Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program
Descriptions of Priority Projects

As Approved by the TPB on July 16, 2014

The purpose of the priority projects is to signal to potential applicants the kinds of projects that are most needed in the region. Agencies may also apply for other project types not listed as priority projects. It is important to note that applications for priority projects are not weighted more heavily than other project ideas; they are subject to the same competitive selection criteria and scoring mechanisms.

A. Mobility Manager Positions at the Local Government Level
(Mobility Management at the Systems Level)

What it is: A full or part-time staff position within a local county government, such as a County’s transportation or human service agency, that serves in a number of capacities - policy coordinator, operational broker - to help human service agencies and consumers identify the best services for individual trip needs. The Mobility Manager would help coordinate services in the jurisdiction and across jurisdictional lines and adapt the service to local need. The Mobility Manager could also serve as an information resource, for example, sharing information with agencies about project best practices, research, and connecting agencies with travel trainers. Many national, state and local resources are available to guide the establishment of the position with the functions that best meet the needs of the region. To assist with regional coordination of human service transportation and share best practices and lessons learned, a committee of the local mobility managers could be established by the TPB.

Good Examples:

✓ Montgomery County Maryland Department of Health & Human Services.
✓ Central Indiana Council on Aging (CICOA).
✓ State of Wisconsin (Mobility Manager in every County) and Wisconsin Association of Mobility Managers.
✓ The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) has toolkits and position descriptions for mobility managers, among other resources.

B. Challenge Grant for Coordinated Planning Efforts

What it is: This strategy emphasizes the importance of coordination at the local level by providing grant funds to jump start coordination efforts by funding the planning (and potentially implementation) process. Grant funds could be utilized to make the planning process more inclusive, encourage non-
Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program
Descriptions of Priority Projects

traditional but interested parties to take a seat at the table, develop a local coordinated plan to share vehicles or develop a mobility management plan for a County or region.

Good Examples:

✓ Prince William County, Virginia’s “Transportation Options Group”, a coalition of private non-profit and public human service agencies, transportation providers, and government officials who developed and implemented a Mobility Management Plan.
✓ Resource: Administration for Community Living (ACL) Strengthening Inclusive Coordinated Transportation Partnerships to Promote Community Living projects.

C. Personal Mobility Counseling Services
(Mobility Management at the Individual Level)

What it is: 1:1 help to customers in identifying their mobility needs and preferences, understanding the available options in their community that fit and providing assistance with application for programs or planning and reserving a trip from start to finish, as requested.

This could be offered as an extension of an existing Information & Assistance/Referral service. Through triage, callers seeking transportation resources could be referred to the Mobility Counselor if it is determined they would benefit from direct assistance.

Good Examples:

✓ Jewish Council for the Aging’s Connect-a-Ride (funded by Montgomery County DPWT).
✓ Dallas 2-1-1/Dallas Area Agency on Aging’s MyRide Dallas

D. Travel Training

What it is: Travel Training teaches people with disabilities or older adults who are unfamiliar with public transit how to use fixed-route services. There are different types of Travel Training services, some include general orientation and others are tailored to the needs of the individual. Training can be provided in groups, one-on-one and peer-to-peer. Many people can benefit from travel training, including older adults, people with physical, intellectual and sensory disabilities, people unable to afford their own vehicle and people with limited English proficiency.

WMATA, local transit agencies, and non-profit organizations provide a range of travel training services currently. However, there is wide recognition that the region would benefit from having additional
Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program
Descriptions of Priority Projects

training of all types (orientation and mobility, one-on-one, peer-to-peer, multi-day). Having a regional and or local transit provider as a partner on this type of project would benefit both the transit agency and the travel training participants. Transit partners could provide vehicles for training, be guest speakers at trainings and possibly offer discounted fare cards.

