Partnerships for the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program: A Multi-Site Study of the Institutional and Coordination Processes Behind Employment Transportation for Low-Income Workers

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1. Introduction

The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program was created by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in 1998, to address the transportation barriers faced by low-income individuals and those transitioning from welfare to work by funding gaps in services. Transportation barriers typically include spatial, temporal, financial, and logistical issues that JARC programs aim to resolve by funding various services within communities. A total of $750 million was authorized ($400 million from the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund and $350 million from General Funds). The total obligations for JARC projects to date have been $864,278,262. FTA’s FY 2006 report on the JARC program reported that the program funded 645 individual services that were operated by 155 grant recipients. In FY 2006, trip-based services (by fixed-route and demand responsive modes) accounted for 83 percent of program expenditures, 2 percent were spent on user-side subsidies, 8 percent on information-based services (including mobility management programs), and 7 percent to “capital investment” or car programs. JARC services were estimated to have connected workers to 43.4 million jobs, of which an estimated 21.2 million were “low-wage” jobs. The program required a dollar for dollar match, such that 50 percent of the project cost would be generated from the JARC program and the remaining 50 percent from non-DOT sources, thus doubling the amount that DOT would invest in any transportation project.

The JARC program was reauthorized by SAFTEA-LU, in 2005. SAFTEA-LU changed JARC from a competitive program to a formula program in 2005. The federal share of eligible capital and planning costs may not exceed 80 percent of the net cost of the activity. The federal share of the eligible operating costs may not exceed 50 percent of the net operating costs of the activity. Recipients may use up to 10 percent of their apportionment to support program administrative costs including administration, planning, and technical assistance, which may be funded at 100 percent federal share.

In order to understand the processes and activities leading to delivery of employment transportation services and to understand the extent of program targeting, patterns of usage and associated costs and benefits, the study team conducted two sets of studies:

- **Partnership and Coordination Study:** Studies of the partnerships and coordination activities that have enabled employment transportation services to be implemented; the results of these studies are reported in “Partnerships for the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program: A Multi-Site Study of the Institutional and Coordination Processes”
Behind Employment Transportation for Low-Income Workers” (the current report).

- **Economic Benefits Study**: Studies of the travel behavior and labor market outcomes experienced by employment service users with the goal of estimating the economic benefits of the programs; the results of these studies are reported in “Economic Benefits of Employment Transportation Services”.

The Partnership and Coordination Study consists of three smaller reports. In this Executive Summary, we summarize our findings from the study.

### 1.1 Changes in Federal Requirements

The JARC program has evolved over time. The program under TEA-21 was mainly directed to individuals transitioning from welfare to work. A key process-related aspect of JARC was the establishment of three types of partnerships by organizations wishing to apply for and use JARC funding: *planning, financial and operating* partnerships.

Government agencies (especially those in the transportation, human services, economic development, workforce development, affordable housing and related sectors), faith-based, and other nonprofit and private organizations that are involved in this planning process are the *planning partners*. To ensure that JARC project planning is part of a coordinated regional transportation planning process Area-Wide Job Access and Reverse Commute Transportation Plans (JARCTP) were required, as were procedures to update this plan by continuous monitoring of regional and state-level needs. Planning partners were instrumental in these activities. In addition to developing the JARCTP, planning partners were also responsible for monitoring and overseeing job access transportation activity in a region. JARC projects require a 50 percent funding match from non-Department of Transportation (DOT) sources. Organizations that match JARC funds for a project are the project’s *financial partners*. Finally, organizations and agencies that operate the services funded by the JARC program (matched by other organizations) are *operating partners*. Operating partners include public transit agencies as well as private providers such as van operators, taxicabs and mobility managers. Often times, there are strong overlaps among the three types of partnerships.

On February 1, 2001, President Bush announced his New Freedom Initiative to promote the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of society by increasing access to assistive and universally designed technologies, expanding educational and employment opportunities, and promoting full access to community life. By FY 2003 the New Freedom Initiative was added so JARC transportation planning was extended to
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persons with disabilities. Plans that did incorporating the mobility needs of persons with disabilities had to be amended.

