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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

January 30, 2014

Transportation Thursdays

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OPPORTUNITY BRIEF

ADMINISTRATIVE BRIEF LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

REGIONAL BRIEF

2014 NATIONAL
CONFERENCE OF REGIONS

FEBRUARY 9-11, 2014
WASHINGTON, DC

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 **NARC**
Building Regional Communities

NARC Meets with Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx:

NARC President, the Hon. Penelope A. Gross, and NARC staff met this week with U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Anthony Foxx. The meeting was an excellent opportunity to relay NARC's transportation reauthorization priorities. Sec. Foxx was receptive to NARC's message, and reiterated his own belief in the importance of a regional focus to improve the economic well-being of all Americans, with transportation as the crux. He highlighted his desire to work across jurisdictions and federal agencies to help make the best transportation system possible for the nation and his ongoing work with the U.S. Housing and Urban Development. Sec. Foxx also expressed interest in working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture more closely.

Sec. Foxx framed his discussion by asking how we set our transportation

Governments

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system on a path appropriate for the 21st century, and specifically how we can improve the capacity and ability of Councils of Governments (COGs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to be at the center of this ongoing transition.

One more specific issue that was discussed centered on bicycle and pedestrian travel, especially as it relates to safety and planning. In addition, Sec. Foxx's staff emphasized the need for close coordination between NARC and U.S. DOT, as rulemakings start rolling out regarding performance measurement and management.

Sec. Foxx also asked a number of provocative questions which will inform the conversation we have at the Transportation Committee meeting at next month's National Conference of Regions.

- Is our transportation system setting us up for the 21st century?
- How do we leverage local leaders to give a stronger voice to transportation?
- How do we ensure local communities are equipped to handle increased efforts?
- How do we increase MPO capacity?
- How do we better link the work of COGs and MPOs?
- How do we connect MPOs into broader economic issues?

If you won't be joining us in Washington for the NCR, please tell us your thoughts on these issues at **erich@narc.org**.

OPPORTUNITY BRIEF

New! GRANT: Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Funding Opportunity

More Information will be coming in February

The *Health Impact Project* is planning to launch a call for funding proposals this February. Grants will support HIA demonstration projects and the development of HIA programs integrating health in decision-making. HIA help to identify and address likely benefits and risks of a decision made in a field outside of the health sector. Eligible organizations include nonprofits, state, local and tribal agencies, and educational institutions. Click **[HERE](#)** for additional information and **[HERE](#)** for details concerning the application process.

New! WEBINAR: Transportation Research Board (TRB): Pavement Renewal Solutions Research Project

February 4, 2:00 PM EST

TRB will summarize the SHRP 2 **Pavement Renewal Solutions** research project, which provides tools for the design and construction of long-life pavements using existing pavements in-place as part of a new pavement structure. Benefits of applying this suite of tools include: longer lasting pavements, reduced long-term pavement costs, improved construction safety, and a robust decision protocol based on key variable inputs including life-cycle cost analyses. Click [HERE](#) for additional information and [HERE](#) to register.

WEBINAR: 2014 DOT Civil Rights Virtual Symposium

February 4-6

Civil rights continue to be a responsibility of every Federal employee and external stakeholder. During this three-day online symposium, experts from across government will be speaking on current, forward-moving topics, broadening participants' perspectives on how civil rights are integral to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) mission and the everyday workplace. Click [HERE](#) for additional information and to register. Registration will close on January 31st.

WEBINAR: National Performance Measures Research Data Set (NPMRDS) Hosted by FHWA's Office of Freight Management and Operations

February 5, 1:00 PM EST

NPMRDS is the probe data that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is using internally for passenger and freight analysis, and making available to states and MPOs. This webinar will demonstrate how states and MPOs can use the data for performance measures. Click [HERE](#) to register, and [HERE](#) for more information.

New! WEBINAR: Measuring the Pedestrian Streetscape

February 13, 3:00 PM EST

Walking is the number one physical activity choice for most people, and, increasingly, an important aspect of our transportation system. Yet much of our built environment does not support safe, routine and enjoyable walking. This will introduce participants to the Microscale Audit for Pedestrian Streetscape tool that can help communities assess the activity-friendliness of streets, sidewalks, and crossings. Click [HERE](#) to register.

GRANT: Projects to Improve Air Quality at Ports 2013 Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Funding Opportunity

Deadline: February 13, 2014

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Transportation and Air Quality (OTAQ) is soliciting proposals that achieve significant reductions in diesel emissions in terms of tons of pollution produced by diesel engines and diesel emissions exposure, from fleets operating at marine and inland water ports. Eligible diesel emission reduction solutions include verified emission control technologies such as exhaust controls and engine upgrades, verified idle reduction technologies, certified engine repowers, and/or certified vehicle or equipment replacement. Additional information can be found [HERE](#).