Additional travel training is needed in the region for people with development disabilities, and for non-English speakers. Transit agencies or non-profits could partner with a community agency that provides assistance to immigrant or refugees groups. Current travel training efforts could be leveraged if a more formal network of travel trainers was formed, which could provide opportunities for peer-to-peer exchanges between travel trainers and share innovative practices. More publicity about existing travel training opportunities is needed for the consumer.

Good Examples:

- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
- Fairfax County, Virginia’s Mobile Accessible Travel Training (MATT) bus
- Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind
- Resource: The Association of Travel Instruction (ATI) has a published definition of travel training as well as other resources.

E. Door-through-Door or Escorted Transportation Service

What it is: Escorted transportation services, also known as door-through-door or assisted transportation, provides a means of extra safety and assistance to a rider who needs support to travel. The level of assistance a program provides varies, but does not include heavy assistance such as lifting or handling medical needs or equipment. Examples might include preparing a rider for a trip by helping with a coat or gathering documents, accompanying someone into a medical building and staying with them throughout their appointment or helping an individual get into and out of a vehicle. Models include a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) who travels with the individual in taxis and volunteer drivers using their own or agency owned vehicles. It is important to note that needs go beyond medical appointments for the individuals requiring this type of assistance. Errands, groceries, hair care and socialization trips are also important and should be considered since these are the first types of trips a person who requires assistance to travel eliminates in favor of medical appointments.

Good Examples:

- Arlington and Alexandria Area Agency on Aging
- Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee’s Volunteer Assisted Transportation Program
F. Expanded and On-Going Sensitivity and Customer Service Training for Taxi, Bus & Paratransit Drivers

**What it is:** Training for bus drivers, Metro station managers, paratransit drivers, taxicab drivers, customer service representatives and other front-line service providers who have with direct interaction with seniors, people with disabilities and people of different socio-economic statuses.

While many agencies are providing the service, this strategy would emphasize longer, more comprehensive training for all staff (as well as refresher training) that involves actual consumers and consideration of their perspective in the process. For example, agencies could partner with a Center for Independent Living (CIL) or a Senior Center to bring consumers to drivers for friendly, face-to-face engagement.

**Good Examples:**
- Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)
- NJ Transit
- Diamond Transportation Services, Inc. – taxis
- San Francisco MTA Accessible Services

G. Shuttle or Taxi service to Bus Stops and Rail Stations

**What it is:** A feeder service for transporting people who are unable to access their local bus stop or Metrorail station, for reasons that may include accessibility issues, distance and location, to nearby rail stations and bus stops that will link them into the regional transit system. This type of project would help solve the first mile/last mile problem in which people who could use fixed route for a trip if they could get to their origin and destination which is too far away from the closest bus stop or rail station.

An organization, agency or private company could fund a shuttle to their destination (worksite, adult day care, hospital, etc. Taxi services could be utilized to fill the first mile/last mile in cases where there isn’t enough demand for a shuttle. Ideas for partnerships might include local agencies with existing van fleets sharing their vehicles or a local transit agency charging a reasonable fee for the service to help offset some of the cost.

**Good Examples:**
- UPS Shuttle in Prince George’s County
- Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home Program
- Meadowlink’s EZ Ride Program - Wood-Ridge, NJ
H. Bus Stop and Sidewalk Improvements

What it is: This project involves eliminating barriers to the use of public transit by people using mobility devices or with mobility impairments by addressing missing infrastructure such as curb cuts, sidewalks and signage. Bus stops need proper boarding and alighting surfaces, spaces for a wheelchair under a shelter, accessible signage, proper snow removal and removal of newspaper boxes or other items that block pathways. Bus stops and the sidewalks leading to the bus stops need improvement to allow more people to use the bus and rail system. Accessibility of the bus stops and sidewalks also need to be maintained over time.

WMATA and the local jurisdictions have conducted an inventory of the approximately 20,000 bus stops in the region and has found that approximately half of them are not fully accessible to people with disabilities. Using Federal funds to improve bus stop accessibility could add to the challenges that potential project sponsors face such as permitting, zoning, and procurement of contractors.

