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To: TJPD Commissioners
From: Melissa Barlow, Director of Transportation Programs
David Blount, Legislative Liaison
Date: October 2, 2008
Reference: Regional Transit Authority update

Purpose: The purpose of this memo is to provide background information on efforts to form a regional transit authority for Charlottesville/Albemarle.

Background: The Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), City of Charlottesville (City), and the County of Albemarle (County) have been working for two years on development of an expanded and enhanced regional transit service, including a governing structure and set of mechanisms to fund the service. The three entities adopted a vision statement for a regional transit authority (RTA) which emphasizes fast, frequent, dependable, and seamless service providing direct links between and among the area's four major destinations: Downtown, UVA/Medical Center, Pantops, and the Rt. 29 North Corridor. Later, the two governing bodies adopted resolutions of intent to pursue a regional transit authority.

The MPO, City, and County have been actively working to develop an RTA plan, and they intend to implement its recommendations to create an RTA that provides an attractive, competitive choice for those who travel throughout the region – residents, commuters, employees, students, and visitors. Issues, options and recommendations for establishing an RTA were examined by a consulting firm, with focus on regional transit management and governance, service and operations, estimated costs and funding. The final report identified routes, level of service, phasing, vehicle technology, funding mechanisms and operating responsibilities. Numerous aspects of the consultants' work have been examined and discussed by local officials, staff, stakeholder groups and community members over the past year or so.

Issues: Over the past two months, a Joint Working Group (JWG) established by the two localities has been meeting almost weekly to craft enabling legislation for the next General Assembly. They are nearing agreement on a framework for legislation to establish an RTA and also for funding options that would provide dollars for both transit and transportation needs. Those discussions have included how other localities and entities in the region could be potential partners in the authority, a notion also raised when the JWG met recently with the Transportation Funding Options Working Group (2005) to discuss possible revenue authority. Commissioners are invited to discuss future RTA involvement by TJPD localities and other regional entities.

Action Needed: Discuss future regional involvement in the RTA.