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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS



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2016 NATIONAL
CONFERENCE OF REGIONS

FEBRUARY 7-9*
WASHINGTON, DC

CONGRESS BRIEF

House Votes to Overturn WOTUS Rule

The House voted yesterday to overturn the recent U.S. Environmental Protection Agency *Waters of the United States* (WOTUS) rule that expands federal regulatory authority over small waterways under the *Clean Water Act*. The Senate earlier passed the same resolution of disapproval, which now goes to the President's desk. He will veto it.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Administration Announcement on Self-Driving Cars

At the North American International Auto Show today, USDOT Secretary Anthony Foxx called for Congress to provide \$4 billion over ten years for pilot programs related to developing and adopting self-driving cars. Joined by National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Administrator and several industry experts, Foxx announced the creation of a blueprint for the deployment of vehicles that includes working with states to create coherent regulations over the next six months and continuing to strive for safe deployment while allowing for innovation.

REGIONS BRIEF

Scenario Planning Update

NARC hosted two events last week regarding scenario planning. In a webinar on Monday, PlaceMatters presented the results of interviews with NARC members to establish what tools they are using and how those tools can be improved. For more information, please see the [PlaceMatters presentation](#).

Later in the week, NARC hosted a two-day meeting in Arlington, Virginia to discuss these issues in greater depth. A diverse group of experts from across the country – including researchers, regional councils, federal agencies, and foundations – came together for a lively and hands-on discussion.

It was agreed that the group would explore creation of a scenario planning consortium to advance best practices, identify user needs, work toward solutions, and build a peer network to help organizations use the tools more efficiently. More details will follow on how your organization can get involved. In the meantime, if you are interested in learning more, please send an email to erich@narc.org.

SACOG Director Mike McKeever Retiring

After twelve years at the helm of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Mike McKeever will retire at the end of 2016. McKeever led Sacramento's nationally acclaimed Blueprint regional planning scenario and will be remembered for changing the future of the region for the better. He spoke about building consensus in a region with diverging viewpoints and making small pieces of change over time in order to create a more sustainable future. As an important member of the Sacramento region and NARC, his leadership will be missed.

Cities Embrace Big-Ticket Transit Projects

In 2015, voters approved 24 of 34 public transit-related ballot initiatives which mostly included raising taxes for rail and bus projects. This success rate occurred primarily at the city and county level. Light rail and rapid bus service are often less expensive and with several examples of recent success stories, these projects are on the rise. However, low gas prices have contributed to a decline in overall transit ridership and concern that driving will be the preferred method of transit in many areas, until it becomes more expensive or less convenient.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Regional Environmental Planner

Central Texas Council of Governments, Belton, TX

Director of Senior and Disability Services

Rogue Valley Council of Governments, Central Point, OR

Planning Manager – Transportation

Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization, Sarasota, FL

Director of Planning and Zoning

City of South Burlington, South Burlington, VT

OPPORTUNITIES

[View full list of grants and events!](#)

Upcoming MPO Staffing and Organizational Structures Survey

In coming weeks, you will receive an email with a request to complete an important survey. This survey is being sent to all MPOs as part of a national study on MPO staffing and organizational structures. This project is being sponsored by FHWA and FTA and is being conducted by the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida. The results from this survey will be used to update the 2010 report, *Staffing and Administrative Capacity of Metropolitan Planning Organizations*. Please keep an eye out for the email with the survey link and complete it as soon as possible.

Smart City Challenge Information Sessions

January 19, 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET: Smart City Challenge Application Homestretch, An Open Q&A Session

January 21, 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET: Understanding Dedicated Short Range Communications

These USDOT information sessions will provide details on the Smart City Challenge. This challenge will concentrate federal resources into one medium-sized city, selected through a nationwide competition. USDOT will provide funding of up to \$40 million to the winning city to demonstrate how advanced data and ITS technologies can be used to reduce congestion, keep travelers safe, protect the environment, respond to climate change, connect underserved communities, and support economic vitality. See the Fact Sheet for the challenge [HERE](#).

Talking Freight Transportation Resiliency

January 20, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

Freight transportation movements, both nationally and globally, rely on efficient transportation systems that allow freight carriers to transport their customers' goods in a manner that minimizes both travel time and costs. However, the transportation network is often subject to disruptions, both recurring and non-recurring, that reduce efficiency and can increase both travel time and costs. This webinar will discuss general freight transportation resilience needs, and will highlight recent research on inland port resilience initiatives.

TMIP Webinar: 2014 Travel Behavior Surveys in Southern Nevada

January 21, 2:00 – 4:00 PM ET

The Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Southern Nevada completed two large surveys in 2015: the *2014 Household Travel Survey* and the *2014 Origin and Destination On-Board*. This webinar will cover lessons learned regarding survey design efforts, sampling methods used, types of emerging technologies used, response rates, challenges in data collection, real-time QC during data collection, post-collection adjustments, and collaborative team work between survey consultants, travel demand modelers, and RTC.

SCDA 2016 Call for Applications

Applications Due: January 28

Sustainable Cities Design Academy (SCDA) provides leadership development and technical assistance to public-private partnerships engaged in planning for sustainable development. Through SCDA, the American Architectural Foundation seeks to educate, inspire, and support local government, business and community leaders, and developers by providing the resources and tools they need to develop long-term solutions for the built environment in our ever-changing world. The American Architectural Foundation announces the SCDA 2016 Call for Applications and encourages public-private partnership project teams to apply. Successful applicants will join AAF for a design workshop in Washington, D.C., August 3-5.

ATTRI State of the Practice, Innovation, and Assessment of Research Webinar

February 2, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

USDOT will review the recently completed *State of the Practice* and *Innovation* scan reports as well as the *Assessment of Relevant Research* document for USDOT's Accessible Transportation Technologies Research Initiative (ATTRI). The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Accessible Public Transportation (RERC-APT) will share the results of the *State of Practice Scan*, *Innovation Scan*, and *Assessment of Relevant Research* documents, using specific examples from accessible transportation or related fields of how the relevant methods, practices, and technologies can meet the needs of transportation users of all abilities. USDOT will also provide a brief update on the status of the overall ATTRI program and next steps.

Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets Extended

Last year, Secretary Foxx challenged city leaders to raise the bar for bicyclist and pedestrian safety by joining a year-long *Mayors' Challenge for Safer People and Safer Streets* effort. Mayors and other elected city officials created local action teams to advance safety and accessibility goals by taking on challenge activities. Over the course of the year, USDOT invited Challenge Cities to participate in forums, webinars, and learn about available resources to help them accomplish their goals. The challenge is now open until September 2016. Interested cities can still join the more than 200 Challenge cities committed to improving walking and biking by emailing pedbikesafety@dot.gov.

CONTACT US

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