SAFETEA-LU, enacted in 2005, required a coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) for all FTA human service transportation programs: Section 5310 Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program, Section 5316 JARC and Section 5317 New Freedom Program. The purpose of the coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan is to ensure that communities coordinate transportation resources provided through multiple federal programs. The HSTP planning process should include representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and should also include participation by the public.

FTA Circular 9045.1 (2007) on the New Freedom program and Circular 9050.1 (2007) on the JARC program require that the coordinated plan can either be developed separately from the metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes and then incorporated into the broader plans, or be developed as a part of the metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes. Circular 9050.1 also describes the requirements of the human services transportation plan and the necessity to include the transportation needs of “individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes.” (page V-1). An important element is to avoid duplication of services.

1.2 Objectives of the Report

The objective of this report is to describe three studies on partnership formation, evolution, effectiveness and challenges to sustainability, with the goal of assisting practitioners develop the Human Services Transportation Plan. The three studies were on partnerships and coordination activity for the Job Access and Reverse Commute program, but broader implications can be drawn for the newer HSTP process and other transportation program activities targeted to disadvantaged populations.

Our analysis on partnership and coordination activity started in 2003 and ended in 2006, allowing us to gauge how these processes have evolved over time. Although we have examined all types of partnerships (planning, financial and operating), we will synthesize the findings of the three studies to facilitate planning and implementation activities rather than operations, given that the HSTP for the JARC and New Freedom is a planning-oriented activity. Ultimately, our intent is to communicate the experiences of JARC grantees and to offer a series of recommendations regarding partnerships and coordination that are designed to enhance the program implementation.
1.3 Information Collected from Partnerships

To collect information on how partnerships formed and evolved over time, the research team conducted three studies. These included the following:

1. Focus group of representatives of JARC partnerships held in November, 2003\(^1\);
2. E-mail survey of lead organizations of the job access planning process conducted over Fall, 2004 through Spring 2005\(^2\);
3. On-site interviews of multiple stakeholders in the JARC planning partnership process conducted in April through July, 2006\(^3\).

The information contained in this report were collected by means of three activities:

- Focus group of representatives of JARC planning, financial and operating partnerships;
- E-mail survey of planning partnership lead organizations;
- Personal interviews of representatives of multiple stakeholder organizations involved in planning partnerships.

The purpose of this document is to summarize our assessment of the partnership activities in the JARC program and to provide recommendations for future partnerships.

2.0 Focus Groups on Partnership Formation, Challenges and Barriers to Sustainability

Given that one of the key features of the JARC program was to develop partnerships among service providers, social service agencies, and related organizations, the use of focus groups allowed the research team to document trends, issues, and future directions of partnerships among transportation, human services, labor and workforce development and related public, private, and non-profit organizations regarding job-access transit projects and employment transportation for low-income workers. Focus groups used in this project were comprised of program managers, administrators, and consultants who collectively brought several decades of experience of planning, implementing and developing partnerships for job-access and employment-transportation programs.

The purpose of the focus group was to understand the dynamics of partnership formation and evolution from the perspective of all types of JARC partnerships: planning, financial and operating. The other two studies reported here focus exclusively on planning partnerships.

Focus group participants represented a cross-section of institutions and included personnel from transportation, human services, private

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consultants, metropolitan planning organizations, employer and economic
development groups, and workforce development groups from eleven
states. Aside from representing the planning, financial, and operating
partnerships of the JARC program, study participants also differed by
region (large metropolitan, smaller urban, and small rural localities),
program types (fixed route, demand-responsive, and auto ownership
programs), organization sizes (large and small), as well as low-income
transportation project size (large and small).

The objectives of the focus group study were four-fold:

- Understand beneficial outcomes of partnerships;
- Document ways in which partnerships formed and understand the
dynamics of partnership growth and development over time;
- Summarize major challenges relating to partnership and
  sustainability;
- Summarize lessons learned for partnership formation and
development.

