

February 11, 2016

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

Full T&I Committee Markup for FAA Bill

Throughout the afternoon on Thursday, the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee continued to vote on amendments to the *Aviation Innovation, Reform, & Reauthorization Act*. At press time, the committee was reconvening to review amendments to the 6-year bill. With 29 amendments reviewed earlier today, the committee will need to act on an additional 41 proposals. The committee held a **hearing** on the bill with four witnesses yesterday. There continues to be stark disagreement on the privatization issue of the air traffic control system and other criticism from both sides of the aisle.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Secretary Foxx Unveils \$98.1 billion FY 2017 Budget Proposal

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx released President Obama's \$98.1 billion **FY 2017 Budget for USDOT** this week. The budget supports funding levels in the FAST Act and moves toward a more regionally-focused approach to funding by steaming money to regional planning organizations. The budget has several focus areas that include expanding the TIGER program, funding development of autonomous vehicles, supporting safety, and improving cybersecurity. **\$3.5 billion** of the budget will go to 31 rail, bus rapid transit, and street projects in 18 states that will create thousands of jobs and expand transportation options under the Capital Investment Grant Program.

USDOT Smart City Challenge Draws Strong Response

77 cities from across the country have submitted applications to USDOT's Smart City Challenge. The challenge asked mid-size cities to submit plans for how they would use the \$50 million to incorporate data, technology, and creativity to improve their city. On March 12, five finalists will be selected to receive \$100,000 to create a final application ahead of the June 2016 final selection.

CBO Releases Report on Making Federal Highway Spending More Productive

Federal spending on highways does not correspond to the way roads are used according to the report, *Approaches to Making Federal Highway Spending More Productive*, released today by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). The non-partisan congressional advisory office recommends three approaches for Congress to make highway spending more productive: charging drivers based on their use of the roads, using cost-benefit analysis to allocate spending, and linking spending to performance.

The report notes that 20-year average improvements mask differences between urban and rural areas and between Interstate highways and other roads which are not always reflected in spending allocation. "For example, even though highway travel is more concentrated on Interstates and in urban areas, and urban roads are typically in poorer condition than rural ones, the federal government and state governments typically have spent more per mile of travel for major repairs on rural roads." Also, according to the report, "the extent to which new highways boost economic

activity has generally declined over time, increasing the importance of maintaining existing capacity. Yet spending has not shifted much accordingly.”

REGIONS BRIEF

Linking Transit Agencies and Land Use Decision Making: Guidebook for Transit Agencies

A new Transportation Research Board report addresses how to improve transit and land use decision-making by providing transit agencies with tools that may help them become more effective at the decision-making table. The tools can help build a transit-supportive community and encourage engagement with MPOs.

Central Texas Extreme Weather and Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment of Regional Transportation Infrastructure

This FHWA grant funded report examines the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization region's vulnerability to extreme weather and climate as part of a pilot program. The report highlights lessons learned for MPOs and state DOTs and next steps for improving resiliency of the area's transportation infrastructure.

JOBS

View full list of jobs!

OPPORTUNITIES

View full list of grants and events!

Talking Freight: National Freight Strategic Plan and FAST Act Freight Provisions

February 17, 1:00 - 2:30 PM ET

Join USDOT officials in an interactive discussion on the future of freight movement in America, including freight provisions in the FAST Act and the draft National Freight Strategic Plan. Improving the nation's freight network is a key priority for USDOT, and this opportunity will help them gain insight on the trends and challenges facing freight transportation over the next 30 years.

Pathways to Opportunity: Housing, Transportation, and Social Mobility

February 23, 2:00 – 4:00 PM ET

Two important factors connecting communities to employment, education, and vital services are affordable housing and transportation. While improving proximity and access to jobs alone won't solve social mobility challenges, it can ameliorate problems like segregation, concentrated poverty, and low-density sprawl that pose real barriers to economic progress for low-income families. Join in person or by webcast to hear Brookings Vice President and Director of the Metropolitan Policy Program moderate a conversation between HUD Secretary Julián Castro and Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. The conversation will be followed by a response panel of experts from metropolitan areas across the country who will discuss local level impacts.

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