NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REGIONS

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

Presentations Available!

CONGRESS BRIEF

FAA Expiration Looming

When Congress returns from recess, they will have just sixteen legislative days to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) has struggled to get support for privatizing air traffic control operations, despite support from the administration. The Senate bill does not include the privatization provision but does include a controversial provision from Senate Commerce Chairman John Thune (R-SD) to expand pilot training options for flying commercial planes. These issues will need to be resolved before a solution can pass ahead of the March 31 expiration or another extension of the program will be required.

Positive Train Control Hearing

A House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee hearing last week on the implementation of positive train control (PTC) featured several rail experts, including Amtrak CEO Richard Anderson and Federal Railroad Administration Chief Counsel. The committee questioned the delays in meeting the congressional mandate and rejected adding extensions beyond this year. Anderson stated that the company may halt operations for railroads that cannot meet the required safety conditions and is considering whether to continue operations on routes that do not require PTC. Commuter railroads such as New Jersey Transit and MARC, the commuter rail in Maryland, could come to a halt on January 1 if the technology is not implemented.

Lawmakers Push to Include Digital in Infrastructure Plans

Lawmakers from both parties are pushing to keep digital infrastructure in the conversation about the president's infrastructure package. Whether hardening our electric grid or providing broadband to all communities, Representative Ted Lieu (D-CA) says that "we need to invest in digital capacity as much as in concrete." Texas Representative Will Hurd (R-TX) said digital infrastructure will help improve healthcare through telemedicine and strengthen border security through fiber optic cables on the U.S.-Mexico border. Some suggest paying for digital

infrastructure through a tax on broadband service, while others suggest using the models of institutions like the North American Development Bank, which uses a mix of public and private funds to finance infrastructure projects.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

FRA Announces $73 Million for Rail Capital Projects and Operating Assistance

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is accepting applications for $73 million in grant funding for projects to strengthen intercity passenger rail, support capital projects, and boost safety initiatives. The new grant programs are expected to leverage private, state, and local investments and may include safety initiatives such as the implementation ofPTC, improved highway-rail grade crossings, and congestion mitigation. Funds will be dispersed through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program and the Restoration and Enhancement Grants program. At least 25 percent, or $17 million, of CRISI's $68 million in funding will be used for rural projects like highway-rail grade crossing improvement projects.

Wyoming Integrates Connected Vehicle Data into its Traffic Management Platform

Wyoming DOT adapted the code for USDOT's Operational Data Environment to process and distribute messages from connected vehicles (CVs) as a part of their USDOT Connected Vehicle Pilot program. The messages received from CVs are sent to the state's traffic management center and integrated into traffic management and information dissemination systems to relay information, such as road conditions and weather data, to the public. Information is also integrated and automatically updated in the state's 511 systems in near real time and sent to fleet management centers. Integration of this technology shows how CVs might be used across the country to improve information dissemination and driving conditions.

REGIONS BRIEF

A New State Preemption Battlefield: Dockless Bikesharing

State legislators in Florida are considering a bill that would preempt the ability of local lawmakers to craft their own regulations around dockless bikes. Supporters of the bill argue that a statewide policy would create a path for newbikeshare companies to implement their business and not have to deal with individual municipalities. Opponents say that it circumnavigates a city's ability to control or benefit from services that operate on their streets. The bill passed out of committee in a 13 to 1 vote and must pass through another committee before heading to the house floor. If it passes, it would take effect July 1, 2018.

JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Principal Planner

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Stateline, NV

Senior Transportation Analyst

Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle, WA

Program Manager, Transportation Funding

Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle, WA

Executive Director

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

OPPORTUNITIES

View full list of grants and events!

TPM Implementation Office Hours

February 13 – February 27

FHWA is hosting TPM Implementation Office Hours, a flipped teaching, webinar-based approach to ensure the successful implementation of a performance-based federal-aid highway program. Flipped teaching is an instructional technique that requires participants to review materials ahead of time and bring their questions to discuss during a webinar. Two 90-minute sessions will be held

for each of the performance areas.

USDOT Public Meeting on AVs
March 1, 1:00 – 4:30 PM ET
The USDOT Office of the Secretary will hold a public meeting on March 1 to seek input on *Automated Vehicles 3.0*. This draft document provides a framework for addressing automation in the surface transportation system and describes USDOT's multimodal approach to the safe rollout of automated vehicles (AVs). The meeting is an open listening session. All comments will be oral, and presentations should be submitted to the docket for consideration. The meeting will be webcast.

Ridership Forecasting with STOPS for Transit Project Planning
May 14-16, Atlanta, GA
June 12-14, Seattle, WA
 The National Transit Institute is offering a course on transit ridership forecasting using FTA's **Simplified Trips-on-Project Software package** (STOPS) in both Atlanta and Seattle. FTA developed the course to provide training on STOPS and its usefulness in transit project planning. The course is intended for travel forecasters looking to understand STOPS in detail as well as transit planners looking to become more proficient in the use of travel forecasts to inform planning decisions. The three-day course covers: how STOPS works; how to use STOPS for individual projects; and how to use ridership forecasts to prepare a narrative about the benefits of transit projects.

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