



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

**NATIONAL
CONFERENCE OF REGIONS**

FEBRUARY 11-14, 2018
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Registration is Open!

**Don't Delay - Reserve Your Hotel Room Before NARC's Hotel Block Closes
Tomorrow, January 19!**

MEMBER REQUESTS

KHCGCC Seeks Examples for TSA Security Audit Process

The Kokomo Howard County Governmental Coordinating Council (KHCGCC), the MPO in Kokomo, Indiana, is seeking examples and information from NARC member MPOs on Transportation Security Administration (TSA) security audits.

Has your MPO gone through the Baseline Assessment and Security Enhancements (BASE) process or have the documentation prepared for a TSA security audit? The types of documents KHCGCC are looking for as examples include: Continuity of Operations Plan, System Safety Program Plan, Standard Operating Procedures, Operating Instructions, Operating Rules, Business Recovery Plan, Training Records, National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) procedures, Threat & Vulnerability Assessments, Security Audits, and Regional Emergency Response Plans. Please send responses and questions to Erich Zimmermann, erich@narc.org.

Transportation System Resiliency

NARC has been asked to participate in a roundtable discussion focused on "Resiliency, Reliability, and Energy Infrastructure Planning." Help NARC share your stories. How are you upgrading and preparing infrastructure (i.e. repairing/building more resilient roads, preparing for transportation fuel shortages, investing in alternative fuels, etc.)? What policies and programs are you implementing to support robust infrastructure investment, planning, and response (i.e. upgrading emergency plans, etc.)? Please send all relevant stories to Leslie Wollack, leslie@narc.org, by February 2.

CONGRESS BRIEF

Are Earmarks the Answer?

Every so often, there is a spirited conversation about whether Congress should bring back earmarks. A bipartisan group of lawmakers in the House have approached Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) to request they be allowed to insert earmarks in fiscal year 2019 spending bills, and in a future infrastructure package. This comes approximately one year after the House nearly approved the return of the controversial practice. The House Rules Committee held two hearings on the subject this week, to hear from both members of Congress and outside stakeholders.

Earmark supporters – including Representative Don Young (R-AK) and House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) – argue that the current moratorium on earmarks has ceded congressional control over the distribution of funds to local areas and left it in the hands of unelected bureaucrats at federal agencies. Rules Committee Chairman Pete Sessions (R-TX) has acknowledged “intense interest” among members to resume the practice that was stopped by then-Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) in 2011. Others, including President Trump, have acknowledged that bringing back earmarks could help build bipartisan support for legislation.

Opponents worry that the return of earmarks would mean a return to **pork barrel spending**. Some believe the previous abuse of earmarks is the reason they should remain forbidden. Still, others reject the view that the return of earmarks would bring increased comity to Congress, without giving individual members buy-offs to do so.

No matter where you come down on the practice, the solution is relatively simple. House rules do not prohibit earmarks. Rather, House Republicans changed their own rules to outlaw the practice. Democrats made changes to the earmarking process in 2008 and 2009, requiring additional disclosure by members and preventing private firms from receiving earmarks. Those practices would remain in place or could be modified if the Republicans lift their own rule forbidding earmarks. The Senate earmark ban also occurred in 2011 at the urging of then-President Obama, with the chamber still in Democratic control. Republicans have continued the moratorium under their control.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

The Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book

The 2017 update to FHWA's briefing book reflects recent federal legislation changes concerning the requirements for metropolitan, statewide, and nonmetropolitan transportation planning. It is intended for government officials, transportation decision makers, planning board members, transportation service providers, interested stakeholders, and the public, and covers the basics of transportation planning and key products that are a part of the planning process.

ITS-JPO Looking for Self-Driving Car Framework Contractor

FHWA's Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office (ITS-JPO) has released a pre-solicitation notice for a contractor to continue work on the *Architecture Reference for Cooperative and Intelligent Transportation (ARC-IT)*. ARC-IT is the guide for planning, defining, and integrating ITS technology into the transportation system. The solicitation is for ongoing maintenance and improvement of the “reference architecture and associated tool sets” and for deployment support to state and local agencies to assist them in developing and updating their own regional and project ITS architectures.

USDOT Will Review GM's Petition for Self-Driving Vehicle

Last week General Motors (GM) filed a petition to deploy their **new Cruise AV** vehicle, which lacks a steering wheel and pedals. GM hopes to launch this vehicle in fleets in 2019. Secretary Chao and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have both said they will carefully review the petition, which exempts GM from federal standards for human-operated vehicles, such as having an airbag where a driver's seat would usually be located.

