

The Route to Transportation Equity:
A Critical Evaluation of the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program and
Strategies to Implement First-Class Public Transportation Systems

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Dedication

For my mom and my dad, who told me I could go wherever I wanted to go- even on public transportation- and taught me accordingly.

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Executive Summary

This report is an evaluation of the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program, a federal grant program that aims to support flexible, innovative transportation alternatives to fill gaps in transportation services specifically for low-income individuals and welfare recipients who are transitioning into the work force. The two program objectives for the Job Access and Reverse Commute program are to: 1) provide transportation services in urban, suburban and rural areas to assist the ability of welfare recipients and low-income individuals to access employment opportunities; and 2) increase collaboration among the transportation providers, human service agencies, employers, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), states, and affected communities and individuals. In addition to evaluating whether the JARC program successfully meets its program objectives, this report also aims to examine the JARC program through a transportation equity lens. Transportation equity calls for equality in mobility and accessibility for all constituencies, with particular attention paid to urban, low-income communities and communities of color that are traditionally disenfranchised and disempowered by transportation policies. Transportation equity is premised on the principles of environmental justice that call for equal access to social and economic opportunities, meaningful community involvement in the decision-making process and minimization of disproportionately adverse human health and environmental effects. This evaluation of the JARC program, therefore, also assesses whether the JARC program sufficiently promotes and institutionalizes these three principles of transportation equity.

This report first evaluates whether the Job Access and Reverse Commute program is successfully meeting its two goals of connecting welfare recipients and low-income

people to jobs and forging collaboration among a variety of agencies and organizations. This study surveys a considerable number of evaluations and assessments of the program that have been administered by diversified entities. These evaluations and assessments include legally-mandated reports by government agencies such as the Federal Transit Administration and the General Accounting Office and a 2002 study conducted by the University of Illinois at Chicago. Additionally, interviews were conducted with individuals who are directly linked to the JARC program- for example, the chief of staff to Representative Danny Davis of Illinois, who moved to amend the JARC legislation to increase annual funding, and Sue Masselink and Gregory Brown, who, as part of the Federal Transit Administration's Office of Program Management, manage the JARC program at the federal level. In examining whether the JARC program is successfully connecting welfare participants and low-income individuals to job opportunities, this study assesses JARC's institutionalization of the transportation equity principle of equal access to social and economic benefits.

This study also analyzes the Job Access and Reverse Commute program's promotion of other key aspects of transportation equity, namely meaningful community involvement and minimization of public health and environmental effects. Profiles of organizations and agencies that considered and incorporated either meaningful community involvement or public health and environmental impact analysis into their transportation projects are included in this report. Interviews with representatives of these organizations were also conducted and incorporated into this study.

This study finds that the Job Access and Reverse Commute program promotes and institutionalizes one key aspect of transportation equity, but not all. The JARC

program directly responds to the social and economic benefits issue of spatial mismatch between job growth centers and low-income residential communities. However, JARC does not institutionalize in its program two other key aspects of transportation: meaningful community involvement and minimization of public health and environmental effects. However, there are ways in which these elements of transportation equity could be strengthened and further promoted by the JARC program.

Firstly, in order to ensure community involvement and maintain the integrity of the JARC program, Congressional earmarking must be limited, and the competitive selection process must be reinstated in some form. Whatever form the competitive selection process takes, it must not compromise the integrity of the JARC program and its public involvement element. Congress and the Federal Transit Administration must commit to using JARC grants to only fund projects that qualify as JARC projects as outlined in TEA-21 legislation.

Secondly, meaningful community involvement should be made an eligibility criterion for JARC projects. The public and potentially impacted communities should be consulted *at least* during the planning stages of a JARC proposal. Promoting meaningful community involvement in transportation planning should thus be institutionalized as a goal of the JARC program.

Third, the JARC program should reward projects that undertake initiatives and efforts to minimize and mitigate potential public health and environmental pollution that stem from additional transportation services. Diesel alternatives and many other environmentally-sustainable options are often more expensive. The JARC program must be committed to funding these types of projects and not reject or penalize proposals that

incorporate environmentally-sustainable alternatives on the basis that they are more expensive. Overall funding for the Job Access and Reverse Commute program must be increased in order to adequately fund environmentally-sustainable efforts.

Unequivocally, this report argues for the continuation of the JARC program. Studies and evaluations have shown that the program has been successful in meeting the needs of welfare recipients and those who are low-income and/or transit-dependent. The JARC program breaks the mold of traditional transportation policies by addressing and responding to the needs of those conventionally neglected by transportation policymakers. Furthermore, there are ways to strengthen and incorporate elements of transportation equity into the JARC program. The Job Access and Reverse Commute program is a worthy program that enables local stakeholders and players to meet the needs of the transit-dependent.

Preface

The first time I ever traveled on public transportation was when I was less than two years old. I was riding a Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) bus in Boston with my mother, and we were going to meet with our social worker. That particular trip was difficult for my mom, a recent immigrant to the United States and could neither read signs written in English nor communicate to the bus driver about where she needed to go. As I have no memory of this, according to my mom, we stayed and rode the bus to the very last stop, at which point the bus driver turned around to announce that we needed to get off the bus. I don't know if we ever made it to our social worker that day. However, for the rest of my life, public transportation played the same role it did in that first episode- it was the primary vehicle that I depended on to get me to where I needed to go because I had no other options. I relied on public transportation to connect me to virtually everything: school, jobs, trainings, volunteer opportunities, friends, relatives, public libraries, social gatherings, cultural events, supermarkets, churches, public parks, health clinics and hospitals.

I was no longer transit-dependent after I moved to Los Angeles to attend Occidental College. One of the first myths I heard about Los Angeles was that there is no public transportation. There is, in fact, a public transportation system in Los Angeles called the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). The truth in that myth is two-fold. First, Los Angeles is culturally, politically and economically a city of cars and highways. Second, the MTA operates an unreliable and incoherent public transportation system. Although I did not need the MTA to get to school and work, I still wondered about those who did. From my first-hand experience, I understood that quality of life for

the transit-dependent is fundamentally connected to the availability and quality of public transportation. Who are LA's transit-dependent? How do they get to school, work, the grocery store and their doctor's office? How do they connect to friends, relatives and other spaces of leisure? What are their experiences when they travel on public transportation?

Soon enough, I began to understand that the MTA operates a racially discriminatory, separate and unequal, two-tier mass transit system in Los Angeles County. Los Angeles County's transit-dependent are the 500,000 monthly bus riders, 81 percent of whom are Latino, African American, Asian Pacific Islander and Native American.¹ MTA bus riders are "profoundly poor," sixty percent of whom have family incomes under \$15,000.² As Thomas Rubin asserts, "More than almost any other major transit system in the country, the Los Angeles bus system serves the poor, minorities, and other voiceless groups or residents."³ In a decentralized city designed with a "massively overloaded surface transportation network"⁴ for the automobile, travel by public buses is difficult, time-consuming and hazardous for one's health. This is further exacerbated by a mass transit policy that favors "choice riders" over the transit-dependent. This unjust and unequal public transportation policy is manifested in discrepancies in funding between bus and rail, where rail projects receive the majority of MTA funding. Furthermore, rail passengers are subsidized at \$5-\$25 each while bus riders are each subsidized at \$.33 to \$1.17.⁵ The destruction of the bus system is the price that must be paid to fund the enormously and endlessly expensive rail system. Bus riders are confronted with fare increases, service cuts, reduction and deterioration of the bus fleet, overcrowding and deterioration of service and infrequent evening and weekend service.⁶ The racially

discriminatory, separate and unequal, two-tier conditions of this mass transit system are made clear when one considers the racial and class makeup of rail ridership, which is far more heavily white and middle class than that of buses.⁷

While it is easy for me to romanticize about the accessibility of public transportation system in Boston, I know that the MBTA also operates an inequitable, two-tier mass transit system.⁸ The first tier is rail-based, which speedily transports the predominantly white and wealthy commuters and tourists to and from downtown. Commuters traveling from the wealthy suburb of Wellesley are able to arrive in downtown Boston within half an hour. The second tier is a system of dirty diesel buses that are often late and overcrowded. From parts of Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan, neighborhoods that are only a matter of a few miles from downtown Boston, riders must take one or two buses plus a subway train to get to downtown. This trip is known to take an hour and a half. Furthermore, the emissions from these diesel buses are hazardous to individual and community health and have been known to trigger asthma attacks and cause cancer. Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan and other areas predominantly served by these diesel buses are low-income communities of color, where the most transit-dependent of our region reside. I have always wondered why buses that serve wealthier and white neighborhoods almost always carried privileged amenities, such as working air conditioning systems and cushioned seats, whereas buses that serve poor communities of color were often occupied to capacity and did not offer air conditioning. Commuter rail lines that carry white suburbanites in and out of the city disrupt and divide poor neighborhoods of color. To add insult to injury, these lines do not offer stops in these neighborhoods to pick people up for the ride downtown.

I undertook this study of transportation equity because I personally understand the connection between public transportation and the quality of life of both individuals and communities. For many people, public transportation is their literal and physical connection to resources and people vital to their well-being and happiness- jobs, education, healthcare, friends and family. Ultimately, environmentally-sustainable and high-quality public transportation should be a right afforded to all, and especially the transit-dependent.

Chapter One: Transportation Equity

Transportation *Inequity*

In order to comprehensively define transportation equity, perhaps it is best first to examine and gain an understanding of transportation *inequities*. Historically and presently, transportation systems in the United States are not created equal. Some communities benefit from transportation development projects, while other communities pay the costs with their personal and community health. One can say that transportation policies have traditionally favored highway development over public transportation. However, a more in-depth analysis of transportation policies in the United States will reveal that they have always favored whites over people of color, middle class over the poor and working class, suburbia over the urban core. Transportation policies often intersect with race, poverty and geography.⁹

The US Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* encapsulates the history of transportation inequity in the United States. Many remember *Plessy v. Ferguson* for its “separate but equal” doctrine that legally sanctioned racial segregation in the United States. Although the “separate but equal” doctrine was wide-reaching and applied to all public arenas, *Plessy*, at its core, was “the legal codification of apartheid on transportation facilities.”¹⁰ *Plessy v. Ferguson* was a civil rights legal battle that began in 1892 when Plessy, a black shoemaker, was arrested for sitting in the “white” car of the East Louisiana Railroad. In 1896, the Supreme Court upheld Louisiana’s Separate Car Act that segregated “white” and “colored” seating on railroad cars and refuted Plessy’s argument that the Act violated the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution. It was not until 58 years later, in 1954, that the Supreme Court reversed

Plessy in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. *Plessy* may have been overturned 51 years ago, but separate and unequal transportation systems exist today.