Good Examples:

- Montgomery County’s Bus Stop Accessibility Efforts
- WMATA received $1.2 million New Freedom Grant from the TPB which will improve 88 stops
- Resource: WMATA’s Bus Stop Inventory and Bus Stop Priority List
- Trimet - Portland, OR

I. Deviated Bus or Feeder Service for Targeted Area or Population Groups

What it is: The premise behind the deviated bus or feeder service is that there are currently customers with disabilities who rely on paratransit but could use a deviated bus program or a feeder service. Some customers could potentially use fixed route transit, with a direct trip from Metrorail, some travel training, and possibly through the use of an aide on the vehicle.

In particular, MetroAccess clients with developmental disabilities that attend an adult day care center or other agency program could benefit from having a “bus” option. A local transit agency and/or non-profit agency could partner on the service. If two or more agencies shared a feeder or the incremental cost of a deviated route bus service; the project would be considered “Mobility Management” and would qualify for the 20% Capital Match. Agencies could share responsibilities of taking calls and scheduling. In the case of deviated route, there needs to be a balance between the deviation and the need for buses to meet their time schedules.
Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program
Descriptions of Priority Projects

Good Examples:
- PRTC, Prince William County, Virginia
- FASTRAN

J. Pilot Programs that Expand the Use of Taxis for Medical Trips

What it is: The use of taxis for medical appointments, in particular, dialysis, could help curb the cost to public agencies and improve the customers transportation experience. MetroAccess is a shared-ride pre-arranged service and the length of time a dialysis patient, who may not be feeling well, is in a vehicle could also be reduced by the use of taxis. This project would build upon existing efforts to provide taxi service to people with disabilities as a more efficient and less expensive option than MetroAccess (customers would pay a similar or lower MetroAccess fare; the taxi companies would be paid by a State or local government). D.C. and WMATA are currently examining how MetroAccess customers going to dialysis centers could take those trips on taxis instead of MetroAccess, and how this could be a mutual benefit to the customers, MetroAccess, the DC government and taxicab companies.

Good Examples:
- Arlington STAR

K. Volunteer Driver Programs

What it is: The use of volunteers to drive agency owned or private vehicles to transport seniors and people with disabilities to wherever they need to go. Volunteer driver programs fill an important niche in outer and rural areas where transportation options are more limited and as a more affordable option for riders requiring an extra hand with groceries or navigation of a medical office building.

Insurance, liability, recruitment of volunteers, volunteer screening and training would need to be considered.

Good Examples:
- Senior Connections, Montgomery County, Maryland
- Partners in Care, Anne Arundel County, Maryland
- Neighbor Ride, Howard County, Maryland
L. Tailored Transportation Service for Clients of Human Service Agencies

What it is: This project would assist people with disabilities who use agency services but for whom public transit is not a viable option for them, either because of the unavailability of transit or due to the nature of their disability. One option is that human service agencies could work together and schedule a “fixed-route” type of service with small vans, designed to pick-up clients within geographic clusters traveling to human service agency locations. The service would be much like school bus transportation. An important element of success is that the pick-up and drop-off locations need to geographically clustered, so that fixed-schedule service is effective. Another option is that agencies provide transportation to their clients by contracting with a provider, or with directly owned or leased vans.

Human service agencies could also coordinate and potentially share vehicles, maintenance, insurance, operating support, and driver training between agencies to provide agency-specific transportation for clients. If one or more agencies work together, costs such as planning for a new service, scheduling, insurance, and driver training and salaries would qualify as mobility management and only require a 20% match. These costs otherwise would be considered an operating project and require a 50% match.

Good Examples:

- ACCESS Transportation Services, Inc., Pittsburgh, PA – transports Area Agency on Aging clients to adult day programs, etc.
- Leslie, Knott, Letcher, Perry Community Action Council, Hazard, KY – serves isolated, rural seniors to get them to senior centers and other services