GRANT: Round 3 of the Implementation Assistance Program SHRP2

Deadline: February 14, 2014

FHWA recently released the recipients of [Round 2 grants](#) and announced the schedule for rounds 3 and 4. These grants are intended to help transportation agencies deploy new products developed under the second Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2). For additional information or questions, contact Carin Michel, FHWA SHRP2 Implementation Manager at goSHRP2@dot.gov or 410-962-2530. Click [HERE](#) to read the release about the upcoming rounds.

New! WEBINAR: Bicycle Safety Education

February 20, 2:00 PM EST

Join the Safe Routes to School National Partnership as we talk about the important components of bicycle safety curricula and help attendees think through decisions about their programs. Next, there will be a chat with Safe Routes to School Education experts on various types of bicycle safety that can be taught in the classroom. Plus, tips and tricks for programmatic success. Click [HERE](#) to register.

New! CONFERENCE: Freight in the Southeast

March 3-6, 2014; Tampa, FL

The Institute for Trade and Transportation Studies, a regionally-focused organization that works on trade and transportation issues in the southeast, is holding its annual trade conference and might be of interest to the area's MPOs and other transportation planners. On the first night, there will be a working dinner with discussion on "Integrating local and statewide freight planning efforts." For more information, click [HERE](#) or contact Bruce Lambert at bruce@ittsresearch.org.

GRANT: U.S. DOT Announces Availability of \$24.9 Million to Put More Zero-Emission Buses into Service Across America

Deadline: [March 10, 2014](#)

The U.S. DOT's Federal Transit Administration announced the availability of \$24.9 million through its brand new Low or No Emission Vehicle Deployment Program that will put a new generation of advanced, non-polluting transit buses on the road in communities nationwide. The funds are intended to encourage more widespread adoption of reliable "green energy" buses into transit fleets. Click [HERE](#) for the announcement, and [HERE](#) for related information.

ADMINISTRATIVE BRIEF

State of the Union: President Obama delivered his fifth State of the Union address on Tuesday, though he made fairly scant mention of transportation or infrastructure issues in his speech. The President mentioned, again, his desire to reform corporate taxes and use the savings to increase transportation funding. He also pushed for Congress to complete surface transportation and waterways reauthorization this summer. Finally, he promised to act on his own to reduce bureaucracy and streamline permitting for certain projects, to speed up project delivery and get workers building more quickly. The full text of the speech is [HERE](#).

Highway Trust Fund Shortage Could Slow Reimbursement

Payments: The U.S. DOT may have to slow reimbursement payments to states for roads and bridge projects during the peak of construction season to avoid emptying the Highway Trust Fund. Peter Rogoff, the department's acting undersecretary for policy, said "based on the numbers we're seeing coming out of the Treasury Department each month, we won't make it" to the end of the fiscal year.

LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

Members Call for Hearings to Address Highway Trust Fund: Based on current spending and revenue trends, the U.S. DOT estimates that the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) will run out of cash before the end of this fiscal year, earlier than previous projections. Democrats on the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee have written Chairman Dave Camp (R-MI) requesting a hearing on the HTF

and ways to fund it. The letter, signed by all 16 minority members of the committee, expresses concern regarding the consequences of an insufficient balance in the HTF to both transportation infrastructure and the economy as a whole. The letter is [HERE](#).

New Five-Year Farm Bill Passes House: The U.S. House of Representatives voted 251-166 to pass a new farm bill Wednesday morning. The bill would end direct federal payments to farmers and expand crop insurance programs while cutting funding for food stamps. The legislation is the first new comprehensive farm package since 2008. Up next is the Senate, where a vote is expected Monday. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) has said she wants to finish the bill no later than next Wednesday.

Help Us Help You: NARC is currently conducting meetings with congressional staff on both sides of the Capitol, focusing on transportation-related committees at the moment. If you have something notable to discuss or push with your congressional member, please send it to Erich Zimmermann, erich@narc.org.

REGIONAL BRIEF

New York receives \$886 Million for Ongoing Hurricane Sandy Recovery Efforts: U.S. DOT Secretary Anthony Foxx and Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff awarded approximately \$886 million to help the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) continue rebuilding and replacing transportation equipment and facilities damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Sandy, which triggered the worst transit disaster in U.S. history. "The funds we are providing today will go a long way to help the MTA continue clearing debris from tunnels, rebuilding stations, and replacing electrical systems damaged by flooding, giving transit riders a transit system that is stronger than ever before," said Secretary Foxx.

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