



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

January 15, 2015

Transportation Thursdays



2015 NATIONAL
CONFERENCE OF REGIONS

FEBRUARY 8-10, 2015
WASHINGTON, DC

Would you Like a Seat at the TRB Table? The Transportation Research Board's (TRB's) Annual Meeting – which attracts more than 12,000 transportation professionals to DC each year – is a premier event on the transportation calendar. Want to help shape the planning focus of TRB by joining the Metropolitan Planning, Policy, and Process Committee? With significant turnover this year, the Chairman is looking for new faces to bring energy and fresh ideas to the table. If you are interested, please contact Erich (erich@narc.org or 202.618.5697) to discuss the opportunity further.

LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

Thune Floats Budget Reconciliation as Pathway on Transportation: This week, Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John Thune (R-SD) floated the idea of using budget reconciliation as a way to fund transportation. Reconciliation requires 50 votes instead of the Senate's usual 60-vote threshold. Such a bill would overhaul the corporate tax code while providing an increase in funding for transportation. Corporate tax reform is the transportation funding vehicle President Obama advocates as well, so this approach could win support among Senate Democrats. According to Sen. Thune, such a bill could be ready to move by summer, and would therefore require a short-term extension of the transportation program, which is currently set to expire on May 31.

New Congress Brings Flurry of Bill Filings: As the 114th Congress gets underway, members are busy introducing (or reintroducing) legislation they would like considered. *Transportation Thursdays* will highlight the most relevant of these bills each week. First up is the *Commute Less Act of 2015* (H.R. 200), which has been introduced several times by Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ). This bill is still worth noting, however, because it has direct impact on the functioning of MPOs. To wit, the bill:

- Requires MPO transportation plans to include employer and transportation management organization outreach strategies to help create and expand employer-based commuter programs. "Employer-based commuter programs" are implemented by employers to provide their employees with alternatives to driving to and from work in a vehicle occupied by a single individual.
- Requires each MPO to establish an employer advisory council consisting of representatives of employers in the transportation management area. Requires each council to develop and maintain a commuter trip reduction plan that identifies area goals for the reduction of vehicle miles traveled during peak commuting hours.
- Requires MPO TIPs to include a list of projects identified in a commuter trip reduction plan that help achieve such reduction goals.

ADMINISTRATIVE BRIEF

NHTSA's New Administrator: Mark Rosekind was sworn in last week as Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Rosekind previously served as a board member of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). Click [HERE](#) for more information on his career.

National Operations Center of Excellence Unveiled: The new National Operations Center of Excellence (NOCOe) was introduced at this week's Transportation Research Board (TRB) meeting, a collaboration between the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), and the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America), with support from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). NOCoE is billed as a new, comprehensive technical services center and website that will offer an array of peer exchanges, webinars, assessments, on-call assistance, and training on topics such as

integrated corridor management, active traffic management, traffic management centers, and incident response. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

REGIONAL BRIEF

ETCOG Wins National Excellence in Transportation Award: East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) won the award for the marketing and communications videos they produced for EasTexConnects. The primary purpose of EasTexConnects is to increase transportation choices as a way to improve quality of life in East Texas, and the videos showcase public transportation options available to all citizens throughout the East Texas Region. You can view the winning videos [HERE](#).

OPPORTUNITY BRIEF

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of grants and events still open!

WEBINAR: The Growth of E-Commerce and Its Freight Transportation Impacts

January 21, 1:00 - 2:30 PM ET

Internet-based commercial transactions, more commonly called e-commerce, have grown dramatically over the past 20 years. This webinar will discuss the supply chain and freight transportation-related impacts of e-commerce, both from a retailer or distributor point of view and from a freight carrier point of view. It will also assess the challenges and benefits e-commerce sales provide to companies. This webinar is part of the "Talking Freight" webinar series organized by FHWA's Office of Freight Management and Operations and the Office of Planning. Click [HERE](#) for more information and to register.

WEBINAR: Elected Officials Walk the Walk

February 5, 2:00 - 3:00 PM ET

Based on America Walks' recently published case studies, this Webinar will feature three local elected officials who have used their status as political leaders to advance walking and walkability. Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett, Columbia, MO City Councilwoman Barbara Hoppe, and former Arlington County Board Member Chris Zimmerman will describe their personal success stories, which include reducing neighborhood speed limits and inspiring citizens of one community to start exercising and lose a combined one million pounds. Click [HERE](#) to register.

WEBINAR: Eco-Logical Starter Kit, Overview, and Technical Assistance Launch

February 10, 3:00 - 4:00 PM ET

The Eco-Logical approach organizes current methods for addressing natural resource identification, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation into a systematic, step-wise process that starts at the beginning of the transportation planning process and concludes with establishing programmatic approaches to recurring natural resource issues that are implemented at the project level. Learn about the history of Eco-Logical, the steps of the Integrated Eco-Logical Framework, the newly available Starter Kit, other technical assistance resources, and testimonials from Starter Kit users. Click [HERE](#) to register.

CONFERENCE: NARC's 2015 National Conference of Regions

February 8-10, 2015 - Washington, DC

Registration is open for the National Conference of Regions. This conference is a forum for locally-elected officials and their Regional Councils to explore federal policy issues, and discuss NARC's legislative priorities for the 114th Congress. Click [HERE](#) for the draft agenda and conference webpage.