

September 20, 2018 [View this email in your browser](#)



### **Register Today for NARC's Executive Directors Conference!**

Join NARC, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Council, and your peers in Cleveland, Ohio September 30 – October 2 for a not-to-be missed opportunity to learn about ideas and best practices from your colleagues and other experts around the nation. Registration for NARC's 2018 Executive Directors Conference (EDC) is now open [here](#). Conference sessions and the room block will be at **Metropolitan at The 9, Autograph Collection**. See our most recent conference agenda draft [here](#).

NARC Board Members (and those who manage travel for Board Members), don't forget to **RSVP here** for both the Board Retreat and Dinner. The Board Dinner will begin after 6pm on Tuesday, October 2nd and the meeting will end before 2pm on Wednesday, October 3rd. Please plan your departure flights accordingly. If you have any questions about logistics, please reach out to Marcy Fritter at [marcy@narc.org](mailto:marcy@narc.org).

## **CONGRESS BRIEF**

### **FAA Language Ready, AV Start Not Included**

The transportation committees in both the House and Senate are aiming to release reconciled FAA reauthorization language tomorrow. The House plans to vote next week and then send the bill to the Senate. Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Chairman John Thune (R-SD) has indicated he will not attach the self-driving car bill to the aviation bill. Thune said that the trial lawyers declined their latest offer on the AV Start bill which ended his efforts. The current FAA authorization expires on September 30.

### **Appropriations Update: Stopgap Passed, Signature Required**

On Friday, President Trump will sign a package of three appropriations bills that includes Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction-Veterans Affairs. The Senate has passed a second package of bills that includes Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, plus a stopgap measure to ensure remaining agencies are funded through December 7. This would avoid a partial government shutdown, but only if the President signs it. Trump this morning indicated he would consider vetoing the bill to put pressure on Congress to provide additional funding for a border wall. There is time to work things out, however. The House returns on Tuesday and will take up the bill then. An extension would be required by September 30 to avoid a partial shutdown.

### **Differing Personalities Vying for Transportation Top Spot**

With Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) term-limited as Chair and retiring at the end of this Congress, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Steering Committee will decide on leadership posts later this year. Sam Graves (R-MO) and Jeff Denham (R-CA) are two Republicans vying for the Committee Chairmanship or Ranking Member position (pending the November election results). Both Congressman have shown to influence members and issues, but Graves' behind-the-scenes

style diverges from Denham's energetic and high-profile lawmaking evidenced in the discharge petition on immigration. The two candidates are very similar ideologically, but the outcome is uncertain given the needs of the party and the candidates' history.

### **House Sends Water Resources Infrastructure Bill to Senate with Unanimous Vote**

The House unanimously approved bipartisan, comprehensive *Water Resources Development Act* (WRDA) legislation – the *America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (S. 3021)*. Although the House already passed a WRDA package earlier this summer, this new bill is the product of negotiations and agreement between both congressional chambers. Senate leaders are confident they can get this bill to the president's desk, despite Senator Richard Burr's (R-NC) vow to block any environmental bills from coming to the floor until he can secure a vote for the renewal of the Department of the Interior's Land and Water Conservation Fund. The National League of Cities (NLC), U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), and National Association of Counties (NACo) released a **letter** applauding the efforts of both the House and Senate to move forward with this bill and their inclusion of provisions that will help our communities, which NARC agrees with as well.

## **ADMINISTRATION BRIEF**

### **Letter to Secretary Chao on Capital Investment Grant Program**

Several dozen members of the U.S. House sent a letter to Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao expressing their concern with the delay in Capital Investment Grant (CIG) appropriated funds. The letter urges Secretary Chao to "immediately begin entering into new Full Funding and Small Starts Grant Agreements." The letter is in response to the slow award process and threatens to push for more strict obligating requirements in the future.

## **REGIONS BRIEF**

### **Scenario Planning Conference Attendees Take a Close Look at Central Ohio**

Last week, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) hosted the Consortium for Scenario Planning Annual Conference. MORPC shared more about their scenario planning initiatives such as insight2050, which is helping Central Ohio plan for a high development and population growth future. Conference attendees also had a walking tour of downtown Columbus. Erich Zimmermann, NARC's Deputy and Transportation Director, sits on the Consortium's Board and was in Columbus learning more about MORPC's and other members' scenario planning activities. Learn more about the consortium [here](#).

### **Before Deadly Collapse, Florida Bridge Contractors Fined for 'Serious' Violations**

Five companies involved in the construction of the Florida International University pedestrian bridge, which collapsed in March, face citations and fines from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The companies did not provide proper safety line and left workers in the area despite the developing cracks. The companies have 15 business days to accept the citations and a criminal case remains possible. The National Transportation Safety Board is also investigating the cause of the collapse, which will likely take months.

### **Texas Company Gets \$300M Loan for High-Speed Train Project**

Texas Central Partners recently secured a \$300 million loan from Japanese sources for the high-speed rail project linking Dallas to Houston. While this loan puts the private endeavor on track for construction once approved, that decision is not expected to arrive until August 2019. The project is estimated to cost a total of \$12 to \$15 billion, covering 240 miles in 90 minutes.

