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## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

April 24, 2014

# Transportation Thursdays

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[RESEARCH BRIEF](#) [REGIONAL BRIEF](#)  
[OPPORTUNITY BRIEF](#)



**ATTENTION: Executive Directors of MPOs - Planning Emphasis Areas for FY 2015 Document:** The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are jointly issuing Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) for the current fiscal year and 2015. The PEAs are priorities that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) should address in developing your respective planning work programs. They are asking FHWA and FTA field offices to meet with you and encourage the incorporation of these PEAs into your *Unified Planning Work Programs* and *State Planning and Research Work Programs*. Should you have questions or require further information, please contact your FHWA Division Office or FTA Regional Office. Click [HERE](#) to see the letter.

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

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***The Key to Saving the U.S. Transportation Program* by Beth Osborne:** Beth Osborne, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) and presently with Transportation for America, has written an article for *Atlantic Cities* in which she identifies key changes that Congress can make in the next transportation reauthorization bill to fix the program's funding problems. Click **[HERE](#)** to read her article.

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## **ADMINISTRATIVE BRIEF**

**President Planning to Release Transportation Reauthorization Proposal:** U.S. DOT Secretary Anthony Foxx said earlier this week that President Obama will soon be presenting Congress with a transportation reauthorization proposal. The Administration did not release a specific bill in the transportation reauthorization debate of 2012; they left the details to Congress to work out. It was previously announced that the President's plan would call for a four-year, \$302 billion bill, and uses \$150 billion from corporate tax reform to pay for it. With the President's proposal, he will be jumping ahead of Congress, who has yet to produce any reauthorization language.

**U.S. DOT Bus Tour State Fact Sheets:** U.S. DOT Secretary Foxx recently concluded a week-long, eight-state bus tour called "Invest in America: Commit to the Future," to promote the Administration's four-year, \$302 billion transportation funding plan. The eight states include: OH, KY, TN, GA, MS, AL, LA, and TX. Click **[HERE](#)** for the fact sheets.

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## **LEGISLATIVE BRIEF**

**Senator Carper Proposes Federal Gas Tax Increase:** In an effort to help find a solution to the pending insolvency of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) has proposed raising the federal gas tax. Carper is arguing that increasing the gas tax should be just one of many funding sources to ensure HTF solvency. His proposal would raise the current 18.4 cent gas tax three or four cents a year for up to four years. After that, increases would be tied to inflation. The gas tax has not been raised since 1993, and the idea still faces significant resistance in Congress. In recent congressional hearings, U.S. House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee members have said that a federal gas tax increase is a nonstarter, and unlikely to be part of any reauthorization bill.

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## RESEARCH BRIEF

### TRB's Transportation Research Record Developing Countries

**2013:** This publication consists of 16 papers that explore travel time and space mean speed of nonmotorized vehicles; a review of India's national urban investment program; assessment of public-private partnership in traveler information provision; low-mass urban microcars; transitioning Beijing, China to a transit city; and lessons of bus rapid transit from nine cities in China. Click [HERE](#) for additional information and to read the journal.

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## REGIONAL BRIEF

**EPA to Award \$4.2 Million to Six U.S. Ports:** In an effort to curb port emissions, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be awarding \$4.2 million to six U.S. ports. That money is going to be used to retrofit or replace diesel engines. The ports that will be receiving the money include: the Port of Seattle, WA; the Port of Hueneme, CA.; the Port of Tacoma, WA; the Maryland Port Administration; the Virginia Port Authority; and the Port of Los Angeles, CA. The EPA is hoping that this program will incentivize other ports to take on measures that will cut emissions and reduce pollution to help protect the environment. Millions of Americans work and live around these ports, and these measures are aimed at providing a cleaner and safer environment to protect them.

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## OPPORTUNITY BRIEF

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of grants and events still open!

### WEBINAR: Three *Promise Zone Initiative* Stakeholder Sessions

*Deadline: Register by COB Friday, April 25*

#### **Promise Zone Initiative Stakeholder Session (TRIBAL)**

April 29, 2:00 PM ET - Click [HERE](#) to register.

#### **Promise Zone Initiative Stakeholder Session (URBAN)**

April 29, 3:30 PM ET - Click [HERE](#) to register.

#### **Promise Zone Initiative Stakeholder Session (RURAL)**

April 30, 3:00 PM ET - Click [HERE](#) to register.

The *Promise Zone Initiative* is part of President Obama's plan to partner

with and invest in communities to create jobs; increase economic security; expand educational opportunities; increase access to quality, affordable housing; and improve public safety. This will be an interactive session that will give you the information you need to know about the *Promise Zone Initiative*. Topics will include: the public comment period for the second round of applications, eligibility criteria, best practices from the first round, timeline for the second round, and details on the President's *Promise Zone Budget Proposal*.

#### **INFORMATION REQUEST: Truck Freight Bottlenecks**

*Deadline: May 9*

The Texas A&M Transportation Institute, in association with Cambridge Systematics and the University of Washington, is performing a literature review for *National Cooperative Highway Research Program's* Project 8-98 "Guide for Identifying, Classifying, Evaluating, and Mitigating Truck Freight Bottlenecks." Are you aware of documented practices or studies for identifying, classifying, evaluating, and mitigating truck freight bottlenecks? This documentation could be part of freight plans, congestion studies, congestion management process (CMP) activities, goods movement studies, etc. If you have any documented practices they can review (U.S. or international), please send them to Bill Eisele at [bill-eisele@tamu.edu](mailto:bill-eisele@tamu.edu).

#### **WEBINAR: Transit Safety and Mobility Applications in a Connected Vehicle World**

*May 14, 1:00 PM ET*

This U.S. DOT's Talking Technology and Transportation (T3) session will provide an overview of two projects (*Pedestrian in Signalized Crosswalk Warning* and *Vehicle Turning Right in Front of Bus Warning*) and descriptions of the applications (Forward Collision Warning, Emergency Electronic Brake Lights, and Curve Speed Warning), results, lessons learned, and objectives of the independent evaluations. Click [HERE](#) for additional information and to register.

#### **WEBINAR: Context Sensitive Solutions National Dialog 2 Boise, Idaho Workshop**

*June 12, 11:00 AM ET*

The workshop will include an up-to-date overview of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) plus presentations on exemplary CSS projects, plans, and programs from the surrounding region. The case studies are drawn from submissions from across the country, and were selected as examples of effective application of CSS principles. You can participate

either on-site or through the webcast. Click [HERE](#) for additional information and to register.

**CONFERENCE: NARC's 48th Annual Conference and Exhibition**  
*June 8-11. Louisville. KY*

The Annual Conference and Exhibition is the largest national event focused on promoting effective regional cooperation and solutions through interaction and education. Held annually in June, NARC's Annual Conference is the premier place to learn how to engage in effective regional collaboration. Click [HERE](#) for a draft agenda, hotel reservation and registration information. Two days of transportation tracks are planned (on Monday and Tuesday) - we encourage all MPOs to attend these sessions. We look forward to your participation in Louisville!

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