Plessy represents a microcosm of the historic and present practices and policies that construct and maintain separate and unequal transportation systems in the United States. Separate and unequal transportation systems are omnipresent and they dichotomize along the lines of race, class and geography. Government on all levels- federal, state and local- prioritize the construction of suburban-serving freeways; it is thus arguably responsible for the obsessive American car culture, air, noise and land pollution, health disparities, congestion, residential segregation, and sprawl.¹¹ The government invested heavily in roads and interstate highways- 3 million and 45,000 miles, respectively- and continues to do so.¹² The policy to build the United States into a car nation serves one set of communities- middle-class, white suburban- while consequently destroying others- the urban poor/working-class communities of color. In addition to being divided, isolated and disrupted, the latter communities bear the brunt of negative economic, environmental and health effects.

While tax dollars also fund public transportation systems, highway development receives a disproportionate share of the public treasury. As Bullard, Johnson and Torres declare, “The lion's share of transportation dollars is spent on roads, while urban transit systems are often left in disrepair or are strapped for funds.”¹³ Eighty percent of the gasoline tax is allocated to highways, while only 20 percent goes to mass transit.¹⁴ As a result of this unequal and disproportionate investment policy, “urban mass transit systems have been dismantled or allowed to fall into disrepair.”¹⁵ The race, class and geography dimensions of this transportation policy are illustrated when one considers who the

transit-dependent are. The answer is found in the urban populations, low-income populations, and populations of color. Public transportation is the only mobility option for millions of inner-city residents.¹⁶ Low-income people also rely heavily on public transit for their mobility needs. For example, of the 500,000 monthly bus riders of Los Angeles County, 60 percent of them have family incomes under \$15,000.¹⁷ Furthermore, while a majority of Americans rely on cars, people of color are likely to not own cars and twice as likely to use public transit, walking, biking and other modes of nonautomotive travel opposed to their white counterparts.¹⁸ While only seven percent of white households do not own cars, 24 percent of African-American households, 17 percent of Latino households and 13 percent of Asian-American households do not own cars.¹⁹ Therefore, while only three percent of whites do so, 12 percent of African Americans, 9 percent of Latinos, and 10 percent of Asian Americans rely on public transportation to get to work.²⁰ The Conservation Law Foundation best summarizes the injustice of this disinvestment policy:

“When it comes to transportation, people of color and people of limited means in city neighborhoods have gotten the short end of the stick in two ways. They have gotten lousy service, usually in the forms of a slow, crowded, unreliable bus. And they have gotten neighborhood environments burdened by pollution, noise, and danger from other people’s traffic.”²¹

Defining Transportation Equity

Because transportation is simultaneously a social justice, economic and environmental issue, transportation equity has been defined in many ways and

encompasses many things. One may find it easier to identify what is NOT transportation equity or transportation *inequity*, as I have done above, since examples are abundant.

Therefore, a national transportation equity agenda must provide “choices to people who currently lack them.”²² The Transportation Equity Network, a national coalition of grassroots organizations that seek to advance equity in transportation policies and planning practices, similarly defines transportation equity as “the fair distribution of public resources across all communities, paying particular attention to the environmental and community development needs of low-income and minority communities.”²³ On the same token, Sanchez, Stolz and Ma describe transportation equity as “fairness in mobility and accessibility levels across race, class, gender, and disability. The ultimate objective of transportation equity is to provide equal access to social and economic opportunity by providing equitable levels of access to all places.”²⁴ Transportation equity calls for equality in mobility and accessibility for all constituencies, but particular attention must be paid to those communities that are traditionally disenfranchised and disempowered.

Transportation Equity and Environmental Justice

Transportation equity is importantly linked to environmental justice; in fact, environmental justice is “a key facet of the transportation equity agenda.”²⁵

Transportation equity analysis is premised on the Principles of Environmental Justice, which was adopted at First People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 2001.²⁶

According to the United States Department of Transportation, there are three fundamental principles at the core of environmental justice: 1) To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority or low-income populations; 2) To ensure full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the

decision-making process; and 3) To avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.²⁷ On the same token, the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Environmental Justice defines environmental justice as:

“The fair treatments and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socio-economic group should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies.”²⁸

In summary, environmental justice is a call for social justice and ecological sustainability.

Sanchez, Stolz and Ma correctly warns that although “the environmental justice movement has addressed some of the inequitable effects of transportation policies on racial minorities and brought attention to the issue of transportation equity,” it has “primarily drawn attention to the governmental policies that negatively and inequitably affect the natural environment in areas with concentrated minority populations.”²⁹ In examining transportation equity issues, it is important to evaluate not only the effects on environment and health but also whether people and communities have equal access to social and economic opportunity and are meaningfully involved in the decision-making process. The next section examines these three principles- equal access to transportation

benefits, community decision-making at various levels and environmental and health quality.

Social and Economic Benefits

The environmental justice principle that calls for the prevention of the denial of benefits by people of color or low-income populations demands that these populations “have reliable and affordable access to good jobs, education and job training, affordable housing, childcare and other services and opportunities throughout metropolitan areas.”³⁰ Inequitable transportation policies have limited the access of low-income communities and communities of color to social and economic opportunities.³¹ Sanchez, Stolz and Ma define this denial of access as social exclusion. They argue that “addressing social exclusion includes addressing problems such as lack of access to jobs, education, and training; low levels of access to public transportation at particular times of the day, which has an impact on persons without cars working late and early-morning shifts; and limited access to public and private spaces because of unsafe conditions and design.”³² In connecting people, particularly those who are low-income and of color, to economic and social opportunities and benefits, transportation plays a vital role in creating and sustaining healthy communities.

Of all social and economic benefits connected to transportation, the perceived “spatial mismatch” between job growth centers and low-income residential communities has received the most attention. Sanchez, Stolz and Ma assert that “transportation policies favoring highways over transit have...helped to create 'spatial mismatch'- the disconnect that occurs when new entry-level and low-skills jobs are located on the fringes of urban areas that are inaccessible to central-city residents who need those jobs.”³³ Henry Holmes

discusses the consequences of spatial mismatch, and thus our transportation policies: “Job decentralization, the relocation of many jobs once located in central cities, and the movement of new retail, service, and information-sector jobs to suburbs further outside the urban core has a direct effect on employment levels, opportunities and income of inner city residents... This spatial mismatch has profound economic and environmental justice implications for people living in central cities.”³⁴ In 1968, economist John Kain was the first to advance the Spatial Mismatch Hypothesis (SMH). Kain examined the residential locations of African Americans in two cities and trends in the location of employment opportunities in both regions. In his study, Kain argued that high unemployment rates of inner-city African Americans were partially attributable to job decentralization and the failure of public transit to connect inner-city residents with suburban job locations.³⁵ Kain’s study concluded that spatial segregation drives black unemployment, and that there is a “spatial mismatch” between the unemployed black labor force and new job opportunities outside of the inner-city black neighborhoods.³⁶ Many studies have been conducted in the last forty years to either support or dispute the theory of spatial mismatch and its link to a lack of economic opportunity in poor neighborhoods. Presently, while spatial mismatch is still very much an academic hypothesis; there is a relative consensus within academic and political spheres on the existence of a spatial mismatch and the validity of the spatial mismatch hypothesis.

Meaningful Community Involvement

It is important that the communities that are most impacted by transportation policies have decision-making power in determining what those policies should be. Traditionally, transportation policies within the United States have not taken this

approach; instead transportation policies are decided and influenced mainly by the mirror of “the power arrangements of the dominant society and its institutions,”³⁷ or the predominantly white elite groups, and their “decisions have played an important role in creating and sustaining the inequities of current transportation policies.”³⁸ Without meaningful public involvement by those who have been profoundly impacted by transportation policies, our mass transit systems have suffered and auto and highway culture have reached a point at which it can no longer be sustained without compromising the health and lives of many people.

With the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991, the traditional model of transportation decision-making began to shift to a model that provided initial opportunities to include decision-making powers from traditionally disempowered communities who are nonetheless impacted by transportation policies. ISTEA required community participation and input throughout the planning process and provided local control of federal transportation funds by designating Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) as the body primarily responsible for planning, receiving and allocating federal transportation funding. ISTEA expired in 1998 and its renewal legislation, TEA-21, which was passed in the same year, retained the public participation provision of ISTEA. State Departments of Transportation and MPOs are required to “seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems including but not limited to low-income and minority households”³⁹ and to involve “culturally diverse stakeholders early in the planning process and during project development.”⁴⁰ The potential of MPOs to meaningfully

involve the public has not been fully realized as they continue struggling to ensure greater stakeholder participation in transportation decision-making.

Public Health and Environmental Effects

Our physical and natural environment, and thus our quality of life, has been degraded by transportation policies. “America’s auto-oriented transportation system dirties the air, contaminates oceans and rivers, consumes open space and wildlife habitat, hastens climate change, and guzzles energy.”⁴¹ The most significant environmental offense that results from our auto-obsessive culture is unhealthy air quality. More than 125 million Americans live in areas with unacceptable air pollution,⁴² and half of us breathe unhealthy air.⁴³ Air pollution is linked to heart disease, lung cancer, birth defects, brain damage, premature mortality, asthma and other lung and respiratory illnesses.⁴⁴ Transportation policies have led to the harmful conditions impacting our environment, health and quality of life.

