TO: Members of APTA’s Blue Ribbon Panel on Workforce Development, Technical Resource Group and Human Resources Committee

FROM: Doran Barnes, chair, APTA Blue Ribbon Panel on Workforce Development

DATE: June 11, 2010

SUBJECT: FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF APTA’S BLUE RIBBON PANEL ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Thank you for your participation to date with APTA’s Blue Ribbon Panel on Workforce Development. As a result of your efforts, I presented the panel’s final report including next steps to implement the recommendations to APTA’s Executive Committee at its meeting earlier this month in Cleveland, OH. The executive committee applauded the dedication and hard work of the panel members and technical resource group, including the human resources committee. The committee expressed strong support for APTA’s efforts to address workforce needs in the public transportation industry and accepted the attached final report. I want to particularly acknowledge the leadership, vision and support of APTA Chair, Mattie “M.P.” Carter and Dr. Beverly A. Scott, immediate past chair, to ensure we continue to address the industry’s human capital needs.

Based upon your resources, expertise and industry support, the panel developed a series of 32 recommendations organized under the following six (6) areas:

**Legislative Issues:** the need to focus on advancing APTA’s authorization recommendations and other legislative proposals (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Jobs bills) for funding to promote the development of a skilled industry workforce. The working group was co-chaired by J. Barry Barker, executive director, The Transit Authority of River City, and myself.

**Image and Branding: Making the Business Case for Workforce Development in Public Transportation:** the need for a targeted campaign to improve the image of public transportation as a career; promote “green jobs; and “sell” our industry by creating messages that reach new generations and talent pools (i.e. returning veterans) by using social media tools and other technologies. The working group was co-chaired by Stephanie Pinson, president and chief operating officer, Gilbert Tweed Associates, Inc., and Alan Wulkan, managing partner, InfraConsult LLC.

**Higher Education:** the need to focus on a variety of educational options, including the role of universities, transportation research centers, community colleges and technical schools in providing the pipeline for public transportation careers, and how best to leverage opportunities for development of core curricula in universities and community colleges. The working group was chaired by Dr. Jill Hough, program director, Small Urban and Rural Transit Center, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University.
Youth Outreach and Awareness: the need to address how best to prepare the next generation of leaders within the public transportation industry, e.g. developing key programs, activities and partnerships for grades K – 12. The working group focused on strategies, programs and activities targeted to K - 12 levels with an emphasis on opportunities to promote and expand the workforce pipeline earlier in the educational process. The working group was co-chaired by Aida Berduo Douglas, business development manager/DBE officer, Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and Tammy Haenftling, assistant vice president, paratransit management services, Dallas Area Rapid Transit.

Partnerships and Collaborations: the need to focus on how to enhance training and educational opportunities for the current and future workforce, through diverse, collaborative partnerships, i.e. labor-management; regional training consortiums; and opportunities for public and private partnerships on workforce development, etc. The working group was co-chaired by Mary Ann Collier, director of operations, Swayzer Engineering, Inc., and Robert H. Prince, Jr., vice president and industry liaison, DMJM Harris, an AECOM Company.

Performance Metrics/Return on investment (ROI): the need to establish an industry-developed model that measures the ROI on workforce development, training, etc., and a regular benchmarking program. The working group established three primary objectives: (1) communicate the successes of existing programs; (2) develop recommendations that use performance metrics and benchmarking to measure the effectiveness and improve public transit workforce development programs; and (3) collaborate with the other working groups to develop performance metrics for all focus areas defined by the blue ribbon panel. The working group was co-chaired by Brian J. Turner, director, International Transportation Learning Center, and Dr. Stephen D. Van Beek, president & CEO, Eno Transportation Foundation.

The final report and recommendations of the blue ribbon panel represent the hard work of the many people who participated in this process. My personal thanks go to each and every person who was involved with this important work over the past year and half. While I am extremely excited about the results of our efforts, I am equally excited about how the discussion and activities surrounding the broad topic of workforce development have intensified throughout the industry because of our work.

Implementation Plan/Next Steps

While much has been accomplished over the past 18 months, our work is just beginning. The successful implementation of the recommendations outlined in the report requires strong commitment and collaboration among APTA members, partners and key stakeholders, among others. The following outlines the proposed implementation plan:

1. The programmatic responsibilities for addressing workforce development issues, programs and activities for APTA remain assigned to the APTA vice chair-human resources, human resources committee (including workforce development, labor and higher education subcommittees) and staff.

2. Establish a small working group, comprised of the APTA vice chair-human resources, human resources committee leadership, the working group chairs of the former blue ribbon panel, union officials, and a representative from the American Public Transportation Foundation board of directors. The mission of this working group will be to advance the implementation of the panel recommendations.
3. Continue efforts to support the implementation of APTA’s 2010 – 2014 Strategic Plan and annual business planning process. APTA’s proposed FY11 business plan includes the following workforce development projects:

- implement final recommendations from the blue ribbon panel
- conduct a pilot program to conduct an education “road show” for members;
- conduct a national public transportation career day; and
- host APTA’s second youth summit.

4. Implement recommendations from APTA’s Preliminary Workforce Survey to be issued in spring 2010.

5. Continue to advance, monitor progress and promote the unified work plan associated with ongoing TCRP projects. There is consensus among the panel members that the progress and conclusion of these studies will continue to inform the implementation of the recommendations.

- TCRP Project J-06/Task 72 – Professional Certification and Credentialing Programs for the Transit Industry – A Scoping Study.

6. Leverage the opportunities available through APTA’s new governance structure recently adopted by the membership. Engage the chairs of the 25 standing committees, now members of the APTA Board of Directors, to promote, support and assist in the implementation of the panel’s recommendations.

7. Finalize recommendations to define APTA’s role in providing ongoing support to members and the industry on workforce development issues. The potential options include: (1) continuing to address these issues with existing APTA resources; (2) establishing a non-profit organization dedicated to workforce development research and training (similar to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Institute for a Competitive Workforce; and (3) establishing a “Public Transportation Workforce Center of Excellence,” offering a complete range of programs to address industry workforce gaps and training needs (modeled after the aviation industry’s center).

We encourage your ongoing participation in this process as the momentum continues to grow on workforce development. Please join me on June 17, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. (EST) for a webinar on next steps. In the interim, please contact Pamela Boswell of APTA’s Program Management & Educational Services Department at (202) 496-4803 or pboswell@apta.com if you have any questions. Again, thank you for your commitment to developing a sustainable workforce for the public transportation industry.