



PLANNING & PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

August 18, 2004

SUBJECT: JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC) GRANT

ACTION: APPROVE STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO FUND A JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE PROJECT

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Approve the recommended funding amount of up to \$866,837 in federal funds from the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Grant Program for the proposed Countywide Car Sharing Demonstration Project.
- B. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer or his designee to submit a JARC grant application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the MTA to act as a pass-through agency on behalf of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church (FAME) for the proposed project.
- C. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to execute a JARC pass-through funding agreement with FAME after the FTA awards a grant.
- D. Increase the FY05 subsidies to others budget by \$1 million to cover the first year's expenses of all nine JARC projects.
- E. Obligate \$98,926 from the JARC program as contingency for the eight previously approved projects.

ISSUE

The MTA has available Congressional allocations totaling \$3,362,172 for the JARC program. In January 2004, the MTA Board of Directors approved eight projects totaling \$1,901,074, and staff informed the MTA Board that additional project sponsors for the \$1,461,098 in remaining funds would be sought. Since the January adoption, staff has reviewed a request from FAME to fund a proposed Countywide Car Sharing Demonstration Project from the JARC Grant Program.

BACKGROUND

For FY 2002 and FY 2003, Congress allocated a total of \$3,362,172 in federal JARC Program funding to Los Angeles County under the Section 3037 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The JARC Program itself has two major goals: (1) to provide transportation services in urban, suburban and rural areas that would assist welfare recipients and other low-income individuals in accessing employment opportunities; and (2) to increase collaboration among regional transportation providers, human service agencies and related service providers, employers and affected communities.

In August 2003, the MTA sent out over 3,000 notices requesting funding proposals from prospective applicants, including various cities, agencies, and operators in Los Angeles County that could benefit from the JARC Program. The MTA received nine applications, but only eight had eligible sponsors. The ineligible applicant was Flexcar, which did not meet the not-for-profit organization criterion under the JARC eligibility requirements. Staff asked Flexcar to partner with a not-for-profit organization so that a new proposal could be considered. Meanwhile, based on a staff recommendation, the MTA Board proceeded with approving the other eight proposals totaling \$1,901,074. The FTA is currently reviewing these eight proposals. A balance of \$1,461,098 of federal funds remains available for an eligible project or projects. Of that amount, \$98,926 remains from the 2002 federal appropriation and must be obligated before September 2004 when the funds are subject to lapsing per federal statute. Upon approval of the recommendations, these funds will be obligated as a contingency amount to the eight projects previously approved by the Board.

Partnering with Flexcar, FAME submitted a proposal for a Countywide Car-Sharing Demonstration Project to the MTA following the January Board approval of the eight JARC projects. The Countywide Car Sharing Demonstration Project will provide car-sharing opportunities to Welfare to Work participants and low income individuals by making vehicles available to program participants on demand. The FAME proposes to use up to 25 cars with initial emphasis placed on the Southwest area of the County, concentrating on South Central area. As the MTA did not receive any other eligible proposals for consideration, staff is recommending that this ninth project be added to the list of eight projects that the MTA Board previously approved for the JARC Program.

County Welfare-to-Work Program and JARC

The Los Angeles County Welfare-to-Work Program is a state program funded through federal block grants from the U.S. Department of Labor. The State of California makes these block-grant funds available for creating additional job opportunities for the hardest-to-employ recipients. The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) coordinates the Welfare-to-Work Program in Los Angeles as the lead agency.

As the lead agency for Los Angeles County, DPSS developed the County Welfare-to-Work Transportation Plan. DPSS developed that plan with the MTA, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and social and human services agencies countywide, including FAME. DPSS also secured approval of that plan from the County Board of Supervisors in June 1999. Under Phase II of that plan, a vehicle-sharing proposal was developed that would make vehicles available to eligible participants to use for trips that are not viable on public transportation. Such trips would include job training or job search, commuting to work, non-emergency medical trips, or child-care drop-off and pick-up. The

proposal also envisioned a DPSS and MTA partnership that would implement the following activities with funding from DPSS and the FTA:

1. Unanticipated Transportation Needs Service (U-TRANS) that would operate similarly to a Guaranteed Ride Home Program.
2. Vehicle-Sharing Pilot Program that would initiate two small-scale pilot programs for three years to make vehicles available to Welfare-to-Work participants.
3. Shuttles, vanpools, and other supplemental services that would make public transit more viable to Welfare-to-Work participants.

Due to the state budget shortfall, DPSS was unable to provide funding for the aforementioned activities. However, the FTA did make available federal funding to Los Angeles County through the MTA under the JARC Program. The FTA's JARC Program provides federal funding for new transit-type services that assist welfare recipients and other low-income individuals in getting jobs, training, and child-care. Although the JARC Program is a separate program with similar objectives, it can supplement the efforts of the County Welfare-to-Work Program by making federal funding available to those sponsors who can provide the 50% match that is required.

At the MTA Board's request, staff contacted DPSS to remind them of the availability of remaining JARC funding. DPSS declined to submit a proposal at this time. DPSS also reviewed the FAME proposal and has provided MTA with a letter of support for the project (Attachment A).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This action will increase the FY05 MTA Budget by \$1 million, for all nine JARC projects, under cost center 0441 (the Pass-Through portion of the Budget), project 500002, to be funded with federal Section 3037 funds. As the available funds will be spent over a two-year period, according to project implementation schedules, the Project Manager and Deputy Executive Officer will be responsible for budgeting the cost in the future years.

The FTA will pay for up to 50% of eligible JARC project costs using the MTA as the pass-through agency. Individual JARC project sponsors will be responsible for meeting the 50% local match requirement. As the MTA receives the invoices from the project sponsor, the MTA will draw down the federal funds from the FTA and pay the JARC project sponsor 50% of the costs incurred with these funds. In the case of the Countywide Car-Sharing Demonstration Project, the FAME proposal indicates that cash contributions from Flexcar will make up the 50% local match required.

OPTIONS

The MTA Board may decide not to approve the funding for the recommended project. This option is not recommended, as it would not allow the MTA to obligate as much of the Congressional allocations to Los Angeles County as possible, if not all, before the JARC funds lapse. Any unobligated funds will be lost to Los Angeles County.

NEXT STEPS

With MTA Board approval, the “Countywide Car Sharing Demonstration Project” will be submitted to the FTA for their consideration and approval for a grant award of \$866,837. Upon FTA approval of the grant, the MTA will execute a pass-through agreement with FAME and monitor project implementation. Staff will also continue to seek projects and project sponsors for the remaining \$495,335 in JARC funds available before they lapse. This particular funding can only be used for unanticipated transportation needs activities.

ATTACHMENT

- A. Letter of support by Los Angeles County DPSS for FAME proposal

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June 7, 2004

Jim McLaughlin, Executive Officer Transit Operations
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Mr. McLaughlin:

**RE: JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC) FUNDING OF
CARSHARING PROJECT**

This is to inform you that the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) supports funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the Countywide Carsharing Demonstration Program that is being sponsored by the First African Methodist Episcopal Church (FAME) Renaissance Corporation.

We agree that this program will enhance transportation services for the CalWORKs participants living in the southwest area of Los Angeles County and that it will enhance our efforts to assist these families in becoming self-sufficient.

If you have any questions, please contact Gail Esfahanika, HSA III, Interagency Relations Section at (562) 908-8386.

Very truly yours,

Phil Ansell, Director
Bureau of Program And Policy

PA:jg

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