Texas Transportation Commission

125 E 11TH STREET • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483

September 29, 2005

To our Partners in Public Transportation Planning:

On behalf of the Texas Transportation Commission, thank you for your ongoing efforts aimed at improving public transportation in the State of Texas. I was happy to see many of you at our June 14th Regional Planning and Public Transportation Workshop. The strong turnout clearly indicates our states' collective interest in and commitment to this important initiative that we are undertaking together.

As this initiative gains momentum, I, along with Michael Morris, Chair of the Regional Planning and Public Transportation Study Group, invite you all to join us in Austin on Wednesday, October 19, 2005 to hear about the progress our regions are making toward coordinated public transportation planning. We are asking that we reconvene as a group for a Sharing Approaches Workshop. Logistics and more complete details may be found at http://www.dot.state.tx.us/ptn/geninfo.htm. An agenda for the day's activities will also be posted at this site in the very near future.

I am hopeful that the summer has provided each region and its stakeholders ample time and opportunity to begin preparing for how they will approach the regional service planning process we are undertaking in Texas. By now, each region should have completed two notable tasks: 1) creating a steering committee that is as diverse as each of your respective regions, including representation of as many stakeholders and interest groups as you can identify; and 2) reaching consensus on the designation of a lead entity that has the interest, capacity, resources, and most importantly, the trust of the region's participants to be a fair and honest broker for all interests and parties within the region throughout this process. If consensus on a lead agency has not yet been reached in your region, please e-mail Shawna Russell in my office at srusse1@dot.state.tx.us.

While any and all parties interested in regional service planning are welcome to attend this workshop, it is especially crucial that there be a representative from each of the 24 regions present and prepared to give an update on the previously identified deliverables for this meeting. The representative for each region should be from the mutually agreed upon lead entity. If there are regions in which a lead agency has yet to be identified or agreed upon, please coordinate amongst yourselves to determine who will be responsible for delivering the region's report. In order for us to be able to cover all 24 regions in one day, it is crucial that the reports be no longer than five minutes each.

Topics that should be included in the report include:

- Identification of a lead agency (if determined);
- Work Plan: the methodology for doing the actual plan;
- Working budget with the estimated cost of planning efforts over the next year; and
- Inventory of constraints in your region with regards to delivery of coordinated public transportation services or planning (if applicable).

Related to this, it is my hope that the working budgets presented will be reflective of the multitude of partners and resources available in your respective regions and will include existing resources and opportunities to the extent possible. Like every other aspect of this planning process, this, too, should be an inclusive partnership in which our local partners actively participate. The department is in the process of identifying funding to assist in the regional service planning initiative, but it will take all of us pooling our collective talents and resources to make this initiative successful. Additional details on budget particulars and examples will follow under separate cover.

We will also use this meeting to unveil an electronic clearinghouse and website dedicated to the regional service planning initiative as well as facilitation services that will be available for use by the regions throughout the planning phases of this initiative. These services have been funded by the Texas Department of Transportation and will be provided by a team of experts from the Texas Transportation Institute and West Texas A&M University.

Please provide the name, organization and region represented for all presenters to Shawna Russell at srusse1@dot.state.tx.us no later than Wednesday, October 12, 2005.

I look forward to seeing you again on October 19th and hearing about the processes, progress and efforts being made across the state to move public transportation forward in Texas. Thank you for the important work you do in service to others.

Sincerely,

Hope Andrade
Commissioner
Texas Transportation Commission