From February 10 to February 11, 2019, the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) hosted its annual National Conference of Regions in Washington, DC. With more than 150 municipal and county elected officials and regional directors in attendance, the conference was one of the most successful in years. There were many highlights including remarks by six Members of Congress, Secretary Ben Carson and other administration officials, as well as many experts on local, state and federal governance. The workshops were diverse in subject matter and focus, and the general sessions were varied and informative. Topics ranged from transportation to infrastructure, broadband, aging, workforce development, climate change and resiliency, as well as how to create a more viable and balanced political climate.

Here is a sample of photographs taken during the conference of speakers, attendees and others.
NARC Board of Directors

Mitchel Herckis, Senior Editor and Director of Strategic Initiatives, RouteFifty.com, Atlantic Media introduces Nancy Ognanovich, Congressional Leadership Reporter, Bloomberg Government.
Left: Nancy Ognanovich speaking to the opening general session on what we can expect from the 116th Congress. Ognanovich spoke about the change in House leadership and what that means for the House, Senate and administration. She also spoke about legislative priorities including budget and appropriations, the debt ceiling, transportation and infrastructure legislation.

Below: Mitchel Herckis and Nancy Ognanovich discussing the future of transportation and infrastructure legislation.
Peter Skoutelas (left), president of the American Public Transit Association spoke about the important role of transit in livable communities. He is joined in this photo by Seminole County Commissioner and NARC Board Member Lee Constantine.

Diane Rath, executive director Alamo Area Council of Governments (right) led a discussion on the 2020 Census with Jim Reed, executive director of the Central Texas Council of Governments, Marlene Nagel, Community Development Director, Mid-America Regional Council, and Aaron Schill, Data and Mapping Director, Mid-Ohio Regional Council.
Lynn Ross, founder of Spirit of Change Consulting, spoke about how the civic commons is an essential part of cities. Ms. Ross currently is leading the Knight Foundation’s *Reimagining the Civic Commons*, demonstrating that public spaces should be welcoming to diverse populations and serve multiple purposes in creating vibrant communities.

Clarence Anthony, CEO and Executive Director of the National League of Cities spoke about the important role that regions can play helping city leaders build better, stronger and more equitable communities.
Members of NARC’s Economic and Community Development Committee learned about the new Opportunity Zones program and a new Department of Agriculture public-private partnership program designed to help expand local and regional food systems.

Panel members included from left to right, NARC Board Member Jennifer Robinson; Matt Josephs, Local Initiatives Support Corporation; Mike Wallace, National League of Cities; Brett Theodos, Urban Institute; and Wes King, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.

NARC Executive Director Leslie Wollack and NARC President Geof Bensen welcome Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson to the conference.
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Benjamin S. Carson spoke about a range of issues of importance to his work at the Department of Housing and Urban Development including affordable housing and homelessness.

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee joined the conference to discuss the important role developing a possible infrastructure package, as well as reauthorization of the surface transportation and water resources legislation, and legislation to reauthorize the Economic Development Administration. Speakers included:

The Honorable Peter DeFazio (D-OR), U.S. House of Representatives and Chair, of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
The Honorable Garret Graves, (R-LA), U.S. House of Representatives (left) and The Honorable Dina Titus (D-NV), U.S. House of Representatives (right)

Lisa Soronen (below), Executive Director of the State and Local Legal Center, spoke about federalism and the Supreme Court.

Anthony Bedell (right), Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Department of Transportation, spoke about the Department’s legislative agenda and how it will address a variety of issues, including auto safety, automated vehicles, and infrastructure.
On Wednesday, February 13, NARC members attended a congressional breakfast.

Tracy Oscavich of Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, David Behrend of North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, and Becky Bradley of Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Among the speakers was Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) seen below with NARC President Geof Bensen.
Also speaking at NARC’s Congressional Breakfast was Representative Katie Hill (D-CA) who is seen left with NARC Board Member and Caldwell, ID mayor Garret Nancolas.

Representative Paul Tonko (D-NY) also spoke at NARC’s Congressional Breakfast about his leadership role on the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change. As part of his work on the Natural Resources Committee, Tonko plans to continue his push for legislation to protect vital water resources.
Michiana Area Council of Governments Executive Director James Turnwald (center right), Nappanee, IN mayor Phil Jenkins (left), and Councilman Ernie Wiggins (right) spoke with Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-IN) about the importance of transportation in the Michiana region.

Valerie McCall, Chief of Government, Cleveland, OH (left) and Grace Gallucci, Executive Director, Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), Cleveland, OH, met with Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY)
Members of Mid-America Regional Council’s Board of Directors and management team met with Representative Sharice Davids (D-KS).
Houston-Galveston Regional Council executive director Chuck Wemple met with Representative Sylvia Garcia (D-TX) to discuss Hurricane Harvey recovery, transportation and infrastructure.
MVRPC’s Executive Director, Brian O. Martin, along with MORPC staff met with Senator Rob Portman and Senator Sherrod Brown during the 2019 National Conference of Regions in Washington D.C.