Reducing the number of running auto vehicles may significantly help mitigate air pollution, since motor vehicles are the largest source of urban air pollution.⁴⁵ Cars, trucks, buses, and other mobile sources release an estimated 3 billion pounds of cancer-causing, hazardous air pollutants each year.⁴⁶ Auto vehicles generate more than two-thirds of the carbon monoxide in the atmosphere, a third of the nitrogen oxides that react to form smog, and a quarter of the hydrocarbons that also form smog.⁴⁷ The link between air pollution, asthma and auto vehicles is supported by an Atlanta-based study during the 1996 Summer Olympics when single-occupancy vehicle use decreased. The study found that fewer children were treated by hospitals and doctors for serious asthma problems.⁴⁸

Economically disadvantaged communities and communities of color are disproportionately affected by these public health problems. Low-income persons and people of color are more likely to live in urban areas with reduced air quality than affluent individuals and whites.⁴⁹ Additionally, “poor communities and communities of color also experience the pollution and physical displacement of locally unwanted land uses associated with the transportation system, such as oil refineries, gasoline manufacturing, leaking underground petroleum storage tanks, diesel bus barns, vehicle maintenance facilities, auto junk yards, and other high-impact and toxic uses.”⁵⁰ Ironically, these communities that are disproportionately affected by these transportation policies are not served by them, since the construction of highways is built for those with cars and not for the transit-dependent. As Dr. Robert D. Bullard calls it, this form of geographic pollution is “drive-by pollution.”⁵¹

Although public transit may help in reducing the overall number of auto vehicles on the road, we must also consider the environmental and health effects of public transit vehicles themselves. Most mass transit systems use diesel buses and some cities even use diesel trains. Diesel vehicles produce particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxide pollution. Nitrogen oxides help form ozone smog in the atmosphere, and PM found in diesel vehicles consists of PM 2.5, which is the most harmful kind of particulate matter. In addition to the environmental impacts, the human health effects of diesel exhaust are also alarming. The United States Environmental Protection Agency classifies diesel exhaust as a “probable human carcinogen.”⁵² The immediate effects of exposure to diesel pollution include burning and watering of the eyes, coughing, tightness in the chest, and labored breathing and wheezing.⁵³ Furthermore, studies have found workers who are

exposed to higher levels of diesel exhaust- such as those who work in the rail and trucking industries- to be at higher risk of developing lung cancer.⁵⁴ Alternatives to diesel must be considered, especially since the same populations who suffer disproportionately from the negative health effects of an auto-oriented society are also the transit-dependent.

This examination of transportation equity will better inform us about the significance and implications of a transportation program such as the Job Access and Reverse Commute program. It is most apparent that the program directly addresses an inequity created by unjust transportation policies. Therefore, JARC attempts to “right” a wrong. However, I hope to show in this report that creating equitable public transportation systems is not limited to reversing transportation inequities. It is possible for programs like JARC to build these systems by laying principles of justice, equity and fairness at their foundations.

Chapter Two: Job Access and Reverse Commute Program

Creation of the JARC Program

On June 6, 1998, President Bill Clinton signed into law the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), a reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. TEA-21 continued ISTEA's authorizations for federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and mass transportation for another 6 year period from 1998-2003. Amended into the ISTEA reauthorization was the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program, which provided \$750 million from FY 1999 through FY 2003 in competitive grants to transit agencies, local human service agencies and others to increase the transportation options of low-income workers. The JARC aimed to support flexible, innovative transportation alternatives to fill gaps in transportation services specifically for welfare recipients who were transitioning into the work force and other low-income individuals. TEA-21 authorized \$150 million annually for the JARC program.

The language of the Act identifies the establishment of the JARC program based on nine findings: 1) two-thirds of all new jobs were located in the suburbs, while three-quarters of all welfare recipients lived in rural or central cities; 2) even in metropolitan areas with excellent public transit systems, less than half of the jobs were accessible by transit; 3) the median price of a new car was equivalent to 25 weeks of salary for the average worker, and considerably more for the low-income worker; 4) at least 9 million households and 10 million Americans who were of driving age did not own cars; 5) 94 percent of welfare recipients did not own cars; 6) nearly 40 percent of workers with annual incomes below \$10,000 did not commute by car; 7) two million Americans

scheduled to have their Temporary Assistance to Needy Families grants terminated by 2002 would not be able to get to jobs they otherwise hold; 8) increasing transit options for low-income workers, especially those who were receiving or who had recently received welfare benefits, would increase the likelihood of those workers getting and keeping jobs; and 9) many residents in cities and rural areas would like to take advantage of mass transit to gain access to suburban employment opportunities.⁵⁵

The creation of the JARC was a partial response to the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWOA), which replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program with block grants to the states, known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). PRWOA imposed a five year, lifetime limit on welfare benefits on its recipients and contained a stipulation that adults must work after two years in order to receive welfare benefits. These requirements and limitations, therefore, made “access to job opportunities a crucial aspect of welfare reform.”⁵⁶ In fact, when Representative Danny Davis moved to amend the JARC legislation to increase annual funding from \$42 million to \$150 million, he made his policy arguments based on the welfare-to-work program.⁵⁷ Representative Davis argued that the JARC program would strengthen the welfare-to-work program and if members of the House were serious about welfare-to-work, they should be serious about the JARC program and fund it adequately.⁵⁸

Spatial Mismatch Hypothesis (SMH)

The findings that supported the creation of the JARC included a spatial mismatch component. For nearly four decades, many studies have been conducted to either support or dispute the theory of existing spatial mismatch between job growth centers and low-

income residential communities in metropolitan areas around the country that ultimately lead to a lack of economic opportunity in poor neighborhoods. As Thomas Sanchez asserts, “A major fact underlying the spatial mismatch hypothesis is the deconcentration of jobs from U.S. central cities.”⁵⁹ The spatial mismatch hypothesis (SMH) was first advanced in 1968 by Harvard economist John Kain, who examined the residential locations of African Americans in Detroit and Chicago and trends of employment opportunities in both regions. Based on the findings of his study, Kain argued that high unemployment rates of inner-city African Americans were partially attributable to job decentralization and the failure of public transit to connect inner-city residents with suburban job locations.⁶⁰ Kain thus concluded that spatial segregation drives black unemployment- or that there is a "spatial mismatch" between the unemployed black labor force and new job opportunities outside of the inner-city black neighborhoods.⁶¹

Subsequent research efforts on SMH have produced mixed results both supporting and rejecting the hypothesis that geographic separation between residential and employment locations of low-income inner city workers have a negative effect on their labor participation rates. These differing results may be a function of the different methods, data and assumptions that have been employed to analyze the problem.⁶² However, a number of comprehensive literature reviews of the spatial mismatch hypothesis that were produced in the 1990s revealed a relative consensus on the existence of a spatial mismatch and the validity of the spatial mismatch hypothesis.⁶³ For example, in 1991, Holzer reviewed twenty studies of the spatial mismatch hypothesis. Overall, he found eight studies that clearly described a spatial mismatch that negatively affected the black residents of inner-city neighborhoods. Five studies of the twenty studies did not

support the spatial mismatch hypothesis. Holzer made several conclusions based on his review: 1) population and manufacturing are declining in the cities; 2) residential segregation has been declining slowly for blacks; 3) black residents of the inner city have less access to employment than either blacks or whites in the suburbs and; 4) there seems to be a decline in earnings for blacks with job decentralization.⁶⁴ A more recent literature review was published by Ihlanfeldt and Sjoquist in 1998. They reviewed 28 spatial mismatch studies that appeared in the 1990s, and concluded that, although these studies often employed different data, different methods, and even different concepts of mismatch, there was overwhelming evidence that mismatch existed, at least in large metropolitan areas.⁶⁵ There are also researchers who have examined the patterns of spatial mismatch in particular metropolitan areas, including Atlanta, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Virtually all researchers concluded that there were dramatic separations of poor people from entry-level jobs in these metropolitan regions, and current public transportation options limited their ability to overcome their mobility problems.⁶⁶

Many urban researchers agree that transportation is not the only barrier low-income city residents face in obtaining and keeping a job. There are personal characteristics that pose employment challenges, such as the lack of job skills, job readiness, education, childcare and good information about job opportunities and hiring networks. There are structural barriers that cause employment difficulties as well, such as an inadequate and inequitable public transportation system, housing and job discrimination and housing affordability.⁶⁷ Although there are debates about whether structural barriers are more important than personal characteristics in terms of attaining

and maintaining employment, there is a consensus among policy experts that "transportation provides a more accessible policy lever."⁶⁸ Politically, transportation fixes are more easily achievable than, for example, eliminating housing discrimination, and practically, there are resources available to make policy changes in transportation and develop programs that could yield positive results.⁶⁹

Clearly, there is not a lack of spatial mismatch literature. However, there *is* a lack of research that specifically focuses on how labor participation is affected by increases in public transportation availability. This relative absence of research is significant given that policy experts and makers have a tendency to recommend improvements and increased expenditures of public transportation systems to address inner-city mobility problems. The JARC program is an example of such a recommendation.

Does public transportation represent an efficient means to overcome employment accessibility or mobility problems of central city workers? Although there is inadequate research addressing this policy question, there are a few studies that have attempted to measure the degree to which public transportation affects inner-city mobility. Three of these studies will be highlighted in this chapter. It is important to note that all three studies reviewed transportation systems that did not include any targeted programs that sought to address inner-city mobility problems.

Thomas Sanchez of the Center of Urban Studies at Portland State University attempted to examine whether transit is effectively linking the residential location of workers with job locations in Portland, Oregon and Atlanta, Georgia.⁷⁰ Sanchez compared labor participation rates for workers within walking distance of transit routes to labor participation rates of workers not within walking distance. Sanchez used Portland

and Atlanta as case study cities because he argued that they provided what could be "best case" scenarios for transit related studies. According to Sanchez, both cities provide high levels of transit service. In both cities, 77 to 86 percent of workers have good access to transit.

