

PILOT AGENCIES APPROVED FOR FLEXIBILITY IN USING TRANSIT PROPERTY FOR PUBLIC/PRIVATE JOINT DEVELOPMENT

From U.S. Dept. of Transportation

■(WASHINGTON) Federal Transit Administrator (FTA) Gordon J. Linton has announced the establishment of a pilot initiative to promote joint development projects between public transportation agencies and the private sector, by allowing certain transit agencies to apply the income from use of federally-funded real estate to transit-related expenditures.

The four transit agencies that will participate in the pilot project are: the Washington, DC Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA); the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District (Tri-Met), Portland, OR; the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), Atlanta; and the Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA), Baltimore.

"These select waivers to the Common Grant Rule will help transit agencies improve their revenues and support transit-oriented development which will provide better service for transit passengers," said Linton.

Under the Common Rule for Federal Grant Programs, public transportation agencies that sell real estate originally acquired with federal financial assistance generally must return the federal share of the sales proceeds to the U.S. Treasury. Pilot agencies will be excepted from complying with this requirement. They will now be able to sell their federally-funded real property to establish transit-oriented joint development projects, create an ongoing revenue stream or receive a one-time payment, and use the proceeds to offset transit-related expenses.

Many public transportation agencies are

currently engaged in joint development projects through leases. They rent air and ground rights on their properties to private developers who build offices, retail centers, day care facilities and newsstands. The transportation agencies are allowed to apply the income from such rentals to transit-related expenditures. The waivers to the common rule will provide public transit agencies greater flexibility in using and managing their real estate assets. They will be allowed to establish land sales contracts for joint development activities and to use the resulting income for transit operations, much as is already being done with rental contracts.

DOT published the individual exceptions to the Common Grant Rule in a Federal Register Notice on Oct. 7, 1996.

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others: East St. Louis, IL, East Side Health Care Coalition, has several replications in the works, the first in a Springfield, IL, community of 23,000 with no other health care resources. Also honored was Vista, CA, Fund for Moms, which offers low cost loans to cover the costs of prenatal care and has several replications in the works.

The Models That Work campaign pays travel and other expenses for project staff to teach others in similar circumstances how to provide basic health care and related social services to underserved communities. It also supports conference workshops that highlight these outstanding grassroots programs, a directory and on-line data base of model programs, and guidelines and technical assistance to spawn replications.

The program was developed at the HRSA Bureau of Primary Health Care. "This is part of our effort to be a 'catalyst' for new primary care delivery sites," said Marilyn Gaston, M.D., assistant surgeon general and BPHC director.

HRSA's major partners in Models That Work include the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Pharmacia & Upjohn and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Within HHS, the Health Care Financing Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention co-sponsor MTW. The HRSA Maternal and Child Health Bureau and the Office of Rural Health Policy also co-sponsor the campaign.

ASSURANCE MECHANISMS FINALIZED FOR OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE LANDFILLS

From Environmental Protection Agency

■(WASHINGTON) The Environmental Protection Agency issued a final rule that gives local governments more flexibility to meet the financial assurance requirements of the Municipal Solid Waste Landfill Criteria.

The promulgation of the Local Government Financial Test allows local governments to meet their financial assurance obligations for closure, post-closure care and corrective action pursuant to the Municipal Solid Waste Landfill Criteria. The effective date for these financial assurance requirements is April 9, 1997, for landfill owners and operators except for small, dry or remote landfill owners and operators who have until Oct. 9, 1997.

A local government can make this demonstration by showing that it has issued a general obligation bond for which it received an investment grade rating. A municipality can also show that its cash holdings and debt obligations pass established ratios and thereby meet the financial assurance requirements. In addition, a local government cannot have an excessive operating deficit for each of the last two years relative to the local government's total budget.

Local governments must report annually on whether they continue to meet the conditions of the test and inform the public that they are using the test. Local governments that pass the financial test can also assure obligations for other landfill owners and

operators if they choose to do so.

An estimated 91 percent of local governments can use their financial strength to assure at least part of their obligations and 54 percent can assure all of their obligations using the local government financial test. Those local governments that are eligible to exercise this options can realize substantial cost savings in complying with the Criteria. This rule also gives state directors the authority to waive the financial assurance requirements for up to 12 months for good cause in specific cases where the April 9, 1997, deadline does not provide sufficient time to comply with these requirements and where such a waiver will not adversely affect human health and the environment.

For more information, contact the RCRA/ Superfund Hotline at 1-800-424-9336.

"Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist . . . It is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil."

*John Maynard Keynes
The General Theory of Employment,
Interest and Money
1936*