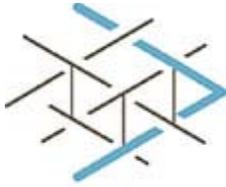


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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

March 6, 2014

Transportation Thursdays

NARC LEADERSHIP

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NARC Executive Directors
Council;
Executive Director,
Southwestern
Pennsylvania Commission

Hon. Fred Strong
Chair, Transportation
Committee
Board Member, NARC
and
San Luis Obispo Council
of Governments

Lyle Wray
Chair, Transportation
Committee
Executive Director, Capitol
Region Council of
Governments

[ADMINISTRATIVE BRIEF](#) [LEGISLATIVE BRIEF](#)
[REGIONAL BRIEF](#) [OPPORTUNITY BRIEF](#)

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is performing an assessment of existing processes and practices metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and other transportation planning agencies use to assess gaps in their transportation system performance as they relate to public access for essential services. NARC is sending this information request to all MPOs on behalf of FHWA.

FHWA considers “access to essential services” as transportation access by the general public, via automobile, public transit, walking, biking, or other means, to employment, health care, education, healthy food/lifestyle, and recreational opportunities.

Please take a few moments to answer the 12 questions in this brief survey, which can be accessed at the link below. The survey should require only a few minutes to complete. **FHWA requests responses by this Monday, March 10. Click [HERE](#) to take the survey.**

If you have any questions regarding this information, don't hesitate to contact Ken Petty (kenneth.petty@dot.gov, 202-366-6654) or Harlan Miller (harlan.miller@dot.gov, 202-366-0847). This effort is in support of Collection Request 201301-2125-001 on the “Assessment of Transportation Planning Agency Needs.”

Michael Parks
Chair, Transportation
Committee
Assistant Executive
Director, Brazos Valley
Council of Governments

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ADMINISTRATIVE BRIEF

President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Budget Blueprint Released This

Week: The Budget would increase total U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) spending more than 25% over last year's appropriated amounts. In addition, the Budget proposes spending \$302 billion (B) over four years to reauthorize the nation's surface transportation programs, which expire October 1, 2014. This represents a significant increase in annual spending, though this total includes dedicated rail funding which has not previously been included in surface transportation authorizing legislation. This additional spending and the current shortfall in the highway trust fund (HTF) would be covered by a \$63B transfer to the HTF using "transition revenue" from "pro-growth business tax reform." In addition, the proposal includes a performance measure to prioritize "fix it first" projects; \$10B over four years for a dedicated freight program; a substantial increase in funding for transit and passenger rail programs (increasing funding from \$12.3B to \$22.3B in 2015); and \$5B for competitive *Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery* (TIGER) Grants.

The Budget also proposes to improve the Federal permitting process by creating a new Infrastructure Permitting Improvement Center and a Permitting Dashboard to be managed by DOT's Office of the Secretary. The Center will coordinate activities across nearly twenty Federal agencies and bureaus responsible for approval of transportation and infrastructure projects. The dashboard is envisioned as a public website to track project schedules and metrics for major projects.

The Budget also includes \$9B in competitive funding, including \$4B to "incentivize innovation and local policy reforms to encourage better performance, productivity, and cost-effectiveness in our transportation systems." This competitive grant program, called *Fixing and Accelerating Surface Transportation*, would incentivize State and local partners to adopt reforms in areas including safety, peak traffic demand management, and others. Examples included in the budget include implementation of distractive driving requirements or inclusion of mass transit, bike, and pedestrian options in transportation plans.

Click **[HERE](#)** for DOT's FY2015 Detailed Budget Documentation; Click **[HERE](#)** for the Administration's DOT Budget Overview.

LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

House Hearing: Overview of Public-Private Partnerships for

Highway and Transit Projects: The Panel on Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) met on Wednesday, March 5 to receive testimony on the role public-private partnerships play in the delivery of highway and transit projects. P3s are contractual agreements between public- and private-sector entities that allow for the procurement and delivery of a facility or service for public use. Though it is not a complete solution for solving the HTF crisis, increasing private sector involvement in highway and transit projects may help alleviate some federal financing pressure, experts told House lawmakers. They said that it is just one of many areas that lawmakers should consider. Joseph Kile, Assistant Director for Microeconomic Studies at the Congressional Budget Office, stated that “on the basis of evidence from a small number of studies, it appears that such partnerships have built highways slightly less expensively and slightly more quickly, compared with the traditional public-sector approach.” James M. Bass, Interim Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer of the Texas DOT, claimed that “P3s in Texas have, and continue to play a vital role in how we deliver critical transportation projects...the private sector is flush with funds to invest in infrastructure projects and it is Congress’ duty to continue to create an environment for those funds to be utilized,” Phillip Washington, General Manager Regional Transportation District, said that “we encourage Congress to lean further forward with P3s, along with other innovative financing methods in the new transportation reauthorization bill”. Richard A. Fierce, on behalf of The Associated General Contractors of America, concluded by saying that “with current and future public funding challenges at all levels of government, P3s offer the promise of delivering high-quality infrastructure in a timely and cost effective way, and can provide up-front capital for projects that could not be done otherwise.” Click [HERE](#) to read written testimony and to view the hearing.

REGIONAL BRIEF

NARC Visits DVRPC, Philadelphia, PA: This week, NARC visited the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to meet with Executive Director Barry Seymour and his staff, and to attend their Board of Directors meeting. One of the more notable Board actions was the approval of an innovative analysis tool that has been under

development by DVRPC for some time. The purpose is to allow DVRPC to analyze projects of all types (bike, pedestrian, road, etc.) for multiple planning purposes (short term, long term, and congestion mitigation planning), using the same underlying tool. This tool provides a quantitative measure of a project's value, while also increasing public awareness and understanding. Though this tool is only one of many they will use in project selection, it's easy to see that a consistent measure of project value and benefit will help improve their prioritization and decision-making process.