The analysis suggested that in general, transit access is potentially correlated with employment participation levels in Portland and Atlanta. The data analyzed in this study supported the hypothesis that if a lack of mobility or employment accessibility contributes to low labor participation rates, transit would at least provide a solution for a portion of low-income workers. Sanchez concluded that the results of his analysis partially supported policies that advocate for increased transit accessibility in addressing urban underemployment. Sanchez warned against concluding that public transportation can in itself overcome the job accessibility and mobility problems of urban workers and that the study results indicate a causal relationship between increased transit access and labor participation.

The second study was produced at the University of Wisconsin -Milwaukee Center for Economic Development, authored by Joel Rast, and was published in 2004.⁷¹ The study examined how well public transit in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Waukesha and Washington counties of Wisconsin provide low-income residents of the 4-county region with access to job opportunities. The study attempted to address two questions: 1) Is there a spatial mismatch between low-income residential neighborhoods and locations of job opportunities in the 4-county Milwaukee region? and 2) How well does public transportation provide low-income residents with access to job opportunities in the 4-county region?

The study confirmed the presence of a spatial mismatch between low-income residential communities and job opportunities in the Milwaukee region. Furthermore, low-income people who live in the Milwaukee region rely heavily on public transportation. While most low-income families are located within walking distance of bus stops, it appeared that public transit is only partially effective in connecting inner-city residents with job opportunities in the region. The study did find that 59.1 percent of businesses with strong hiring projections for entry-level workers are located within 1/4 mile of bus lines and 63.5 percent of businesses with strong hiring projections for entry-level workers are located within 1/2 mile of bus lines. However, these statistics overstate the percentage of prospective employers of low-income residents accessible by public transit since it did not take into account commute times. Rast argued that some portion of the businesses located within 1/4 mile of 1/2 mile of bus routes remain inaccessible to many low-income persons using public transit because commute times would be in excess of one hour both to and from work. The study estimated the commute times from two neighborhoods in Milwaukee to high-growth entry-level job locations that were accessible by public transit. The study found that less than 50 percent of the regions' entry-level jobs with strong hiring projections can be reached by residents of these neighborhoods in one hour or less.

In 2002, Evelyn Blumenburg and Paul Ong published a study that examined the relative access that welfare participants in Los Angeles have to employment opportunities.⁷² Blumenburg and Ong found that most of the welfare participants in Los Angeles do not face the typical "spatial mismatch" that is present in other metropolitan areas. Instead, the participants' access to employment varied dramatically depending on

their residential location and commute mode. The study discovered that welfare recipients living in job-rich neighborhoods can reach a fair number of jobs using public transit. However, for those who live in job-poor neighborhoods, a reliance on public transit significantly reduces their access to employment. Similar to the findings of the study of Milwaukee, although 44 percent of welfare recipients of Los Angeles have access to high levels of public transit (able to easily walk to a bus stop), they would have to sustain long commutes in order to reach their destinations.

Blumenburg and Ong concluded that policies that seek to address the transportation needs of welfare recipients should be targeted to reflect the characteristics of the neighborhoods in which the welfare recipients live. Therefore, public transit improvements should be made only in job-rich neighborhoods to enhance the already-effective transit systems. However, Blumenburg and Ong argued that in job-poor neighborhoods improved fixed-route transportation service is unlikely to substantially increase employment access for welfare participants. For job-poor neighborhoods, Blumenburg and Ong advocated for policies that would increase auto ownership and improve alternate forms of non-fixed route transportation services such as employer-sponsored vanpools, shuttles or paratransit.

JARC and Transportation Equity

While it is clear that the JARC program was created to address the perceived spatial mismatch between job growth centers in the suburbs and the residential locations of welfare recipients and low-income workers, it may not be obvious that the program promotes certain aspects of transportation equity and environmental justice. The previous chapter's discussion links transportation equity and environmental justice to social and

economic benefits made accessible by transportation, such as access to jobs, education, job training and other services. In focusing on connecting low-income people to jobs and activities related to their employment, the JARC program is facilitating the availability of social and economic benefits by communities and populations previously denied these opportunities.

This study of the Job Access and Reverse Commute program is an extension of the three studies highlighted above that examined whether the existing public transportation systems effectively linked inner-city workers with job opportunities in their respective regions. While the next chapter discusses what the JARC program has accomplished thus far, chapter four attempts to determine whether public transit systems that have received JARC funding to specifically address the mobility problem of welfare participants and low-income workers succeed in connecting low-income workers to employment locations. I agree with the studies and reports that contend that the JARC is successfully connecting low-income workers to job centers through transportation. In doing so, JARC promotes and institutionalizes the transportation equity component of connecting low-income people and people of color with social and economic benefits.

Chapter Three: JARC Accomplishments

There are two program objectives for the Job Access and Reverse Commute program: 1) to provide transportation services in urban, suburban and rural areas to assist the ability of welfare recipients and low-income individuals to access employment opportunities; and 2) to increase collaboration among the transportation providers, human service agencies, employers, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), states, and affected communities and individuals. The program also establishes a regional transportation planning approach to job access challenges, since only access to jobs and reverse commute projects derived from a Regional Job Access and Reverse Commute Transportation Plan are eligible.

As stated in the legislation, "The Secretary [of Transportation] may make access to jobs grants and reverse commute grants... to assist qualified entities in financing eligible projects,"⁷³ namely access to jobs projects and reverse commute projects. An access to jobs project is a project that relates to the development of transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment. Job access projects implement new transportation services or extend existing services to fill the gaps that exist in many areas between where welfare recipients and low-income persons live and employment opportunities. A reverse commute project is a project that relates to the development of transportation services designed to transport residents of urban areas, urbanized areas, and areas other than urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities. Reverse commute grants may be allocated for: 1) subsidizing the costs of associated with adding

reverse commute bus, train, carpool, van routes, or service from urban areas, urbanized areas, and areas other than urbanized areas, to suburban workplaces; 2) subsidizing the purchase or lease by a nonprofit organization or public agency of a van or bus dedicated to shuttling employees from their residences to a suburban workplace; or 3) otherwise facilitate the provision of mass transportation services to suburban employment opportunities.

In seeking to forge successful collaborations at the regional level among a variety of key players and stakeholders, the JARC grant program does not take the traditional one-size-fits-all transportation planning approach. The JARC program institutionalizes this approach in three ways. First, in order for access to jobs and reverse commute projects to be eligible for JARC funding, they must be derived from an established Regional Job Access and Reverse Commute Transportation Plan. The planning process must be collaborated among existing transportation service providers, state or local agencies that administer TANF and Welfare-to-Work programs, public housing agencies, the community to be served and other area stakeholders. Second, although local agencies and authorities, non-profit organizations, state entities, and regional transit authorities are eligible applicants, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and chief executive officers of states are granted the power to select the applicants. In urbanized areas with a population of 200,000 or more, MPOs select the applicants while in small urbanized areas under a population of 200,000 and non-urbanized rural areas, the states select the applicants. Finally, a 50 percent non-Department of Transportation match is required for all projects. Although other federal funds eligible for transportation programs can be used as part of the match, this provides an opportunity for the applicants to coordinate with

other agencies and authorities to secure funding for the program. In fact, this aspect of securing financial commitments by other agencies and authorities is explicated in JARC's award criteria and therefore considered by the Federal Transit Authority in determining the merit of each application. The extent to which an applicant demonstrates a collaborative planning process is also included in the program's award criteria.

TEA-21 authorized up to \$750 million from FY 1999 through FY 2003 for the Access to Jobs program. While TEA-21 authorized and appropriated \$150 million annually for the JARC program, \$50 million was guaranteed for FY 1999, \$75 million for FY 2000, \$100 million for FY 2001, and \$125 million for FY 2002. No more than \$10 million per year of the total funds is allowed to be allocated for reverse commute activities. Sixty percent of each year's fiscal funding is allocated to urbanized areas with populations of at least 200,000. The remaining 40 percent is divided evenly between urbanized areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000 and non-urbanized rural, areas with populations below 50,000.

As of 2002, the Department of Transportation had awarded over \$355 million for 352 job access and reverse commute grants in 42 states in the District of Columbia in all ten Federal Transit Administration regions.⁷⁴ Of these funds, 60 percent were obligated for fixed route services, 34 percent for demand response services, 3 percent for ridesharing, and 3 percent for information services.⁷⁵ Furthermore, sixty-two percent of the JARC funds were awarded to major urban areas. Non-urbanized rural areas received 23.6 percent of the funds, and medium urban areas received 13.8 percent.⁷⁶

JARC Controversy

The JARC program has not been without its fair share of controversy. One in particular centers on the way in which the grantees are selected. For FY 1999, all JARC grantees were competitively selected. However, while Congress also provided \$75 million for the program for FY 2000, the conference report that accompanied the Department of Transportation's appropriations act directed \$49.6 million of the \$75 million to be distributed to certain states, localities, and organizations.⁷⁷ For FY 2000, the Department of Transportation solicited proposals and competitively awarded about \$29.6 million, which included \$25.4 million provided by the Congress for FY 2000 and about \$4.2 million carried over from FY 1999. For FY 2001, Congress provided \$100 million for the JARC program. Once again, the conference report that accompanied the appropriations act directed the distribution of a certain amount- this time, about \$75 million- to identified states, localities, and other organizations. The Federal Transit Administration allocated the remaining \$25 million to proposals submitted in FY 2000 under the competitive process that were not funded or only partially funded in that year. Therefore, the FTA did not solicit any proposals for competitive funding in FY 2001.⁷⁸

In a December 2001 report to Congress, the General Accounting Office argued that there were detrimental effects to the noncompetitive selection of JARC grantees. The GAO pointed out that the administration of JARC funding to Congressional designations were not legally found. According to the GAO report, the conference reports that accompanied the appropriations acts “did not impose legally binding requirements and did not provide FTA with a legal basis to deviate from the requirements of selection of Job Access grantees in fiscal years 2000 and 2001.”⁷⁹ GAO asserted that since only \$50 million of the available \$175 million were available for competitive grants, FTA’s

capacity to "to fund projects that might have emerged from this process as the most promising in meeting the program's objectives" was compromised.⁸⁰ Furthermore, according to FTA program officials and grantees, the decrease in funding for competitively selected projects during fiscal years 2000 and 2001 meant that about one-fifth of the FY 1999 Job Access projects did not receive continued funding.⁸¹

The Department of Transportation disagreed with GAO's assertion that it did not competitively select grantees in fiscal years 2000 and 2001 by allocating funding to Congressional designations. Federal Transit Administration officials contended that the agency determined that these projects met the program's basic requirements and its selection criteria for competitively awarded grants.⁸² The Department of Transportation also stressed that the legislative language of competitively selected projects was not stringent.