3.0 Lead Agency E-mail Survey to Assess the Effectiveness of
Planning Partnerships

Job Access and Reverse Commute planning partnerships were developed
under federal guidance by metropolitan areas and state DOT’s in order to
coordinate activities among multiple stakeholders to facilitate access to
jobs by low-income workers. As a way to ensure that JARC project
planning is part of a coordinated regional transportation planning process
and not an isolated event that includes the project alone, an impetus was
given to create area-wide Job Access and Reverse Commute
Transportation Plans (JARCTP) and to update this plan by means of
continuous monitoring of regional and state-level needs. Each state was
responsible for working with metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs)
and rural areas to ensure that the statewide transportation system met the
needs of all the populations within the state. Planning partners were also
charged with retaining a monitoring and oversight role for job access
transportation activity in a region.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the level of effectiveness of
planning partnerships. According to federal regulations, the planning
partnerships had the following responsibilities:

1. To provide an institutional forum in order to collaboratively
   address regional job access needs by bringing together
   transportation and other (non-traditional) governmental, for-profit
   and non-profit organizations;
2. To jointly develop the JARCTP and to undertake functions that is
   reflective of the needs and preferences of all partners;
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3. To evaluate and monitor the region’s job access needs over time.

The objectives of this planning partnership e-mail survey were:

- To identify partners involved in the regional job access planning process;
- To identify the steps that led to the development of the area-wide JARCTP and to obtain information on the plan development process;
- To obtain insights into the lead agency’s overall experience with the regional job access planning process.

The information on the basis of which this role is assessed was obtained by means of a survey of lead organizations of the JARCTP and the area-wide job access planning process in general. Lead organizations are responsible for coordinating the development of this plan. Lead organizations could be Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Council of Governments (COGs), transit agencies, county of city-elected bodies, local organizations chairing or organizing welfare reform activities, state entities including departments of transportation, workforce development or human services or other entities.

The method used for collecting data was an e-mail survey of lead agencies. The e-mail survey questionnaire was designed to assess the extent to which planning partnerships responsible for these activities met their objectives, based on specific benchmarks or criteria. Information regarding the process and the evaluation criteria were gathered using a survey of the lead organization of the job access planning process.

4.0 On-site Interviews of Partner Organization Representatives Involved in Planning Partnerships

The last study of the series was conducted by means of on-site interviews of representatives of multiple stakeholder agencies involved in planning partnerships in each of the ten FTA regions. Whereas the goal of the e-mail survey was to obtain information from the perspective of the lead agency, the personal interviews were intended to learn about the planning partnership process from the perspective of different stakeholders. Interviews were conducted of approximately 3-dozen individuals in 10 different locations. Personal interviews with teams of professionals involved in planning partnerships at each location yielded a wide variety of information pertinent to the JARC program and the environment in which the partnerships were operating.
The on-site interviews had the following objectives:

- To ascertain the function and importance of the planning process from the perspective of multiple stakeholders involved in the planning partnerships and its ultimate impact on system users;
- To develop a series of ‘best practices’ culled from JARC recipient agencies with the goal of flattening the learning curve of future grantees and/or any transit professional who is involved in planning and implementing employment transportation services for low-income workers.

5.0 Findings

The findings from the three partnership studies (focus group, email survey and site visits), are summarized in two major sections: the first discusses the findings that relate to the planning activities and the second relate to implementation activities.

5.1 Findings Regarding Planning Activities

5.1.1 Planning Partnership Requirement

Study participants were strongly in favor of the planning partnership requirement. This requirement was seen by most grantees as a particularly useful part of the JARC experience and while some found it onerous at the outset, the value of bringing together a wide range of individuals and ideas has been recognized as a vital step in ensuring the success of the JARC program. The availability of JARC funds provided purpose and much-needed infusions of essential resources to encourage new or resurrected interest in service provision. In particular JARC funds allowed participating groups to examine the feasibility of service expansion, a prospect that typically gets tabled when resources turn scarce. In this way it created a new learning environment that produced a new understanding and sensitivity to existing problems.

These partnerships brought the planning process closer to the needs of the individuals to be served. In this regard, the specific JARC objective to help disadvantaged individuals to reach jobs and training facilities has been better achieved. Area-wide JARCTP’s were developed as a result of the involvement of a diversity of organizations, as was the intent of federal guidelines. Further, over time a diverse group of organizations were involved in the subsequent monitoring and oversight of job access activities.
5.1.2 Planning Activity prior to the JARC Program

Prior to the JARC program, at numerous locations, organizations involved in either planning or providing transportation services to low-income persons had already been working together, and these agencies reached out to additional partners in order to meet the planning requirements of the JARC program. In many instances, the JARC program was the catalyst that made the serviced possible. Prior to the availability of JARC funds, planning work were conducted but lack of funding opportunities did not result in meaningful transportation services.

