



# **Successes and Challenges with the FTA New Freedom Program: Guidance for the NYMTC region**

**Brian Ross**  
**New York University, MUP '08**  
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NEW YORK METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL



# New Freedom Program

- Newly established under SAFETEA-LU
- Designed to provide *new* public transportation services and public transportation alternatives *beyond* those required by the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) to individuals with disabilities.
- Funds allocated nationally based on a formula that accounts for the number of persons with disabilities



# New Freedom Program

## Examples of Eligible Programs

- New and enhanced paratransit beyond the minimum requirements of ADA.
- Customer or travel workshops or “travel training”
- New feeder services.
- Accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations.



# Eligible Applicants

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- Private non-profit organizations.
- State or local government authorities.
- Operators of public transportation services including private operators of public transportation services.



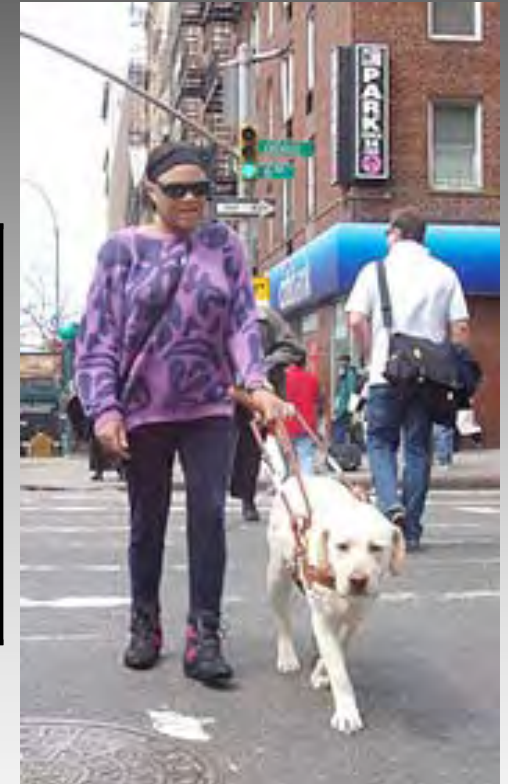
# New Freedom Program

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## Funding Availability

### NY Urbanized Area

2006	2007	2008
\$4,045,067	\$3,889,365	\$4,260,171



# Coordinated Planning Process

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- Selected projects **must be** derived from a locally-produced Coordinated Plan
- The required elements necessary in a coordinated plan are:
  - An assessment of available services
  - Identification of the transportation needs of individuals with low income, those with disabilities, as well as older adults
  - Ways to address these gaps in service
  - Priorities for how to implement these strategies to address service gaps and the feasibility of each



# Research Questions

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- What challenges has NYMTC and the country faced in implementing this newly established FTA initiative?
- What can be done to improve the implementation of this program in the NYMTC region?



# Methodology

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- **Task 1:** Literature Review
- **Task 2:** Informal Discussions with other cities
- **Task 3:** Develop a Final Paper with Best Practices and Conclusions





# Broad Difficulties

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- **Funding**

- Largest issue facing the New Freedom Program
- Paratransit is costly - Access-a-Ride costs \$55.64 per trip to New York City Transit
- Large Organizations vs. Small Non-profits

- **Designated Recipients**

- Lack of funding is a disincentive to volunteer

- **Oversight**

- 23 requirements have to be abided by large agencies and non-profits



# Discussions with Other Cities

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- **Interviewed:**
  - Washington, DC
  - Denver, CO
  - Dallas/Fort Worth, TX
  - Seattle, WA
  - Phoenix, AZ
  - San Diego, CA
  - Chicago, IL
  - Minneapolis, MN



# Common Themes/Innovative Practices

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- **Outreach and Education**
  - Workshops
  - Web Presence
  - Targeted Outreach
  - Application



# Common Themes/Innovative Practices

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- **Funding Issues**
  - State Resources
  - Pilot Projects
  - Match Sharing
  - In-Kind Matching
- **Oversight**



# Conclusion

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- **New Freedom program DOES have positive elements**
  - “The real value here is less in the money chase and new projects...instead, the real benefit is making the best use out of existing resources and programs.”
    - David Snyder - MWCOCG Transportation Planning Board Member

**This will allow NYMTC to be able to stretch the \$12 million allocation**

# Conclusion

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- New Freedom program is still in its infancy and will take time to grow and evolve into a successful and sustainable program
- Recommendations should be used to better educate the public on the New Freedom Program

