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MEMO

To: TJPD Commissioners
From: Melissa Barlow, Director of Transportation Programs
Date: May 29, 2009
Re: Regional Transit Assessment (RTA) Toolkit Project Update

Purpose: This memo is to provide Commissioners with a summary of the RTA Toolkit Project, in advance of the verbal presentation at the meeting.

Background: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) awarded TJPDC \$90,000 through its Public Transportation Participation Pilot Program (PTP Program) for applied research to develop innovative approaches to improving public participation in the transportation planning process. The grant provided the opportunity to engage the public in the Regional Transit Authority discussion occurring over the last year and a half among local decision-makers. The project's two main goals are to:

- Gather input from citizens in the local area about their current experiences using transit, and to ask non-riders what would it take for them to try transit. This input will provide decision-makers with the tools needed for identifying and implementing specific, cost-effective public transportation system enhancements. The toolkit is intended to guide and complement the public engagement process currently underway with the Regional Transit Authority.
- Develop a toolkit of methods and best practices of public engagement used during this study, to be made available to other communities.

Most of the survey work is being done by a consultant, Southeast Institute of Research (SIR), selected through a competitive process. Their work began in August 2008. During the fall and winter, several survey instruments were developed to conduct telephone, on-board, on-line, and mail-out surveys.

Status: Work is progressing well. The grant end date is 9-30-09.

- 300 telephone surveys were completed in April and the on-line survey will end May 31, 2009. We anticipate at least 1,000 on line responses.
- A public transportation summit **Transportation Tomorrow** was held on May 21 to present recommendations received from the public and to solicit additional input to guide the development of our future transit system. SIR provided highlights of the survey to approximately 55 people attending. A 5-member panel of experts, including Steve Williams and Donna Shauneseay, was available to comment and answer questions from the audience. Donna Shauneseay of JAUNT will attend the Commission meeting for this discussion.

Action Needed: This is an information item only.