Findings regarding the partnership requirements:

- Study participants favored the planning requirement although some participants found the activity onerous at first;
- In many cases JARC energized existing planning activities and made services possible;
- Participation in planning activities by all members has been high but uneven over time;
- JARCTP was updated in many cases to reflect current needs and priorities.

5.1.3 Uneven Level of Partner Participation

More than two-thirds of the respondents (70%) in the email survey of lead organizations indicated that they perceived a high/very high level of participation by the planning partners in the overall process. This is despite the fact that planning partners acted with no special resources, which emphasizes the commitment of these organizations to meeting the needs of the region’s low-income workers.

While coordinated planning stakeholders generally agreed that there was a serious degree of involvement by group members, it was not uncommon for some stakeholder organizations to take on a greater share of the planning responsibilities. In some cases this was generally accepted, while in a few cases at least some concern was expressed regarding the inability of all to participate equally and to gain the new services desired.

5.1.4 How Are Partnerships Formed

There are three main ways in which JARC partnerships formed. These include:

- “Trim-down” model: Mostly occurred in cases where various transportation, human-services and/or employment-related organizations were already working together on related issues, but in order to put together a proposal that met the requirements of the JARC program, the list of organizations was trimmed to some extent;
- Expansion model: Occurred in cases where one organization (such as a transit agency, human services agency, etc.) conceptualized right up front what to do regarding the JARC opportunity and then brought in partners over time;
- Hybrid model: A core group of organizations interested in a broad issue such as low-income employment, given the JARC opportunity, trimmed down on the list of agencies with interest for the specific (transportation-related) objective and then
reached out to other organizations such as transit agencies, MPOs, private providers, etc.).

5.1.5 Type of Partnerships: Simple and Complex

At the grantee or project level, there are two main partnership structures: simple, where two or three organizations are involved in the partnership; and complex, where a large number of organizations are involved. Complex partnerships lead to diversification of matching funds, with consequent positive impacts for service sustainability, but with the added burden of administering and record keeping with multiple partners, and the challenge of keeping a diverse group focused on the same objective over the long term.

5.1.6 Activities beyond JARC and Spin-Off Activities

The partnership activities have been of value not only for the JARC service but for other activities as well. Individuals getting to know each other have lead to other collaborative activities beyond the JARC program. It was evident to FTA that planning and implementing service, primarily to individuals transitioning from welfare to work, required the knowledge and experience of more than just the staff of transit properties. Specifically, the inclusion of experts from the human services community, workforce boards and other public- and private-sector stakeholders greatly enhanced the planning process and this involvement lead to other important cooperative arrangements relating to issues such as housing, day-care and economic development. In some cases it also provided the impetus for new, related local legislation to improve transportation and other human, workforce-type services.

5.1.7 Inter-organizational relations

Inter-organizational challenges are present in many types of partnerships and are not unique to low-income employment transportation. The challenges of dealing with inter-organizational dynamics, including turf issues, lack of understanding of organizational culture, mission, and legal commitments, slowed partnership effectiveness to some extent. Changes in key staff and loss of interest by subsequent staff, as well as mission and program changes in key organizations, can lead to frustrations. Participants noted that the multi-partner situation diversifies funds and coordinates service, but needs a lot of resources for planning and interaction. Finally, differences exist in data collection, data sharing, and coordination -- propensities that have been harmful to some extent for partnership sustainability.
5.1.8 Changes in partnerships over time

Partnerships are dynamic entities and they evolve over time. Occasionally they take on additional directions. Keeping project momentum high over time was a challenge, and participants indicated that there was a lot of scheduling and time commitment involved in participating and sustaining partnerships over time. Staff changes in lead partner organizations, with a resultant learning process that would start all over again, led study participants to comment that there is a need to keep a larger group of personnel within partner organizations well informed about developments in the project. Furthermore, there were program and mission changes in key organizations, and changes in organizational assignment and priorities, leading to challenges in keeping the partnership objective focused, even if there were no financial or other direct, program-related difficulties.