### **Passenger Rail Project Between Southern California and Las Vegas Has a New Backer**

Brightline, a private Miami-based rail provider, acquired the high-speed rail project XpressWest, which seeks to connect Southern California to Las Vegas. The project has failed to get off the ground over the last ten years and was originally estimated at \$7 billion, but Brightline's proposed electric system and diesel locomotives may drive costs down. The multi-jurisdictional project is set to open by 2022 and has received encouragement from both Nevada and California officials.

### **New Executive Directors at SANDAG and Tri-County RPC**

Both the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) in California and the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) in Michigan have new leaders moving them forward. The SANDAG Board of Directors has officially selected Hasan Ikhrata, who has served as the

executive director at the Southern California Council of Governments (SCAG) for ten years. Hasan is also a member of NARC's Executive Directors Council. The TCRPC Board of Commissioners recently appointed their interim executive director, Jim Snell, to serve as their next executive director. Jim was hired by TCRPC in 2015 as their chief transportation planner and has dedicated over 26 years of his career to transportation planning. Congratulations to Hasan and Jim on their new leadership roles!

## **JOBS**

*[View full list of jobs!](#)*

### **Transportation Engineer/Transportation Planner**

Metropolitan Area Planning Agency, Omaha, NE

### **Assistant/Associate Planner**

San Joaquin Council of Governments, Stockton, CA

### **Transportation Programs Manager**

Benton-Franklin Council of Governments, Richland, WA

### **Communications Manager**

Greater Portland Council of Governments, Portland, ME

### **DTP Travel Forecasting Program Director**

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Washington, DC

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

*[View full list opportunities!](#)*

### **Smart Columbus Program's Mobility Assistance for People with Cognitive Disabilities**

September 26, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

The Mobility Assistance for People with Cognitive Disabilities (MAPCD) is one of nine Smart Columbus projects. This project's goal is to enable people with cognitive disabilities to travel more independently on fixed-route bus service. The project team includes City of Columbus staff, subject matter experts with the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) and Ohio State University (OSU), and participating individuals with cognitive disabilities. Use of the term "cognitive disabilities" was decided by subject matter experts at OSU and COTA to include clinical diagnoses of autism, Down Syndrome, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and dementia along with less severe cognitive conditions such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), dyslexia (difficulty reading), dyscalculia (difficulty with math), and learning disabilities.

### **2019 Environmental Excellence Awards**

Application Deadline: September 28

This biennial program was developed by FHWA to honor partners, projects, and processes that excel in meeting growing transportation needs while protecting and enhancing the environment. While working in partnership with states, organizations, businesses, and individuals, FHWA encourages environmental stewardship and increased awareness of the successes that can be achieved by incorporating environmental excellence into our everyday work.

### **Walk into Action: Walking and Walkability Policy Issues**

October 10, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

At the national, state, and local level, walking advocates can use their voice, and their vote, to support policies, programs, and candidates that support healthy, active, and engaged communities. Learn about how you can use your voice and your vote to support walking and walkability by engaging communities and elected officials on a variety of intersecting issues. This webinar assumes some knowledge of issues related to walking and walkability.

### **Questionnaire Regarding Access Management**

Responses requested by October 12, 2018

The Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) is seeking information from

transportation agencies, researchers, and consultants on current practices used to measure the value of access management recommendations at the small project, corridor, and program levels. Cost/benefit methods for other transportation actions that could be adapted for access management projects are also of interest. This short scanning questionnaire is part of National Cooperative Highway Research Program Project 25-47: How to Measure and Communicate the Value of Access Management, led by CUTR at the University of South Florida, along with Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

### **EDC-5 Regional Summits**

The objectives of the Every Day Counts (EDC) Regional Summits are to: facilitate dialogue, encourage creative thinking, and celebrate a shared vision for new opportunities. These Summits are an integral component of the EDC model, bringing together transportation leaders and front-line professionals responsible for the development and delivery of highway projects. The Summits provide transportation professionals the opportunity to learn about the 10 innovations promoted through EDC-5, exchange ideas with their state, local, and industry counterparts, and provide feedback to FHWA on the support and resources needed to adopt the innovations. The summits will be in **Baltimore, MD, Albany, NY, St. Louis, MO, Portland, OR, and Orlando, FL.**

### **FTA Joint State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Workshop and Training**

October 23 – 25, Washington, DC

The workshop will focus on effective rail transit system safety and current oversight responsibilities. The workshop will also promote the exchange of information between attendees and FTA's Transit Safety Oversight, Headquarters, and Regional Offices, as well as other Federal agencies, regarding new programs and requirements to strengthen rail transit safety oversight. Contractors supporting the State Safety Oversight program and rail transit agencies are also invited to attend.

### **2019 TRB Annual Meeting Resiliency Tabletop**

January 13, 2019, Washington, DC, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM ET

This exercise will assemble fifteen multi-disciplinary teams at the Annual Transportation Research Board (TRB) meeting in Washington, DC. Each team will have representatives in each of the following groups: economics and commerce, infrastructure, emergency management, government transportation entities (all levels), and government non-transportation entities. During the 4-hour exercise, each team will collectively complete a workbook to stimulate a recovery from a freight disruption that affects local communities, regional economies, and national supply chains.

## **CONTACT US**

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