



NARC National Association of Regional Councils

TALKING POINTS

TRANSPORTATION

BUILDING REGIONAL COMMUNITIES – LARGE, SMALL, URBAN AND RURAL – THROUGH ADVOCACY, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) supports the existence and continued operations of Councils of Government (COGs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) of all sizes – large, small, urban and rural – in transportation planning and programming to promote regional solutions to national transportation needs.

- **FINANCING:** The future financing of our country's transportation system is in question. With a soon-to-be insolvent Highway Trust Fund and without other funds to support a nationally integrated, multi-modal transportation system, our country will be unable to compete in a global market place, sustain jobs and strengthen the overall national economy. NARC believes in exploring innovative transportation financing mechanisms that empower COGs and MPOs and capitalize on their vast experience, employing financing policies that meet regional needs. These policies include, but are not limited to: additional taxing at all levels of government; Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and other user-based fee piloted programs; and, public private partnerships (PPPs) that do not undermine public authority in managing our infrastructure.

One example of PPPs that NARC is advocating for is Regional Infrastructure Improvement Zones (RIIZs). This unique form of a public private partnership would encourage private-sector involvement in the building and construction of infrastructure through favorable tax treatment of funds and a streamlined approval processes. RIIZs would not require the selling or leasing of infrastructure, but will allow private corporations or individuals to contribute funds toward the maintenance and construction of all infrastructure as predetermined by the regions.

- **SAFETY:** Safety is paramount in establishing and maintaining an efficient multi-modal transportation network with COGs and MPOs serving as a primary leader in transportation safety planning activities. NARC advocates for policy and program changes that reduce the inconsistencies surrounding COG/MPO participation in safety planning and better incorporate regional transportation interests into safety planning programs carried out at the state level.
- **FREIGHT:** Goods movement is the backbone of America's commerce and requires a high degree of coordination between multiple modes of transportation – highways, ports, railroads and airlines. Connectivity and easy access between these modes is integral to freight mobility and the resulting economic prosperity and community development. For these reasons and many others, freight and goods movement should have a dedicated funding source and be incorporated in our national surface transportation program at the federal, state and regional levels. COGs and MPOs are well positioned to coordinate the freight interests within the regional context of transportation, economic development and environmental planning.
- **AUTHORITY & RESOURCES:** NARC believes that the success of regional planning is contingent upon proper authority for local elected officials and adequate resources to build capacity for greater regional cooperation in addressing the following key issues: integration of urban, suburban and rural interests; efficient goods movement; transportation safety planning; good decision-making; and, the future financing of our transportation system.
- **DATA & TECHNOLOGY:** Transportation planning and decision-making relies on the most up-to-date data available to create models that forecast future transportation and land-use needs. NARC believes that policy and program changes are needed at all levels of government to improve data collection and promulgation and the technology available to aid the regional planning process in addressing emerging transportation, land-use and environmental issues within a complex landscape.
- **COOPERATION:** The cooperation between and integration of rural, suburban and urban regions will bolster the American economy and maintain standards of living. NARC advocates for policies that prioritize the linkages between all regions, regardless of size, and supports transportation policies that maximize the authority, funding and positive future role for all regions.