5.1.9 Updating Plans

The JARCTP was intended to be updated over time. Most of the coordinated plans, once developed, were updated at least once a year to reflect changing demographics and employment transportation needs over time.

5.1.10 Improved planning methods and practices

JARC programs promoted and supported the use of analytic capabilities (such as Geographic Information Systems), which allowed amassing, processing, and presenting large amounts of information necessary to study service expansion. Agencies indicated that they were planning to implement greater use of information technology but the JARC program accelerated the pace of their use.

5.2 Findings Regarding Implementation and Service Sustainability

5.2.1. Service improvements and impacts

Participants stated that the coordinated planning process resulted in improvements in service coordination, greater public involvement in the planning process, greater leveraging of transportation funds, and improvements to the level and quality of transportation services provided under the program. Over 94% of the respondents to the survey of lead agencies in the planning process indicated that the planning partnerships were instrumental in achieving the job access goals for their area, and 66% of respondents indicated that the planning process had resulted in financial partnerships where local agencies were able to coordinate funding and provide service for low-income transportation projects.
Accessibility to jobs is the cornerstone of the JARC program. Many of the respondents agreed that this goal was being met. Improvements in access to job services for low-income riders was seen a directly attributable to increases in resources among JARC riders.

5.2.2 Changes Over Time

Organizations involved in the coordinated planning and delivery process faced challenges to sustainability, including staff turnover amongst the participating organizations, changes in the missions and organizational objectives of participating organizations. More importantly in several cases the initial understanding of where and when service needed to be provided required major changes as the spatio-temporal needs of low-income workers became clearer.

5.2.3 Service sustainability

Partners noted that the most important factors that determine partnership sustainability are:

- Having the right, meaningful project that satisfies joint objectives;
- Having reliable, relevant, and commonly agreed-upon data and information to create, evaluate, and monitor performance;
- Finding the right partnership dynamics and communications methods.

5.2.4 Update plans and services

Regarding Objective 3, that the planning process should not be a one-time activity but rather a process of continuous evaluation and monitoring of the region’s job access needs over time Close to 70% of the respondents indicated that the JARCTP had been updated at least once a year to reflect the fact that their region’s job access needs changed over time. However, for almost 20% of the areas that responded, the plan, once developed, was never updated.

Planning partners have, overall, met federal guidelines regarding staying involved during the planning and implementation process. There has been some turnover in organizations entering and leaving the partnership, but monitoring and oversight activities have remained reasonably strong over time.

5.2.5 Increased Efficiency

Improvements have occurred in service coordination, streamlining of costs, avoidance of duplication of efforts and increases in efficiency. By
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having the diversity of parties in the planning process they were able to build upon existing services and make the overall delivery of service more cost effective.

5.2.6 Delays in the obtaining JARC funds

Some projects experienced delays in obtaining the JARC funding, causing some smaller agencies to pull out of the partnerships since they could no longer afford the participation and the wait. This negatively affected that scope and amount of services that were provided.

5.2.7 Social and political challenges

Challenges arise due to the nature of the task at hand, which is to provide transportation to a small section of the low-income traveling public. Especially in areas with little or no transit, there is the need to deal with a negative perception of transit. When there are difficulties with implementing regular transit services, the problems with establishing low-income transportation services increase. In some other areas, social and racial issues have posed difficulties in planning services because some individuals or communities do not want the JARC target populations to be transported to work in their areas. In other cases, job access transit is just not a political priority, since it focuses on such a small, targeted population. Finally, although the participation of employers is seen as vital, participants had mixed experiences with employers, who sometimes dropped off the project when it became clear they had to commit funds to the service.

5.2.8 Transportation coordinators

Frequently, successful service planning was linked to the development of a bridge between the human services and transportation communities, most effectively by the use of transportation coordinators. These individuals commonly were former welfare clients that were trained in the scope and the nature of the public transportation system and were able to communicate to potential transit clients about the available service. This was noted as a critical step in overcoming the obstacles that welfare clients had about accessing jobs and other destinations in areas with which they were not familiar.