Subsequently after GAO's report, in the FY 2003 Supplemental Appropriations Act (H.R. 4775), signed into law on August 2, 2002, Congress authorized and instructed FTA to fund all projects designated in the report language upon receipt of an application. A number of applications for projects in congressionally-designated areas were submitted in FY 2002 and FTA has obligated \$13 million for those projects.⁸³ Therefore, since 2000, the FTA has increasingly awarded JARC grants to noncompetitive applicants that were designated by Congress: in FY 2000 the Congress earmarked approximately 66 percent of the funds for specific projects; in FY 2001, about 75 percent.⁸⁴ Finally, for fiscal years 2003 and 2004, all grantees were designated by Congress through appropriations legislation.⁸⁵

Gregory Brown of the FTA Office of Program Management, which oversees the

implementation of the JARC program, expresses concern about the way in which the Congressional designations may have compromised the integrity of the program.⁸⁶ With the Congressional designations, it is more difficult to ensure that all JARC funding are directed towards assisting low-income people. Currently, as JARC and TEA-21 is up for renewal, the FTA has submitted a proposal to Congress that would reinstate the competitive grant selection process at the state level.⁸⁷

Following this discussion of JARC objectives and empirical accomplishments, the next chapter examines whether the JARC has fulfilled its goals of connecting welfare participants and low-income individuals to jobs via transportation and forging successful collaboration at the local level. Is the JARC a successful welfare-to-work program? In the next chapter, I intend to argue and illustrate that JARC does successfully connects welfare and low-income individuals to job opportunities. Furthermore, in doing so, the JARC program addresses the transportation equity component of providing access to social and economic benefits through transportation. Chapter five is a further discussion about whether the program promotes and institutionalizes other key aspects of transportation equity.

Chapter Four: JARC Evaluation

There is a relative consensus among an array of evaluations conducted on the effectiveness and integrity of the Job Access and Reverse Commute program; that is, JARC is successfully meeting its two goals of connecting welfare recipients and low-income people to jobs and forging collaboration among a variety of agencies and organizations. A considerable number of evaluations and assessments of the program have been administered and by diversified entities. However, none of the reported findings are qualified to generalize the program. Nevertheless, thus far, the evaluations indicate the program's success in meeting its goals. In meeting its goal of connecting people to work, JARC helps create more just and equitable transportation systems. However, does the JARC program address issues of transportation *inequity* and promote transportation equity? In responding to spatial mismatch through policy, does the JARC program address the social and economic aspects of transportation equity?

Evaluations of the Job Access and Reverse Commute program are legally mandated. As required by TEA-21, the Comptroller General of the United States (or, the United States General Accounting Office) conducts a study to evaluate the grant program every six months and submits a report to both the House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. Additionally, also by law, the Department of Transportation is only required to conduct an evaluation and submit a report to the same House and Senate Committees no later than two years after the date of the enactment of the Act.⁸⁸ The majority of evaluations of the Job Access and Reverse Commute program has been conducted by the General Accounting Office, which is mainly responsible for assessing

the integrity of the program.⁸⁹ The Department of Transportation sponsored three assessments⁹⁰ of the JARC program and submitted a report to Congress in October of 2002. All of these evaluations and assessments form the basis of this report's comprehensive evaluation of the JARC program.

Connecting People to Jobs

The number of new employment sites reached by JARC services constitutes one measure the Federal Transit Administration has substantially relied on in assessing whether the Job Access and Reverse Commute program is connecting people to jobs. The FTA requires JARC grantees to report the number of new employment sites reached by their projects. A new employment site is defined as a new transit stop directly reaching or within 1/4 mile of an employer or set of employers not previously served by public transportation service. These types of employment sites were not previously reached geographically or during time periods not previously covered by transit such as late at night or on weekends. According to the FTA, based on an analysis of 56 grant reports describing grantee performance through FY 2001, a total of 7,453 new employment sites were reached by JARC services.⁹¹ Two-thirds of these new sites made employment locations available that otherwise could not be reached previously by public transportation. Furthermore, over one-third (34.8 percent) of these new sites made employment options possible during a previously unavailable time period. Based on these estimates, the FTA estimated that approximately 17,750 new employment sites were made accessible through programs funded by JARC in FY 2001.⁹² The FTA also estimated that of the approximately 17,750 new employment sites, 11,750 were new location-sensitive employment sites (locations that were not served by public

transportation prior to initiation of a JARC-funded service) and 6,000 were new time-sensitive employment sites (sites not serviced during certain times of the day).⁹³ If the number of new employment sites reached by JARC services is a sufficient measure of the success of the JARC program in connecting people to work, then the JARC program is meeting its goal of getting people to work via transportation.

However, the number of new employment sites may not be sufficient in measuring JARC's performance. In 2002, the General Accounting Office warned that "using a methodology that is based on this measure would yield limited information because it only partially addresses the program's goal of providing transportation to low-income people."⁹⁴ Furthermore, this measure also "does not address other program goals and criteria."⁹⁵ In its report to Congress in October of 2002, the FTA and DOT did include other performance measures such as the number of riders using JARC services to access jobs and employment-related activities and user characteristics and impacts. Based on 63 grant reports describing grantee performance through FY 2001, JARC services carried 3.6 million riders. According to 41 grant reports describing grantee performance through FY 2001, 462,211 low-income residents and welfare clients received new access to transportation services.

In 2002, the University of Illinois at Chicago administered a survey to study the effects of the JARC programs on its users and determine the importance of the services to them.⁹⁶ The University of Illinois research team conducted 23 site visits where JARC-funded programs were in operation and selected at least one representative site from each of the ten FTA regions. When it comes to connecting people to work, the survey reported that: 1) JARC-funded services are improving the work opportunities of low-income

individuals; 2) JARC-funded transit services reach the target audience; 3) JARC-funded services cater to mobility-limited individuals with no access to vehicles or drivers licenses or both; 4) JARC-funded services are perceived as being very important by riders; and 5) JARC-funded services are leading to either time or cost savings (or both) to riders.

The survey found that JARC services are improving the work opportunities of individuals by connecting them to jobs via transportation, particularly those who are low-income, the target population of the JARC program. Sixty-four percent of the survey respondents indicated that they either started or would end their trip at work. Of these, 12 percent used the JARC service to connect from one job to another. Therefore, JARC services are also being used for work-to-work trips. The survey also found that 27 percent of the respondents did not work before using the service. An additional 30 percent worked but earned less than what they currently were earning. Almost 60 percent of the respondents indicated that they could not make the trip without the service. Of all work-bound travelers, 60 percent could not access their job; 68 percent could not access job interviews or training facilities. Sixty-eight percent of all respondents earned less than \$9.00 per hour. Thirty-one percent have received some form of public assistance in the last 5 years and forty-four percent were either part-time, unemployed but looking for work, or unemployed and not looking for work. Fifty-six percent reported employee tenure of less than a year, which is representative of employee tenure of lower-paid workers in the service industries. The survey's findings also indicated that a majority of JARC service users were transit-dependent and mobility-limited, as 84 percent of the respondents did not own a vehicle and 64 percent did not possess a driver's license.

The survey also found that JARC-funded services are perceived as very important by the riders. A majority of respondents- 93 percent- found the service was either “very important” or “important.” Sixty-six percent said they would not be able to access their destination without the provided service. Additionally, the JARC services are viewed as cost or time efficient. Seventy-two percent of riders who used to travel to their destination via another mode of transportation found that they either saved time or incurred about the same travel time using the JARC-funded service to travel to the same destination.

Even in rural areas, where providing rural transit has its particular challenges and difficulties (such as long distances and light population densities that present temporal, spatial and financial challenges), JARC projects have also been able to connect low-income people to jobs. The FTA also issued a report in December of 2002 that documented eight Job Access and Reverse Commute projects in rural areas that received funding in FY 1999.⁹⁷ The report found that JARC worked well for their clients, allowing participants to access better on-the-job training, leading to higher employment rates and higher-paying jobs. Several grantees even cited reduced welfare rolls.

Collaboration at the Local Level

According to the FTA, the key to successful JARC projects is “collaboration among multiple public and private partners.”⁹⁸ Furthermore, as Nancy Jakowitsch, a former Surface Transportation Policy Project staff member, and Michelle Ernst assert, “Transportation justice also depends on collaborative decision-making between local elected officials, transportation beauracracies, related agencies, community stakeholders, and the private sector.”⁹⁹ Increased collaboration among transportation providers, human

service agencies, employers, metropolitan planning organizations, states and affected communities and individuals is one of the two major goals of the JARC program. The JARC grant program rewards collaboration at the local level in any of the planning, financing and operation of service stages.

The General Accounting Office asserts that the Job Access and Reverse Commute program successfully met its goal of encouraging collaboration among transportation, human service, and other community-based agencies in Job Access service design, implementation, and financing.¹⁰⁰ Based on a survey of all applicants for the 194 projects selected for the Job Access and Reverse Commute program in fiscal year 1999 of which 89 percent of the grantees responded, 23 percent of the respondents agreed that the JARC program improved coordination among different organizations involved in getting people to work.¹⁰¹ According to the GAO survey of grantees selected in fiscal years 1999 and 2000, almost 80 percent of the 152 grantees that responded indicated that the JARC program increased cooperation with other transit agencies, and 88 percent indicated that the program increased cooperation with human service agencies. Additionally, out of the nine transportation and welfare reform experts the GAO consulted, eight of them stated that this significant increase in collaboration at the grantee level was the most successful result of the JARC program.¹⁰² Particularly in rural area grantees, where it is relatively easy for them to collaborate since virtually all of the grantees and their partners indicated they had already worked together on previous projects, grantees reported that JARC created even more communication among partners about what more could be done to successfully place people into jobs.¹⁰³

Perhaps the success and strength of these collaborations are best measured by the sustainability of the JARC projects. The General Accounting Office has paid particular attention to, and subsequently questioned, the sustainability of JARC-funded projects. In a survey of JARC grantees selected in fiscal years 1999 and 2000, 41 percent of the respondents indicated that they would likely terminate or decrease services, while 47 percent were uncertain about their ability to continue those services.¹⁰⁴ Only 12 percent of the respondents indicated that they could continue their services after the end of program funding. While there are multiple difficulties associated with securing finances for transportation projects, it is worth to note the sustainability of the JARC projects in order to comprehensively evaluate whether the JARC program is successfully meeting its goal of forging collaboration among key players and stakeholders.