Chamber to Push for Gas Tax Hike for Road and Bridge Upgrades

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is proposing a federal gas tax increase of 5 cents per year for five years as part of its 2018 federal infrastructure initiative, which would generate more than \$375 billion over the next decade. The group has previously called for raising the gas tax and Chamber President Tom Donohue highlighted infrastructure as an important investment during his state of American business speech on January 10. The Chamber held an event earlier today titled

America's Infrastructure Summit: Time to Modernize, which highlighted the importance of increased infrastructure investments and the important role the federal government and private companies play.

REGIONS BRIEF

MORPC Visits Hyperloop One

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) visited the DevLoop Hyperloop One test track last week in Nevada for a tour. The **outdoor lab** is a testing site for real hardware at scale and offers the chance to see the Hyperloop in action. MORPC is one of the winners of the Hyperloop One Global Challenge, which aims to **bring Hyperloop technology** to the Midwest. They are currently discussing a feasibility study for the corridor to understand potential ridership, costs, and strategies for implementation.

Cost Climbs by \$2.8 Billion for California Bullet Train

When voters approved bond financing for the California high speed train from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 2008, it was projected to cost \$40 billion. The latest estimated cost for the entire project has now jumped to \$67 billion after an estimated increase of 35% to the first phase. Officials said they hope to recover the costs down the line but want to be upfront and honest with the public. One reason for the increased costs is that the authority entered into construction contracts before securing rights of way for all of the Central Valley segment, which has taken longer than expected. A mistake the new chief executive, Brian Kelly, said they would not make again. A new business plan is in the works for lawmakers this spring that will include a timeline and new estimated overall cost.

California Approves Greenhouse Gas Reduction Utility Projects

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has approved fifteen pilot projects to speed electric vehicle adoption. The projects from Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison, and San Diego Gas & Electric include electrification of school buses, delivery trucks, and other fleet vehicles; and installing fast charging stations in urban locations. These projects will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and must be implemented within one year. A portion of the funds will also be saved for project evaluation following completion.

APA Healthy Communities Policy Guide

The American Planning Association's (APA) *Healthy Communities Policy Guide* identifies policy ideas for local, state, and federally elected officials to help improve community health and quality of living through planning. The guide addresses challenges from our built, social, and natural environment, and provides policy recommendations to create healthy food systems and increased physical activity for improving community health.

NARC Fleets for the Future project: Simplifying Alt Fuel Vehicle Procurement

Last week, NARC's Fleets for the Future (F4F) grant project was featured in *Advanced Clean Transportation (ACT) News*. The article details the project's success, what to expect in 2018 for vehicle offerings and conference participation, and best practices guides developed for electric vehicles, gaseous fuel vehicles, fleet financing, and fleet transition planning.

JOBS

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

Transportation Section Manager

Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments, Albany, OR

Community and Economic Development Director

Wasatch Front Regional Council, Salt Lake City, UT

Executive Director

Indiana Association of Regional Councils, Indianapolis, IN

OPPORTUNITIES

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

“3I” Series on Infrastructure Ideas and Innovation: Asset Inventories

January 22, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM ET

The Bipartisan Policy Center is launching the BPC Infrastructure Lab and “3I” Series—Infrastructure Ideas and Innovations. This new effort is aimed at providing policymakers with fact-based evidence that can shape strategies for restoring America’s infrastructure. State and local governments across the country are struggling just to repair and maintain their infrastructure systems, let alone expand or upgrade these systems with the latest and greatest technologies. As such, the lab’s first event presents leading public-sector efforts to embed asset management concepts into municipal government practices. In the spotlight: The District of Columbia’s comprehensive asset inventory, which includes 96 percent of all assets owned, a tally of accrued deferred maintenance, and an action plan to improve the District’s infrastructure. NARC member Grace Gallucci, Executive Director of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, is participating on the panel. The event will be webcast.

Performance Based Planning and Programming Webinar

January 25, 1:00 – 3:30 PM ET

FHWA and FTA speakers will provide an overview of the “Performance Based Planning and Programming (PBPP) Requirements,” along with implementation timelines. Peer presenters will share how they are coordinating and collaborating with key partners such as state DOTs, MPOs, and transit operators on PBPP. The purpose of the webinar is to share the latest information and best practices to ensure consistency nationwide when implementing these requirements.

FHWA-FRA Joint Webinar: Section 130 program

January 25, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

The FHWA-FRA Joint Webinar Series discusses a variety of highway-rail grade crossing issues, and tools and strategies to enhance safety. This webinar's focus is on the Section 130 Program, and includes an overview of Section 130 Program requirements and presentations from Montana and North Carolina's Section 130 Programs.

CONTACT US

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