5.2.9 Private-sector involvement

The inclusion of private sector businesses was acknowledged as important to the planning process though their involvement was frequently short-lived. Faith-based organizations, however, in particular demonstrated the dedication and time to see the process through to the end.
5.2.10 Users should be appreciated as patrons

Participants also made the point that the riders of the service should be appreciated, which is an important (but often forgotten) detail. At the same time participants noted the important role played by the service operators who hear riders’ ideas and frustrations directly and the need to keep them involved.

6.0 Recommendations

As with the findings above the recommendations are divided into two groups. The first includes recommendations regarding the planning process and since many grantees are actively providing service the second part relates to recommendations for service implementation.

6.1 Recommendations for Planning Activities (PA)

6.1.1. Recommendation PA1: Combine federal transportation-assistance programs.

One of the greatest challenges facing the grantees is how to sustain the provided service. Commonly it is necessary to find other governmental programs that may be used, at least, partially to fill the void. The process could be simplified if the multitude of federal programs could be combined so that local agencies have the discretion to allocate the fund where they are most needed. Involving many stakeholders to explore synergies can facilitate this. While the traditional transportation stakeholders will participate in these processes, gains can occur by drawing others into the planning process. By continuing to draw in non-traditional partners into the partnership over time, the planning process has allowed regions to leverage a greater share of federal transportation dollars towards job-access activities (which require a 50 percent match), than would otherwise have been possible. Close to 66% of the respondents indicated that financial partnerships for job access transportation projects were jump-started as a result of the collaborative environment fostered by the regional planning partnership.

6.1.2. Recommendation PA2: In future years the statewide and regional planning requirement should be merged with the planning requirements for human services transportation. Having a merged planning process at the state and the regional levels in a productive manner to bring systemic (holistic) views into the planning process. At the same time, the planning horizons, the time-line, as well as the data required should all be coordinated for this to come to fruition.
The objectives of the coordinated public transit human service transportation planning process overlap to some extent with the objectives of the statewide and metropolitan planning process and the two planning processes should be merged into one in future reauthorizations.

Also, there is concern that the coordinated planning process and the competitive selection process are redundant and the need for a separate competitive selection slows down the process for completing the steps needed to receive a JARC, New Freedom or 5310 grant. In many cases, the planning process can result in people around the table agreeing on specific projects to fund, so it may not make sense to have a second competitive selection process that rubber stamps the decision that was made in the planning process.

6.1.3 Recommendation PA3: **Decrease the local match requirement for the JARC program.**

Many of the successful grantees felt that they spent an inordinate amount of time securing the local match. Recognizing the implemented service not previously implemented because not sufficient resources could be identified, locating the match required seeking unconventional sources of support. While it is encouraging that such sources were found, the amount of time spent in securing the match required allocating too many of their existing scare local resources to this task.

6.1.4 Recommendation PA 4: **The transportation planning process can be broadened beyond JARC but a large planning group can become unwieldy.**

There is room for increasing the participation of non-transportation organizations. In particular, the involvement of non-transportation state-level agencies could be significantly improved, so that job access activities and programs become a consistent and cross-departmental aspect of the policies of state governments. At the same time, concerns were expressed that if the group became too large it would become unworkable. There may well be an optimal size for the planning process but this is difficult to dictate at the outset. The findings from our study suggest that the size of the existing groups seemed to work well.

6.1.5 Recommendation PA5: **A mechanism should be established that will facilitate all participants to have their needs understood and reliably assessed.**

Although the coordinated planning process has provisions designed to ensure that all stakeholders will be able to have a seat at the table and have a voice in developing specific priorities for their geographic area, the
JARC program also gives the designated recipient (often a traditional transit agency) the power to select what specific projects will be funded. There is concern that the process will not select projects that were truly derived from the coordinated plan (especially if the priorities of the plan are open-ended).

At the same time we know that resources were not available for the planning stages and all participants donated their own time. This may have led some partners to undertake a greater share of grant-writing and other time-consuming activities.