The Job Access and Reverse Commute program may be successful in meeting its two goals of connecting people to job through transportation and forging collaboration among key players in addressing the issue of transportation mobility and job access. However, does the JARC program address issues of transportation *inequity* and promote transportation equity? In responding to spatial mismatch through policy, does the JARC program address the social and economic aspects of transportation equity? Does it institutionalize meaningful community involvement? Does it encourage potential applicants to consider the dimension of environmental and health effects? Is the JARC program a transportation equity program?

Chapter Five: Models for Community Involvement and Minimizing Public Health and Environmental Effects

In successfully connecting welfare participants and low-income individuals to job opportunities, the Job Access and Reverse Commute program promotes and institutionalizes one key aspect of transportation equity, but not all. The JARC program is a transportation equity program in that it directly responds to the social and economic benefits issue of spatial mismatch between job growth centers and low-income residential communities. However, JARC does not institutionalize in its program two other key aspects of transportation equity discussed in chapter one: meaningful community involvement and minimization of public health and environmental effects. While JARC does not entirely ignore these important components of transportation equity (as this chapter will illustrate), in the next chapter, I will argue the ways in which these elements could be strengthened and further promoted by the program. This chapter includes profiles of organizations and agencies that considered and incorporated either meaningful community involvement or public health and environmental impact analysis into their transportation projects. These organizations offer testimony to the possible ways in which the JARC program could develop more just and equitable transportation options for the transit-dependent.

The JARC program does not promote and institutionalize the transportation equity elements of meaningful community involvement and public health and minimization of environmental impacts, but it also does not completely disregard them. Indeed, the program encourages potential grantees to incorporate community involvement in their transportation projects and rewards those that do. When the FTA solicited JARC grant

applications for FY 1999, it listed “consultation with the community to be served” as part of the broader criterion of “Coordinated Human Services/Transportation Planning Process and Regional Job Access and Reverse Commute Transportation Plan.”¹⁰⁵ While an application may be awarded up to 25 points for the larger criterion, consultation with the community is not required. However, Sue Masselink from the FTA Office of Program Managements assures that for the during FY 1999 selection process, the FTA examined the applications very closely to ensure that a community involvement process is in place.¹⁰⁶ In fact, the factor of “real partnership at the community level” was “heavily weighted.”¹⁰⁷ Masselink acknowledges that since Congress designated all JARC funding for the past three years, FTA’s “control of community involvement” has been compromised. Nevertheless, the FTA is responsible for working with Congressionally-designated grantees to create transportation projects that qualify as JARC projects.¹⁰⁸

Similarly, the JARC program does not require its funded projects to incorporate the dimension of mitigating environmental and public health effects. One may argue that the consideration of environmental and public health effects may be loosely interpreted as “innovative methods and techniques,” which was part of a larger criterion that was awarded up to ten bonus points for the FY 1999 selection process. However, these bonus points were removed from the grant selection process in FY 2000.

Although the JARC program does not require these elements, we find examples of organizations and agencies, both JARC grantees and non-JARC grantees, that have incorporated them into their transportation projects and campaigns. The next section takes a closer look at two JARC-funded agencies and organizations that successfully involved the community in their transportation projects. Furthermore, we will also

consider the anti-diesel efforts¹⁰⁹ of Los Angeles' Bus Riders Union, the largest multi-racial transportation group in the United States. The BRU's campaigns for transportation equity for LA's transit-dependent centered on their demand for environmentally sound and sustainable public transportation. It must be acknowledged that the following "models" are successful within their specific contexts; there is no such thing as a viable one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to transportation policy. However, the following organizations and agencies may offer valuable lessons about transportation equity.

Meaningful Community Involvement Models

Even though the JARC program does not require meaningful community involvement as part of its eligibility requirements for JARC grants, there are several agencies and organizations that value this transportation equity aspect and have included it as part of their JARC project. The Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) and Interchurch Coalition for Action, Reconciliation and Empowerment (ICARE) are examples of such organizations. While CARTA is a transit agency and ICARE is a nonprofit organizing coalition, their divergent methods in involving the community speak to the different ways in which community and public involvement and participation can take form.

Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA)

The Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) received Job Access and Reverse Commute program grants of \$500,000 each for fiscal years 1999, 2000 and 2002 to expand transit options for low-income people with jobs in the rural and urban parts of Hamilton County, Tennessee.¹¹⁰ CARTA sought to fill a number of transportation gaps that were identified in a regional study on transportation needs. With

the JARC funds, CARTA was able to expand hours and days of operation on multiple fixed-route bus routes, add new stops to several routes in several communities, purchase vehicles for a new vanpool service, and contract demand-response van services for daycare facilities for children, among other accomplishments.¹¹¹ As of 2001, these new services enabled CARTA to: 1) create 271 new stops within ¼ mile of employment sites during times not previously served, such as late night and evening; 2) reach more than 2,000 employers and 20,000 entry-level jobs; 3) add 1,400 new stops within ¼ mile of residences of welfare recipients; and 5) reach 65 childcare facilities with capacity for 2,200 children within ¼ mile of new stops.¹¹²

CARTA relied heavily on local community residents to inform their planning process for the JARC grant application. In 1997, prompted by an awareness of the disparity in transportation services in low-income communities, CARTA and the Chattanooga Metropolitan Planning Organization hired consultants to study transportation models that focused on getting low-income people to work.¹¹³ CARTA and the Chattanooga MPO supplemented that study with community research. CARTA purchased a Geographic Information System (GIS) that allowed them to collect data and cross-check where low-income workers lived, where jobs existed and where transportation services were being provided. CARTA's community research also incorporated a two-fold process that involved focus groups and one-on-one meetings.¹¹⁴ The focus groups, which specifically targeted the populations to be served by new transportation services, allowed for input from neighborhood groups, community groups and general citizens. At these neighborhood meetings, local residents proposed new routes and stops that would better allow them to access service and jobs. CARTA also

conducted “stakeholder meetings” during which CARTA officials met one-on-one with community leaders to understand their transportation priorities.

CARTA Planning Director Bob Nugent explains that community involvement is essential to transportation planning because it is nonsensical to “throw service at things.”¹¹⁵ It is more reasonable is to be informed by the public and match regional planning to the real world. CARTA continues to work with the community in several ways. One is through their survey work, which allows for input from the general population. The second is through the transportation coordination group, which emerged out of the above-mentioned collaboration effort among CARTA, the Chattanooga Metropolitan Planning Organization and rural transportation agencies. The transportation coordination group is a coalition of state, county and local service providers that meets monthly. These meetings are open to the public and provide an avenue through which the public can voice their concerns about their transportation needs.

Interchurch Coalition for Action, Reconciliation and Empowerment (ICARE)

The JARC application process for the Interchurch Coalition for Action, Reconciliation and Empowerment (ICARE) began in 1998, two years before it applied for JARC funding. ICARE began a listening process that included extensive meetings with their constituents, who were congregation members of their 35 member churches, to determine what their most pressing issues were.¹¹⁶ Overwhelmingly, the constituents cited transportation and lack of access to jobs in the Jacksonville, Florida area as their main concerns. Following these meetings, ICARE formed a committee to conduct research on the various alternatives and solutions available and thus began their long-term process for creating alternatives for getting low-income workers to jobs.

ICARE continued to involve community members as they began planning and coordinating for transportation projects. After initial discussions with Jacksonville's MPO, the Jacksonville Transit Authority, and WorkSource, the local investment board, ICARE hosted a public meeting of approximately 700 community members at which they publicly asked representatives from the Jacksonville Transit Authority and the Jacksonville MPO to work with ICARE to address their communities' transportation needs. At this 1999 meeting, ICARE was able to convince the transit authority and the MPO that increasing ridership on public transportation was a priority. Both entities agreed to expand transportation for the Jacksonville community.

By the time ICARE applied for a JARC grant, the Jacksonville Transit Authority was already operating a direct bus line from the north to the south of the city that cut the commute time for riders on this route in half. Ridership along this new route increased by 300 additional people. ICARE coordinated the JARC grant application process with WorkSource, Jacksonville MPO, Goodwill Industries, Inc., the local housing authority, and other groups interested in access to jobs. WorkSource and the Jacksonville MPO provided the matching funds while the other groups provided technical input. ICARE was able to secure \$1 million for the Jacksonville area.

The JARC grant was used to rerouting other bus lines to maximize ridership and access to jobs. Additionally, the grant was used to create ChoiceRide, a vanpool shuttle service. Finally, grant funds provided for contracts with van companies to offer shuttle services to and from the airport, which is critical in meeting employees' needs. The van shuttle service provided a low-cost and cost-effective option for the workers.

Public Health and Environmental Effects

Already people of color and low-income people are disproportionately exposed to high levels of emissions from diesel buses. Adding new transportation options may exacerbate those conditions. An equitable transportation system and an environmentally sound and sustainable system are not mutually exclusive. Transportation equity advocates do not necessarily need to choose either service or public health. The organizing work and victories of the Bus Riders Union of Los Angeles illustrate the falsity of that choice.

