



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

## ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

### **Planning Emphasis Areas Released for Fiscal Year 2016**

FHWA and FTA are encouraging Executive Directors of MPOs and heads of State DOTs to give priority consideration to the following emphasis areas in updated unified planning work programs (UPWP) and statewide planning and research programs: MAP-21 Implementation, Regional Models of Cooperation, and Ladders of Opportunity.

### **New Safety App for Commercial Vehicles**

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration unveiled QCMobile (Query Central), an application for smartphones that consolidates existing online safety performance information regarding commercial vehicles. The new app is intended to be used by law enforcement personnel and roadside safety inspectors, though it will be available to the general public.

### **Rule Requires Modifications for Disabilities**

In light of a gap in the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) identified by several courts, USDOT worked to ensure that transportation programs and services are equally available to those with disabilities. The published **final rule**, which becomes effective July 13, requires public transportation providers to reasonably modify their policies, practices, and procedures to align accessibility and nondiscrimination goals.

## CONGRESS BRIEF

### **House, Senate Debate Budget Plans**

This week, both chambers debate their separate budget plans to help guide the appropriations process later this year. There are several provisions impacting transportation that are worth noting. First, both plans create “reserve funds” that will allow for transportation spending above enacted levels if additional revenues can be identified later this year. In addition, both plans allow for transfers from the general fund to the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). The House plan requires the cost of any transfer to be paid the year the transfer is made, while the Senate allows for a 10-year repayment window. The plans also allow for the possibility of using a budget reconciliation bill (lowering the threshold for passage to 50 votes in the Senate), which could include an HTF fix. Some, including Senate Commerce Chair John Thune (R-SD), suggest that budget reconciliation could be the best opportunity for increasing transportation funding (and possibly passing a transportation reauthorization bill) this year.

### **House Hearing on Reauthorization**

Earlier this week, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held the second part of a hearing titled, *Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill: Laying the Foundation for U.S. Economic Growth and Job Creation*. Members heard from North Carolina Governor Patrick McCrory, Salt Lake City Mayor and National League of Cities President Ralph Becker, and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials President John Cox. Mayor Becker highlighted several times the need for additional funding and authority in the hands of the nation’s local elected officials, “the next transportation bill should directly allocate greater funding to local governments and provide more flexibility for local decision makers to choose the best mix of transportation options to fit regional needs.”

## **Innovation in Surface Transportation Act Reintroduced**

The *Innovation in Surface Transportation Act* was reintroduced yesterday in the House and Senate (**H.R. 1393** and **S.762**). The bill would create separate entities in each state to distribute, on a competitive basis, a share of the funding provided through the federal transportation program.

## **The Devolution Debate**

In the context of debate over transportation funding and reauthorization, there is a small minority in Washington who raise the specter of devolution as a potential solution. In theory, absent a federal tax on gasoline, states would be free to raise their own rates and replace the funding themselves, free of any federal constraints. This is not a likely scenario, given strong Congressional support for a strong federal role in transportation. The reality of the devolution concept is not as simple as the theory. The Transportation Construction Coalition earlier this week **released a map** highlighting just how much each state would have to raise their gas taxes to make up the federal revenue. Also, thirty-eight stakeholders sent a **letter to Congress** rejecting the devolution of the federal-aid program.

## **REGIONS BRIEF**

### **GHG Reduction Strategies in Metropolitan Washington**

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG) formed a multi-sector working group of technical and policy staff to identify viable strategies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions across energy, transportation, land-use, and built environment sectors in the DC area. Experts come from state and regional agencies and member jurisdictions. The hope is to meet **MWCOCG's 2008 climate goals** by quantifying benefits, costs, and time frames for various strategies, and then jointly developing a regional action plan.

### **Healthy Corridors**

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) will conduct the Healthy Corridors Project to support and advise communities in redeveloping commercial corridors for better safety, health, and mobility performance. ULI will be working with demonstration corridors in Los Angeles, Denver, Nashville, and Boise over the next two years, and hope to produce healthy development strategies that can be replicated across the nation.

### **Changing Transportation Stigmas**

Mobility Labs identified a gap in marketing as the cause for current social stigmas against alternative (non-car) modes of transportation, citing the auto industry as a prime example of how positive marketing has shaped travelers' mindsets about ownership of personal vehicles. Mobility Labs encourages local officials and agencies to reshape negative stigmas and energize people to support and explore non-car transportation options.

## **JOBS**

***View full list of jobs!***

### **Executive Director**

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

### **Chief Transportation Planner**

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Lansing, MI

### **Transportation Planning Technician**

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Lansing, MI

### **Contracts and Procurement Analyst**

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

### **Regional Planner**

San Joaquin Council of Governments, Stockton, CA

## **Transportation Safety Planner/Civil Engineer**

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Pittsburgh, PA

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

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

#### **FHWA's Climate Resilience Pilots**

March 24, 2:00-4:00 PM ET

Over the course of 2013 and 2014, FHWA partnered with various state DOTs, MPOs, and Federal Land Management Agencies to conduct 19 **climate resilience pilots** that assessed transportation infrastructure for climate change and extreme weather vulnerability. Representatives from the MD State Highway Administration, TN DOT, Hillsborough MPO in Tampa, and Broward MPO in Southeast Florida will share the results of their climate change resilience projects and comment on lessons learned for adaptation.

#### **Plug-In Electric Vehicles and Charging Infrastructure: Alternative Financing to Develop a Mature Market**

March 24, 1:00 PM ET

As part of the U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Cities program, the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions offers a webinar presentation to discuss the plug-in electric vehicle (PEV) market, provide examples of PEV investments and infrastructure, and highlight accomplishments from successful Clean Cities.

#### **National Public Transportation/TOD Ladders of Opportunity Initiative RFP**

March 26, 2:00PM ET

This FTA webinar will discuss the Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new National Public Transportation/ Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Technical Assistance Initiative, which supports the Ladders of Opportunity initiative of the President and the Secretary of Transportation by providing technical assistance for TOD activities around public transportation stations, including technical assistance to economically distressed communities across the country.

#### **The Role of High Productivity Freight Vehicles in Metropolitan Areas**

April 1, 4:00 PM ET

The Volvo Research and Educational Foundations Center of Excellence for Sustainable Urban Freight Systems developed a Peer-to-Peer Exchange Program as a forum to discuss global best practices and examples of sustainable urban freight systems. In this tenth webinar of the series, the panel will present an overview of Australia's infrastructure management experience with Performance-Based Standards (PBS) and High Performance Freight Vehicles (HPFVs).

#### **Taking Action at the Local Level**

April 13, 1:00 PM ET - The Fine Art of Messaging

April 23, 1:00 PM ET - Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper – and Healthier

May, TBA - The Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets

America Walks launched a spring webinar series to promote walkable design at the local level, and to call on participants to build community through the walking initiatives set forth in each webinar.

#### **Understanding the Travel Needs of Disabled Veterans and Wounded Warriors**

April 14, 1:00-3:00 PM ET

USDOT's Accessible Transportation Technologies Research Initiative (ATTRI) is a joint program for mobility research that is co-led by FHWA and FTA. This informational webinar series is available to promote discussion and gather feedback on technological solutions to issues of mobility for travelers with disabilities.

#### **Mapping America's Futures**

April 14, 2:00pm-3:00 PM ET

The Urban Institute developed a mapping tool that projects changes in U.S. urban populations through year 2030, focusing on three factors that drive population change: birth, death, and migration rates. With the ability to also apply demographic conditions to the map, users may use this tool to help formulate future policy and best allocate limited resources.

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