

JOB ACCESS REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC) and NEW FREEDOM PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

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 eligible 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.

In an effort to continue to improve the mobility options within the Houston Urbanized Area, the H-GAC in conjunction with the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) conducted a Call for Projects for the JARC and New Freedom programs in May 2009. Approximately \$7,871,730 has been allocated for JARC and \$3,362,355 for New Freedom projects in the Houston Urbanized Area for FYs 2007 through FY 2009 (see Attachment 1 for a map of the Houston Urbanized Area and Table 3 for a summary of the funds that are available). Of the \$11,234,085 available to the region in both programs, approximately \$2,966,310 would be obligated with the approval of the Transportation Policy Council leaving a balance of \$8,267,775 that will need to be obligated before July, 2011.

Current Situation

H-GAC received seven (7) project proposals in response to the May 2009 call for projects (five for JARC and two for New Freedom funding). A proposal review team consisting of staff from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), METRO, Fort Bend Transit and H-GAC evaluated and ranked the projects and the recommendations for funding are shown on Tables 1 and 2. METRO is the designated recipient for the JARC and New Freedom programs in the Houston Urbanized Area and discussions have been initiated for H-GAC to become the designated recipient in the future.

Action Requested

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

Attachment 1- Houston Urbanized Area Map

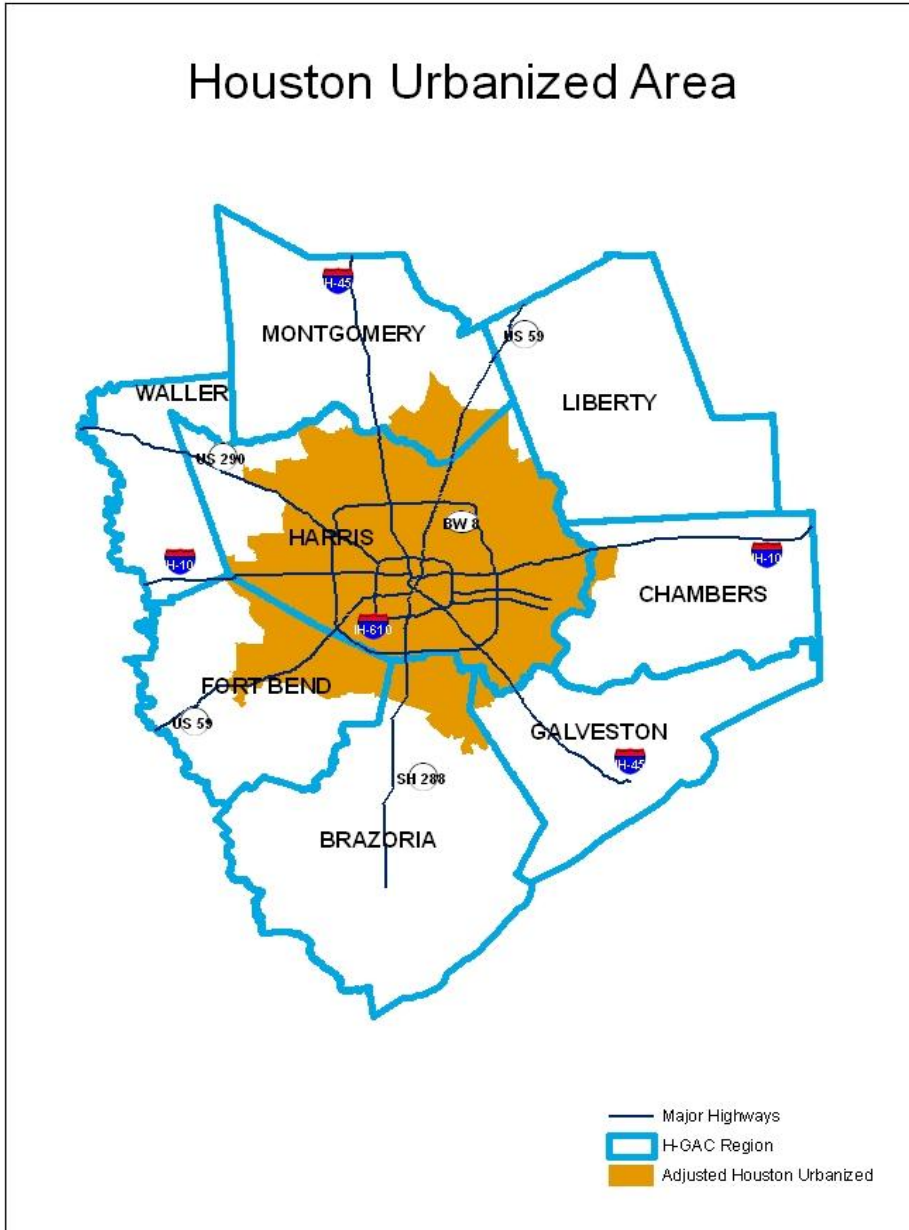


TABLE 1- JARC- FY 2007-2009 Preliminary Recommendations (3 years)

	Applicant	Brief Project Description	Total Request	Comments
1	Family Services, Ways to Work	Provide low-interest automobile loans for low-income families for employment-related transportation, plus staffing.	\$498,919	Award is recommended.
2	Gulf Coast Center/Connect Transportation	Provide Park and Ride service between the Texas Medical Center and Pearland.	\$1,046,346	Award is recommended with comment that the lease cost (\$250,000) is higher than average.
		TOTAL	\$1,545,265	

TABLE 2- NEW FREEDOM- FY 2007-2009 Preliminary Recommendations

	Applicant	Brief Project Description	Comments	Total
1	Liberty Cab	Purchase 5 ADA compliant rear entry ramped Minivans	Award is recommended.	\$ 188,003
2	Harris County Community Services/Rides	Continuation of Rides + service and service expansion of Rides program	Award is recommended.	\$ 1,233,042
		TOTAL		\$1,421,045

Table 3- JARC, NF Funds Currently Available to the Houston Urbanized Area

Program	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	Total
JARC	\$2,346,350	\$2,541,879	\$2,983,501	\$7,871,730
New Freedom	\$900,941	\$ 1,143,418	\$1,317,996	\$3,362,355
Total	\$3,247,291	\$3,685,297	\$4,301,497	\$11,234,085