Bus Riders Union (BRU)

In its fight for a first-class mass transit system for the entire population of Los Angeles, the Bus Riders Union (BRU) centers its organizing campaigns on the public health and environmental concerns of those who are already the most impacted by LA's air contaminants, namely, poor and working-class people and people of color. As previously discussed, economically disadvantaged communities and communities of color are disproportionately affected by public health problems that stem from unhealthy auto-produced air quality.¹¹⁷ Los Angeles residents, especially inner-city residents, who are overwhelmingly Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific Islander, are exposed to a toxic soup of airborne chemicals. This poor air quality is connected to three interrelated, transportation-based problems of high levels of gasoline-based emissions from autos, high levels of diesel-based emissions from trucks and buses and industrial emissions from factories and businesses.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, those who are the most impacted by the transportation-produced pollution are also more likely to be transit-dependent. Los Angeles County's transit-dependent are overwhelmingly poor people of color; 81 percent of the 500,000 monthly bus riders are overwhelmingly Latino, African American, Asian Pacific Islander and Native American and 60 percent of bus riders have family incomes

under \$15,000.¹¹⁹ Therefore, when the BRU organizes for more buses for LA's transit-dependent, it is not content with additional diesel buses that would put the health of LA's residents at further risk.

The Bus Riders Union's campaign for 370 clean fuel Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses in 2000 is indicative of the organization's environmental principles. In May of 2000, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) board was expected to vote to purchase 370 diesel buses.¹²⁰ The BRU refused to accept any diesel buses and campaigned against the proposal. It resisted the Sophie's choice between mobility and public health and framed the public debate as a life and death battle. The day before the MTA board was to vote on the proposal, the BRU held a press conference that declared that it would sue the MTA over violations of the 14th Amendment, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Clean Air Act and the California Environmental Quality Act.¹²¹ On May, 26, 200, the BRU successfully forced the MTA board to purchase 370 clean fuel Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses.¹²²

The BRU's Clean Air, Clean Lungs, Clean Buses campaign is three-fold. The campaign aims to dramatically reduce air toxins and greenhouse gas emissions from autos by pressuring automakers to dramatically reduce production of pick-ups and SUVs. The campaign also seeks to reduce overall auto use in Los Angeles by 50 percent, from 8 million to 4 million. Under this endeavor, the BRU's goals are to double the MTA bus fleet from 2300 buses to 4600 non-diesel buses, create bus-only lanes on LA freeways and key LA surface streets that prohibit auto use and design "auto-free zones" that are prohibited for auto use and only accessible to pedestrians, wheelchairs, bicycles, and

public transportation. Finally, the campaign will lead a widespread trilingual public health education campaign among the 400,000 daily LA County bus riders.¹²³

Although the Bus Riders Union has been a strong proponent of clean fuel buses in Los Angeles, they warn that they are “careful about advocating new technologies before they are fully viable, especially in terms of long-term costly purchases.”¹²⁴ The BRU advocates for clean fuel Compressed Natural Gas buses for the reasons that it burns better and is a more desirable choice for public health than diesel and even “clean diesel.” However, the BRU also recognizes that clean fuel CNG is not necessarily better for global warming or indigenous communities where the contaminants of clean fuel are deposited.¹²⁵ The organization recognizes that while clean fuel CNG is advancement from diesel, it is not “the end all be all” energy source for public transportation.

The BRU recognizes that its demand for an affordable and efficient public transportation system must not exacerbate the already existing poor environmental conditions experienced by the transit-dependent. For the BRU, an equitable transportation system and an environmentally sound and sustainable system are not mutually exclusive. The BRU recognizes that reducing the number of auto vehicles on the road may significantly help mitigate air pollution, and that public transit has a role to play in reducing the overall number of auto vehicles. However, the BRU considers the environmental and health effects of public transit vehicles themselves.

CARTA, ICARE and the Bus Riders Union offer valuable lessons of transportation equity that may be applicable for other organizations and agencies that are undertaking the task of implementing equitable systems of mass transit. CARTA and ICARE demonstrate that it is both possible and often fitting to have a process in which

those who are to be served have a say in planning those services. The Bus Riders Union reminds us that we must consider the environmental and public health implications of the policies we are advocating. These organizations and agencies call attention to the fact that transportation equity is not one-dimensional. Advocates for transportation equity must strive to incorporate all of its principles. The next chapter concludes this report with policy recommendations for the Job Access and Reverse Commute program that are informed by these model organizations and agencies. I argue that the JARC program must institutionalize more aspects of transportation equity, particularly those of meaningful community involvement and environmental and public health impacts.

Chapter Six: Policy Recommendations

In summary, both historically and in the present, transportation systems in the United States have not been created equal. Transportation policies in the United States have always favored highways over mass transit, whites over people of color, middle class over the poor and working class, and suburbia over the urban core. Transportation equity is defined as “fairness in mobility and accessibility levels across race, class, gender, and disability. The ultimate objective of transportation equity is to provide equal access to social and economic opportunity by providing equitable levels of access to all places.”¹²⁶ A national transportation equity agenda must, therefore, pay particular attention to those traditionally disenfranchised and disempowered by transportation.

Furthermore, transportation equity, based on the principles of environmental justice, calls for: 1) the prevention of the denial of social and economic benefits by people of color or low-income populations; 2) full and fair participation in the decision-making process by all those potentially affected by transportation policies; and 3) a considerable effort to avoid, minimize and mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on populations of color and low-income populations.

In seeking to promote greater transportation equity, the Job Access and Reverse Commute program successfully meets its two goals of connecting welfare recipients and low-income people to job opportunities and forging collaboration among a variety of agencies and organizations. In effectively connecting people to jobs and directly addressing spatial mismatch between job growth centers and low-income residential communities, the Job Access and Reverse Commute program promotes and

institutionalizes one key aspect of transportation equity- that is, preventing the denial of social and economic benefits for people of color or low-income populations. However, the JARC program does not institutionalize two other key aspects of transportation equity discussed in chapter one: meaningful community involvement and minimization of public health and environmental effects.

There are ways in which these elements of transportation equity could be further promoted by the Job Access and Reverse Commute program. For the purpose of institutionalizing and strengthening meaningful community involvement and mitigation of public health and environmental impacts within the JARC program, I recommend the following:

1. Earmarking:

As previously discussed, since 2000, the FTA has increasingly awarded Job Access and Reverse Commute grants to noncompetitive applicants that were designated by Congress. In FY 2000 the Congress earmarked approximately 66 percent of funds for specific projects. In FY 2001, Congress earmarked about 75 percent.¹²⁷ Finally, for fiscal years 2003 and 2004, all grantees were designated by Congress through appropriations legislation.¹²⁸ The Transportation Equity Network argues that the danger in congressional earmarking is that it may result in “less public involvement in the planning process. Groups with political clout are guaranteed funding without having submitted JARC applications that require extensive community collaboration, and often receive JARC funding without a demonstrated need for these funds.”¹²⁹

In order to ensure community involvement and maintain the integrity of the JARC program, Congressional earmarking must be limited, and the competitive selection

process must be reinstated in some form. The Transportation Equity Network advocates eliminating earmarking program and requiring the Federal Transit Administration to rate projects based on clear criteria and submit recommendations on funding to Congress prior to appropriations decisions. Because TEA-21 (and therefore the JARC program) is currently up for reauthorization, the Federal Transit Administration submitted a proposal to Congress that recommends reinstating the competitive selection process at the state level.¹³⁰ Each state would be allocated a predetermined amount of JARC funding, and it would also have the authority to select projects for JARC funding.

Whatever form the competitive selection process takes, it must not compromise the integrity of the JARC program and its public involvement element. Congress and the Federal Transit Administration must commit to using JARC grants to only fund projects that qualify as JARC projects as outlined in TEA-21 legislation. To do so otherwise is to misuse and misappropriate JARC funds.

2. Community Involvement:

As studies have shown, JARC projects are especially successful in meeting its eligibility requirements (see chapter four). I propose that meaningful community involvement should be made an eligibility criterion for JARC projects. It cannot be stressed enough that it is important for the communities that are most impacted by transportation policies to have decision-making power in determining what those policies should be. The danger of NOT incorporating meaningful community involvement into transportation planning and policies is evident in our unequal public transportation systems. On the other hand, there are many benefits that are associated with and result from a strong commitment to community involvement, as illustrated in this study. In

matching their transportation planning to the realities of the “real world,” both CARTA and ICARE were able to successfully provide efficient and affordable service for their low-income and transit-dependent constituents.

The public and potentially impacted communities should be consulted at least during the planning stages of a JARC proposal. This consultation with the public and community should be made an eligibility criterion for JARC proposals. Promoting meaningful community involvement in transportation planning, therefore, should be an additional goal of the JARC program.

3. Mitigation of Public Health and Environmental Impacts

Although the Bus Riders Union and WE ACT establish for us the importance of anti-diesel work, I do not recommend institutionalizing an anti-diesel component as an eligibility criterion for the JARC program. I do recommend rewarding projects that undertake initiatives and efforts to minimize and mitigate potential public health and environmental pollution that stem from additional transportation services. The JARC program must also understand that diesel alternatives- and many other environmentally-sustainable options- are often more expensive. Therefore, the JARC program must be committed to funding these types of projects and not reject or penalize proposals that incorporate environmentally-sustainable alternatives on the basis that they are more expensive.

Indeed, overall funding for the Job Access and Reverse Commute program must be increased in order to adequately fund environmentally-sustainable efforts. Currently, as TEA-21 is up for reauthorization in Congress, the Transportation Equity Network is actively advocating for an increase in funding for public transportation to equitably

address the needs of all people, particularly the transit-dependent. The current House bill, H.R. 3550 would fund the JARC program at more than \$1 billion over six years, an increase of more than \$255 million.¹³¹

Conclusion

Currently, the continuation of the Job Access and Reverse Commute program is contingent upon the reauthorization of TEA-21. I strongly argue for the continuation of the JARC program. Studies and evaluations have shown that the program has been successful in meeting the needs of welfare recipients and those who are low-income and/or transit-dependent. The JARC program breaks the mold of traditional transportation policies by addressing and responding to the needs of those conventionally neglected by transportation policymakers. The JARC program is a transportation equity program in that it directly responds to the social and economic benefits issue of spatial mismatch between job growth centers and low-income residential communities. Furthermore, there are ways to strengthen and incorporate more elements of transportation equity into the JARC program: 1) JARC projects must be competitively selected; 2) Community consultation must be required at least during the planning stages of a JARC proposal; 3) The JARC program must be committed to fund environmentally-sustainable transportation options; and 4) Increase the overall budget of the JARC program. The JARC program is a worthy program that must be continued in order to enable local stakeholders and players to meet the needs of the transit-dependent.