6.1.6 Recommendation PA 6: **Steps should be taken to inform future and even current JARC grantees of the potential pitfalls with a diverse partnership. The list below identifies many of the pitfalls.**

Participants were optimistic that, partnerships are workable within the current programmatic environment and that there are beneficial outcomes that result from the three types of partnerships (planning, financial, and operating) instituted by the JARC program. The recommendations for future partnership developers were summarized as follows:

- Realize up front that maintaining relationships in partnerships is hard work,
- Be flexible and creative; this is critical,
- Assess and become familiar with traditions followed by partners,
- Have champions and political sponsors,
- Stress to partners that they need to have patience with the program and be willing to learn,
- Know and appreciate the riders: “partner with the rider,”
- Do your homework: gaining knowledge of rules and programmatic regulations traditions and operating environment of partners involved should be done up front; possible hire a financial or planning consultant and not be afraid to seek outside expert help,
- Give project maximum appeal and exposure and
- Pay attention to the planning aspects and evaluate and monitor project performance.

6.1.7 Recommendation PA7: **Keep the program flexible.**

The nature of the lead organization and partner organizations reflects local needs and priorities. The flexibility built into federal regulations regarding the types of lead agencies and partner organizations has been effective to harness local planning needs.
6.1.8 Recommendation PA8: **Encourage planning partnerships to identify a champion.**

Participants noted that a champion is absolutely necessary from the very beginning. This individual (or individuals) may be a political figure that understands the problem and the importance of marshalling local resources to help meet the transportation needs of the prospective users. It is exceedingly useful to have someone that can carry the message to the important decision makers in the region.

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**Helpful hints towards successful partnerships (contd.):**

- Have champions - have at least one person to champion the cause - it is also useful to have a state legislator whose assistance could be sought in times of difficulty;
- Partners need to think long-term - allocate time accordingly, give people little assignments to stay involved, do not aim too high, smaller projects may be better to start with;
- Get to know and appreciate the riders - “partner” with the riders - “always remember the people you serve”;
- There is a constant need to know and evaluate the market and related labor needs;
- Homework involved should be done up front - background work such as getting to know the partners, their traditions, operational environments and programmatic regulations;

(Continued on next page)

6.2 Recommendations for Service Implementation (SI)

The recommendations cited below are most likely to occur once the service has been initiated.

6.2.1 Recommendation SI1: **Improve the prospects of sustainability – establish a broader program.**

This is effectively the same recommendation as PA1 but it is worth repeating. For many grantees the parameters of the JARC program, while useful for delivering service to targeted populations, the continuation of the service may be enhanced if a wider range of funds may be used to continue the service.

6.2.2 Recommendation SI2: **Relax some of the requirements imposed on service providers.**

JARC is a new and innovative program, which has sought to involve non-traditional partners in the planning, financial, and operating stages of transportation for the first time. While these have brought about important benefits, members noted that financial issues, FTA drug and alcohol requirements, insurance and liability coverage required by many operators, JARC reporting requirements, and the limited guidance for smaller organizations and non-traditional partners are obstacles. To many organizations the existing requirements to starting service were too onerous to consider participation.

6.2.3 Recommendation SI3: **Make resources available to publicize services.**

In communities that had low transit ridership, the initial difficulty was to raise public awareness about job access transportation services. Without the ability to adequately publicize the service it may not be sufficiently well known to be fully successful. Even after the projects got under way, resources were necessary in order to publicize the service. Participants also noted that once the service was up and running, organizations not
involved initially wanted to share in the success and help publicize the service.

6.2.4 Recommendation SI4: **A mechanism should be created to provide incentives for private sector in the implementation and sustainability of the service.**

Too often the JARC service caters to jobs in an industry that is very competitive and that relies heavily on low-paid employees. In this setting the employers find it difficult to volunteer resources to help fund the service. If an incentive program were available it may allow greater active participation by the private sector. They are frequently at the table during the planning process but drift away after the service start-up.

### 7.0 Summary

A hallmark of the JARC program is its requirement to involve a wide range of parties involved in planning or providing transportation services to transportation-disadvantaged individuals. These planning partners represent agencies that have a common goal of improving lives through improved transportation. This has benefited not only the JARC program but has created interaction among people and agencies that in the past had little direct relationships.