (2) make use of available resources and leverage resources to the extent possible, (3) are considered for geographic distribution to encourage some level of diverse geographic disbursement, (4) coordinate with other Federal programs, (5) can be achieved with the given technical capacity of project sponsor, and (6) show evidence of broad solicitation for input.

It is the intent that FTA will propose some form of oversight and reporting requirements that will require evaluation of funded programs. However, at this time the requirements are not known.

Program summaries are below:

### **New Freedom Program**

Funding requirements state New Freedom Program funds can be used for new public transportation services and public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the ADA that assist individuals with disabilities with transportation. FTA proposed that “new public transportation services” and “public transportation alternatives beyond those required by ADA” be considered separate categories of service. Therefore, new service is not required to go beyond the ADA. Rather, it must simply be new service that is targeted toward people with disabilities; and meets the intent of the program by removing barriers to transportation. An example is fixed route service extended to serve a particular location identified as a need by the disability community. Projects must be derived from a locally developed public transit human service coordinated plan and determined based on a competitive selection

process. Other activities eligible could include (but not limited to) purchase of vehicles, ride sharing, vanpooling, training, administration, and maintenance. Also, administering voucher and transit pass programs, volunteer driver and aid programs, mobility management, training for individual users on alternative options, corridor services providing access for populations beyond one agency or organization within a community. New Freedom funds are distributed through a formula based on population of persons with disabilities. For FY 2006, expected nationwide funding available is \$78 million, increasing to \$81 million in FY 2007, and continuing to rise slightly in subsequent years.

### **Job Access & Reverse Commute Programs**

In general, projects and expenses eligible for JARC funding must relate to the development and maintenance of transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment. Under TEA-21, JARC funds could only be used for “new and expanded” services. The “maintenance of transportation services” language in SAFETEA-LU suggest that not only continuing JARC projects could be funded, but also existing projects that meet the intent of the program but were previously funded under other programs (this interpretation is still under review by FTA). Examples of other eligible projects include (but not limited to): late-night and weekend service, guaranteed ride home service, shuttle service, expanding fixed-route transit routes, demand response van service, ridesharing and carpooling activities, bicycling, local car loan programs, and promotion and marketing. Starting in FY 2006, JARC will be distributed based on a formula instead of being a discretionary program. The formula is based on the number of low income persons. For FY 2006, nationwide funding is estimated at \$138 million, with an increase to \$144 million in FY 2007.

### **Section 5310 Elderly Individuals and Individuals With Disabilities**

Program funds are allocated by formula to the States for capital costs for providing services to the elderly and to persons with disabilities. States may sub-allocate funds to private non-profit organizations and to public agencies if they are designated to provide coordinated service. Increase coordination requirements begin in FY 2007 because projects must be in a locally developed human service transportation coordination plan. Allocation is based on number of elderly and persons with disabilities in each state. Total funding available nationwide is approximately \$112 million in FY 2006, \$117 million in FY 2007 and slight increase each year thereafter.