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Appendix 1 JARC Legislation

PUBLIC LAW 105-178 [H.R. 2400]

JUN. 09, 1998

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

105 P.L. 178; 112 Stat. 107; 1998 Enacted H.R. 2400; 105 Enacted H.R. 2400

[*3037] Sec. 3037. <49 USC 5309 note> JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE GRANTS.

(a) Findings.--Congress finds that--

(1) two-thirds of all new jobs are in the suburbs, whereas three-quarters of welfare recipients live in rural areas or central cities;

(2) even in metropolitan areas with excellent public transit systems, less than half of the jobs are accessible by transit;

(3) in 1991, the median price of a new car was equivalent to 25 weeks of salary for the average worker, and considerably more for the low-income worker;

(4) not less than 9,000,000 households and 10,000,000 Americans of driving age, most of whom are low-income workers, do not own cars;

(5) 94 percent of welfare recipients do not own cars;

(6) nearly 40 percent of workers with annual incomes below \$ 10,000 do not commute by car;

(7) many of the 2,000,000 Americans who will have their Temporary Assistance to

Needy Families grants (under the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)) terminated by the year 2002 will be unable to get to jobs they could otherwise hold;

(8) increasing the transit options for low-income workers, especially those who are receiving or who have recently received ^{***388} welfare benefits, will increase the likelihood of those workers getting and keeping jobs; and

(9) many residents of cities and rural areas would like to take advantage of mass transit to gain access to suburban employment opportunities.

(b) Definitions.--In this section, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) Eligible low-income individual.-- The term "eligible low-income individual" means an individual whose family income is at or below 150 percent of the poverty line (as that term is defined in section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)), including any revision required by that section) for a family of the size involved.

(2) Eligible project and related terms.----

(A) In general.--The term "eligible project" means an access to jobs project or a reverse commute project.

(B) Access to jobs project.--The term "access to jobs project" means a project relating to the development of transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment. The Secretary may make access to jobs grants for--

(i) capital projects and to finance operating costs of equipment, facilities, and associated capital maintenance items related to providing access to jobs under this section;

(ii) promoting the use of transit by workers with nontraditional work schedules;

(iii) promoting the use by appropriate agencies of transit vouchers for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals under specific terms and conditions developed by the Secretary; and

(iv) promoting the use of employer-provided transportation, including the transit pass benefit program under section 132 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(C) Reverse commute project.--The term "reverse commute project" means a project related to the development of transportation services designed to transport residents of urban areas, urbanized areas, and areas other than urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities, including any project to--

(i) subsidize the costs associated with adding reverse commute bus, train, carpool, van routes, or service from urban areas, urbanized areas, and areas other than urbanized areas, to suburban workplaces;

(ii) subsidize the purchase or lease by a nonprofit organization or public agency of a van or bus dedicated to shuttling employees from their residences to a suburban workplace; or

(iii) otherwise facilitate the provision of mass transportation services to suburban employment opportunities.

(3) Existing transportation service providers.-- The term "existing transportation service providers" means mass [**389] transportation operators and governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations that receive assistance from Federal, State, or local sources for nonemergency transportation services.

(4) Qualified entity.-- The term "qualified entity" means--

(A) with respect to any proposed eligible project in an urbanized area with a population of at least 200,000, the applicant or applicants selected by the appropriate metropolitan planning organization that meets the requirements of this section, including the planning and coordination requirements in subsection (i), from among local governmental authorities and agencies and nonprofit organizations; and

(B) with respect to any proposed eligible project in an urbanized area with a population of at least 200,000, or an area other than an urbanized area, the applicant or applicants selected by the chief executive officer of the State in which the area is located that meets the requirements of this section, including the planning and coordination requirements in subsection (i), from among local governmental authorities and nonprofit organizations.

(5) Welfare recipient.-- The term "welfare recipient" means an individual who receives or received aid or assistance under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (whether in effect before or after the effective date of the amendments made by title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-193; 110 Stat. 2110)) at any time during the 3-year period before the date on which the applicant applies for a grant under this section.

(c) General Authority.--

(1) In general.-- The Secretary may make access to jobs grants and reverse commute grants under this section to assist qualified entities in financing eligible projects.

(2) Coordination.-- The Secretary shall coordinate activities under this section with

related activities under programs of other Federal departments and agencies.

(d) Applications.--Each qualified entity seeking to receive a grant under this section for an eligible project shall submit to the Secretary an application in such form and in accordance with such requirements as the Secretary shall establish.

(e) Prohibition.--Grants awarded under this section may not be used for planning or coordination activities.

(f) Factors for Consideration.--In awarding grants under this section to applicants under subsection (d), the Secretary shall consider--

(1) the percentage of the population in the area to be served by the applicant that are welfare recipients;

(2) in the case of an applicant seeking assistance to finance an access to jobs project, the need for additional services in the area to be served by the applicant (including bicycling) to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from specified jobs, training, and other employment support services, and the extent to which the proposed services will address those needs;

(3) the extent to which the applicant demonstrates--

[**390] (A) coordination with, and the financial commitment of, existing transportation service providers; and

(B) coordination with the State agency that administers the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act;

(4) the extent to which the applicant demonstrates maximum utilization of existing transportation service providers and expands transit networks or hours of service, or both;

(5) the extent to which the applicant demonstrates an innovative approach that is responsive to identified service needs;

(6) the extent to which the applicant--

(A) in the case of an applicant seeking assistance to finance an access to jobs project, presents a regional transportation plan for addressing the transportation needs of welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals; and

(B) identifies long-term financing strategies to support the services under this section;

(7) the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the community to be served has been consulted in the planning process; and

(8) in the case of an applicant seeking assistance to finance a reverse commute project, the need for additional services identified in a regional transportation plan to transport individuals to suburban employment opportunities, and the extent to which the proposed services will address those needs.

(g) Competitive Grant Selection.--The Secretary shall conduct a national solicitation for applications for grants under this section. Grantees shall be selected on a competitive basis.

(h) Cost Sharing.--

(1) Maximum amount.-- The amount of a grant under this section may not exceed 50 percent of the total project cost.

(2) Nongovernmental share.----

(A) In general.--The portion of the total cost of an eligible project that is not funded under this section--

(i) shall be provided in cash from sources other than revenues from providing mass transportation, but may include amounts received under a service agreement; and

(ii) may be derived from amounts appropriated to or made available to a department or agency of the Federal Government (other than the Department of Transportation) that are eligible to be expended for transportation.

(B) Inapplicability.--For purposes of subparagraph (A)(ii), the prohibitions on the use of funds for matching requirements under section 403(a)(5)(C)(ii) of the Social Security Act shall not apply to Federal or State funds to be used for transportation services.

(i) Planning Requirements.--

(1) In general.-- The requirements of sections 5303 through 5306 of title 49, United States Code, apply to any grant made under this section.

(2) Coordination.-- Each application for a grant under this section shall reflect coordination with and the approval of affected transit grant recipients. The eligible access to jobs [**391] projects financed under this section shall be part of a coordinated public transit-human services transportation planning process.

(j) Grant Requirements.--A grant under this section shall be subject to--

(1) all of the terms and conditions to which a grant made under section 5307 of title 49, United States Code, is subject; and

(2) such other terms and conditions as are determined by the Secretary.

(k) Program Evaluation.--

(1) Comptroller general.-- Beginning 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 6 months thereafter, the Comptroller General of the United States shall--

(A) conduct a study to evaluate the grant program authorized under this section; and

(B) submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate a report describing the results of each study under subparagraph (A).

(2) Department of transportation.-- Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall--

(A) conduct a study to evaluate the access to jobs grant program authorized under this section; and

(B) submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate a report describing the results of the study under subparagraph (A).

(l) Authorization and Allocation.--

(1) In general.----

(A) From the trust fund.--There shall be available from the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund to carry out this section--

(i) \$ 40,000,000 for fiscal year 1999;

(ii) \$ 60,000,000 for fiscal year 2000;

(iii) \$ 80,000,000 for fiscal year 2001;

(iv) \$ 100,000,000 for fiscal year 2002; and

(v) \$ 120,000,000 for fiscal year 2003.

(B) From the general fund.--In addition to amounts made available under subparagraph (A), there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section--

(i) \$ 10,000,000 for fiscal year 1999;

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- (ii) \$ 15,000,000 for fiscal year 2000;
 - (iii) \$ 20,000,000 for fiscal year 2001;
 - (iv) \$ 25,000,000 for fiscal year 2002; and
 - (v) \$ 30,000,000 for fiscal year 2003.

(C) Additional amounts from the general fund.--In addition to amounts made available under subparagraphs (A) and (B), there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section--

- (i) \$ 100,000,000 for fiscal year 1999;
- (ii) \$ 75,000,000 for fiscal year 2000;
- (iii) \$ 50,000,000 for fiscal year 2001; and
- (iv) \$ 25,000,000 for fiscal year 2002.

[**392] (2) Set-aside for reverse commute projects.-- Of amounts made available by or appropriated under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) to carry out this section in each fiscal year, not more than \$ 10,000,000 shall be used for grants for reverse commute projects.

(3) Allocation.-- The amounts made available by or appropriated under paragraph (1) to carry out this section in each fiscal year shall be allocated as follows:

(A) 60 percent shall be allocated for eligible projects in urbanized areas with populations of at least 200,000.

(B) 20 percent shall be allocated for eligible projects in urbanized areas with populations of at least 200,000.

(C) 20 percent shall be allocated for eligible projects in areas other than urbanized areas.