NARC also met with DVRPC staff to learn about their approach to planning, plan development, project analysis, data and performance measurement, freight, economic and community development, and food system analysis. DVRPC does a remarkable job integrating a wide variety of issues into their work; they consider the impact of their work together rather than as isolated projects. DVRPC staff does this in a relatively challenging environment; working over the boundaries of both Pennsylvania and New Jersey, contending with two DOTs and two governors' offices.

OPPORTUNITY BRIEF

New! GRANT: FHWA's Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration

Open until the Program Ends or Funding is No Longer Available

FHWA announced on February 19 the availability of \$30 million (M) in funding and requests grant applications for FHWA's Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration authorized within the *Technology and Innovation Deployment Program* under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). On a rolling basis, AID Demonstration funds will award multiple projects that meet eligibility, requirements, and selection criteria. Click [HERE](#) to view the notice, and [HERE](#) to apply.

New! WEBINAR: Introduction to My Environment, myRTK, and ECHO TRI Data Tools

March 10, 12:00 PM EST

The Dillard University Deep South Center for Environmental Justice and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will host this data tools session to guide individuals through the data tools myRTK, My Environment, and ECHOS. The tools allow users to geographically view industrial facilities releasing toxic chemicals near their home, work and

schools, access data on air and water quality, and help users find permit, inspection, violation, enforcement action, and penalty information in their communities. Click [HERE](#) to register.

WEBINAR: The Challenge of Transportation Planning for Resilience

March 11, 11:30 AM EST

Join William Lyons, principal technical advisor in transportation planning at Volpe, for his talk on Transportation System Resilience Extreme Weather and Climate Change. Lyons leads Volpe support for the FHWA and FTA on regulatory reviews of transportation planning by states and metropolitan areas. The projects involve multi-disciplinary teams and significant collaboration with transportation planning and operating agencies at federal, state, regional, and local levels. Click [HERE](#) to register.

WEBINAR: TIGER Application Process

March 12, 19, 26

U.S. DOT is offering a series of special topic webinars that delve into various aspects of the TIGER application process. These will be a great resource for anyone either considering applying to TIGER this year or actually preparing a TIGER application, as the webinars come from the funding source and share the expertise of the U.S. DOT to prospective applicants. Advance registration is required and available by clicking on the webinar topic listed below:

[March 12th – How to Compete for TIGER Discretionary Grants](#)

[March 19th – Preparing a TIGER Planning Grant Application](#)

[March 26th – Preparing a Benefit Cost Analysis \(BCA\) for a TIGER Discretionary Grant](#)

Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

New! WEBINAR: America's PrepareAthon! Campaign to Increase Individual and Community Preparedness

March 18, 10:30 AM EST

March 20, 4:00 PM EST

The first America's PrepareAthon! national day of action is April 30, 2014. It's a nationwide, community-based campaign for action to increase emergency preparedness and resilience. Twice yearly, America's PrepareAthon! will provide a national focus for individuals, organizations, and communities to participate through drills, group discussions, and exercises to practice for local hazards. Click [HERE](#) for information on how to get involved! Click [HERE](#) to register for March 18,

and [HERE](#) for March 20.

New! WEBINAR: Keeping Pedestrians Safe in Urban and Suburban Settings

March 20, 2:00 PM EST

Walking is the mode of choice for some, and the only choice for many. Pedestrian safety should be a priority and thus incorporated into all planning and design processes. This webinar will provide an overview of tools, campaigns, and strategies you can use to help reverse pedestrian fatalities and injuries. Click [HERE](#) to register.

New! WEBINAR: Eco-Logical Step 8: Implement Agreements and Deliver Projects

March 27, 3:00 PM EST

Learn how agencies are implementing transportation projects and programs developed through the Eco-Logical approach, plus key lessons from regional and statewide Eco-Logical implementations in Montana and California. There will also be a discussion on Step 8 of Integrated Ecological Framework, where agencies deliver projects and implement the previous steps of the Eco-Logical ecosystems approach to environmental mitigation, and will feature speakers that are using the Eco-Logical framework to enhance and streamline mitigation efforts in their community. Click [HERE](#) to register.

New! SURVEY: Next Phase of the Regulatory Review of Existing DOT Regulations

Deadline: [March 31](#)

The U.S. DOT has long recognized that there should be no more regulations than necessary and that the regulations they issue should be simple, comprehensible, and impose only as much burden as is necessary. That is why they want your advice on cutting more red tape and how this second round of retrospective review should be managed. Click [HERE](#) for information and [HERE](#) to submit comments.

GRANT: Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Funding Opportunity

Proposal Deadline: *[April 2](#)*

The Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts, has launched a call for proposals. 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](#) to read the proposal letter

and [HERE](#) for application details.

Extended Deadline! GRANT: FTA Announces Availability of \$24.9M to Put More Zero-Emission Buses into Service Across America

Deadline: *April 10*

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced the availability of \$24.9M through its 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.

CONFERENCE: Ohio Conference on Freight

September 18-19, Hyatt Regency Columbus, OH

This conference addresses the reality that economic growth will increasingly depend upon or be at the mercy of our freight infrastructure. Key goals of the conference include: building professional capacity in all aspects of freight transport by disseminating best practices in supply chain and logistics; strengthening the ability of the public and private sectors to effectively plan, build, and maintain an efficient transportation network; examining and informing state and federal policies that support freight related economic development. Also, professional engineers can claim professional development hours [PDH]. For more information contact Christine Drennen, Conference Director (419.241.9155 ext. 119 or drennen@tmacog.org) or visit www.ohiofreight.org for more info.

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