



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS



CONGRESS BRIEF

Both the House and Senate are out this week and will return next week.

House Smart Transportation Caucus Formed

Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI), Joe Barton (R-TX), Joe Wilson (R-SC), and Ted Lieu (D-CA) recently announced the formation of a new House caucus focused on security concerns around transportation technology. The group will look at a variety of technologies, including smart infrastructure, real-time transit and parking technology, and connected vehicles. Together they plan to advocate for the development and deployment of next-generation technology with a focus on improving cybersecurity measures.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Every Place Counts Design Challenge

USDOT announced a new design challenge to help communities improve access to transportation for disconnected communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Four communities will be selected to receive technical assistance from USDOT in a 2-day design session hosted by a local or tribal government. Projects that are planned or being developed to improve or replace existing infrastructure that offer opportunities to reconnect communities to amenities will be eligible for

assistance. Applicants must create a Community Team which can include MPOs and transit agencies to participate in the design session. Communities must register by May 20 with applications due on June 3. An **information session** will be held on May 11.

Possible Funding Changes to Airport Rail Projects

This week, FAA proposed changes to the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) program to make eligible additional rail projects. Currently, PFC funds must be used to support rail projects exclusively for airport patrons and employees on airport property. The changes would allow additional elements of projects not solely for those users to be eligible for funding. FAA **requests comments** on the proposed changes by June 2.

U.S. Court Rules Amtrak has too Much Power over Freight Carriers

On Friday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit again ruled that Amtrak holds improper and coercive regulatory power over private freight carriers. A 2008 statute directed Amtrak to work with federal regulators to keep trains running on time, giving them priority over freight trains on shared tracks. While Amtrak is public, the appeals court said that it continues to maximize profit, making it unfit to hold regulatory authority. This is the second time the D.C. Circuit ruled against Amtrak regarding this issue after the Supreme Court sent it back to be reconsidered.

REGIONS BRIEF

SCAG Adopts Final Regional Transportation Plan

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) adopted its 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy last month. The plan includes \$556.5 billion in transportation investments through 2040 and reduces greenhouse-gas emissions by 21 percent over the life of the plan. SCAG's plan will also reduce delay per capita by 39 percent and create over 351,000 new jobs in the region.

Framework for Ranking Pedestrian and Cyclist Projects

A report from the Urban Transportation Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago outlines a framework for decision-makers and planners on how to best rank projects for pedestrian and biking facilities. The study developed seven criteria for measuring the effectiveness of proposed projects and tested its approach through several case studies in Illinois.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

OPPORTUNITIES

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

NPMRDS Quarterly Webinar

May 10, 1:00 – 3:00 PM ET

This webinar will review the National Performance Measures Research Data Set (NPMRDS) and its importance with regard to FHWA's proposed rule on system performance, freight movement, and CMAQ program measures. The NPMRDS includes travel time data that FHWA is using internally for passenger and freight analysis and that they have made available to states and MPOs. FHWA will provide an overview of the probe data set, discuss the NPMRDS requirements in the proposed rule, demonstrate an approach to using the NPMRDS to calculate the proposed measures, and respond to technical assistance questions.

Implementation of FAST Act: Designation of Alternative Fuel Corridors

May 12, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

May 16, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

Participants will have an opportunity to share insights and suggestions on the process and criteria FHWA should consider when designating alternative fuel corridors. The same information will be presented at both webinars.

Keeping Counties Moving: Technological Innovations in Transportation

May 18, 2:00 – 3:15 PM ET

Join this interactive webinar to learn how counties are leveraging technological innovations to improve transportation systems and ready them for the future. Transportation and technology experts will discuss national trends and current county projects in connected vehicles and open data sharing, the actual and expected benefits, and future plans for innovation. This discussion will give county elected officials and staff members an idea of where the field of transportation is heading in the face of rapidly developing technologies and suggest next steps.

Understanding the Links between Transportation and Health: Case Studies from the Field

May 23, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

This discussion will focus on the benefits of planning for health and transportation together. Topics will include: USDOT/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Transportation and Health Tool and its relationship to states and MPOs; three examples from MPOs on how health and transportation impacts the environment, safety, active transportation, air quality, and connectivity; and an overview of the FTA Rides to Wellness Program.

Introduction of the Rapid Policy Assessment Tool

June 1, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

The Rapid Policy Assessment Tool (RPAT) is open-source software that enables users to quickly compare travel demand impacts of various land use, investment, and policy scenarios. A brief tutorial will cover the basics of RPAT, strategy evaluation, and output performance metrics. Two case studies from Oregon and Pennsylvania will demonstrate the uses of RPAT, lessons learned from its implementation, and best practices for effective presentation of outputs from RPAT to non-technical personnel.

Automated Vehicles Symposium

July 19-21 – San Francisco, CA

This symposium will focus on challenges and opportunities related to the increasing automation of motor vehicles as well as the environments in which they operate. Breakout sessions include topics such as assessing the user experience, law and policy issues, and planning for the technology.

CONTACT US

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