

JOB ACCESS REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC) PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS - UPDATE

Background

The Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom grant programs are funded through the Federal Transit Administration and are authorized under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which was enacted in 2005. The purpose of the JARC program is to support the development and maintenance of projects to transport welfare recipients and other low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment. Reverse commute projects provide transportation services to and from suburban employment opportunities for residents of urbanized and non-urbanized areas. The New Freedom program provides new public transportation services and new transportation alternatives for disabled persons beyond those required by the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Recent federal guidance allows for the expansion and continuation of existing projects. H-GAC in conjunction with the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) initiated a Call for Projects for the JARC and New Freedom programs in May 2009 for the Houston Urbanized Area (see Figure 1).

Current Situation

H-GAC received seven (7) project proposals in response to the May 2009 call for projects. A Project Evaluation Team (PET) with staff from H-GAC, METRO, TxDOT and Fort Bend County Transit evaluated the proposals. Four of those projects were approved by the Transportation Policy Council at its July 2009 meeting. Negotiations continued with the remaining project proposers and resulted in a revised scope and budget for the Energy Corridor District's (ECD) Eldridge Crosstown Circulator bus route. That project includes a local match funding partnership with the ECD and METRO to leverage federal JARC (reverse commute) funds. The project will be incorporated into the METRO bus system after three years of successful ridership growth. Table 1 provides a brief description of the project's scope and JARC budget. Table 2 summarizes the total project budget and Table 3 provides a summary of the JARC and New Freedom funds that have been allocated to the Houston Urbanized Area.

Action Requested

Staff requests TAC approval of the recommended ECD- JARC project. Upon approval by the TAC and TPC the project will be amended into the 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the statewide STIP.

Figure 1

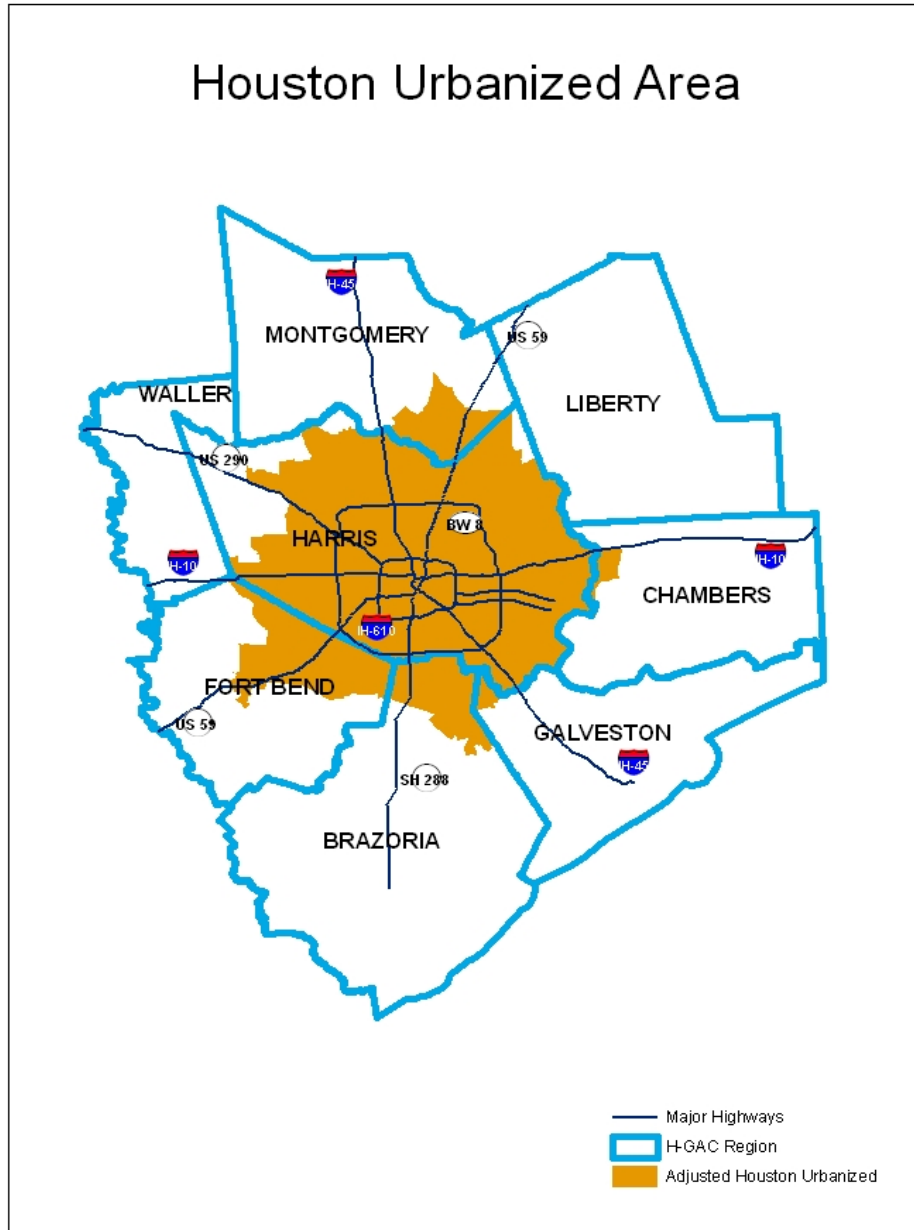


Table 1- JARC Funding Summary

	Applicant	Brief Project Description	Total JARC Request (Three Years)	Comments
1	Energy Corridor District- Eldridge Cross-town Bus Route	Provides local bus access connecting several METRO bus routes with the Energy Corridor District and the Addicks Park and Ride lot.	\$3,044,218	Recommended.

Table 2- ECD JARC Project Budget Summary

Summary	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
JARC	\$ 1,133,699	\$ 966,967	\$ 943,551	\$ 3,044,218
METRO	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 1,800,000
ECD	\$ 287,699	\$ 231,967	\$ 208,551	\$ 728,218
Farebox	\$ 149,860	\$ 187,325	\$ 234,156	\$ 571,341
Total	\$ 2,171,259	\$ 1,986,259	\$ 1,986,259	\$ 6,143,777

Table 3- JARC, NF Funds Allocated to the Houston Urbanized Area¹

Program	FY2008	FY2009
JARC	\$2,541,879	\$2,983,501
New Freedom	\$ 1,143,418	\$1,317,996
Total	\$3,685,297	\$4,301,497

¹ The FY 2010 allocation of JARC and New Freedom funds is expected to be equivalent to the FY 2009 allocation, subject to federal approvals.