



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS



CONGRESS BRIEF

An Infrastructure Bill When?

Congress and the administration continue to spin widely divergent tales as to when we might see an infrastructure plan. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao said last week that an outline may be coming soon, followed by legislative action in the fall. She stated that the administration is weighing different funding options and plans to release outlines/ideas that do not increase the deficit. Meanwhile, Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Chairman John Thune (R-SD) said this week that the proposal could slip until next year. Thune sees the calendar quickly becoming booked with tax reform, health care, and the FAA reauthorization this summer.

Conservative Groups Send Letter to Congress on Infrastructure Funding

A coalition of more than 50 conservative organizations sent a letter to Congress today promoting fiscal responsibility in an infrastructure package. The letter criticizes the Obama administration's spending policies and offers six conservative strategies to improve infrastructure and maximize taxpayer dollars. The recommendations include reforming environmental review processes and removing existing federal barriers to give states more freedom. The coalition also suggests that new spending should be offset with spending cuts, and advises against using repatriation money.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Trump Budget Proposal Sneak Peek

A full fiscal 2018 budget proposal being crafted by White House officials aims to balance the federal budget in 10 years through \$800 billion in cuts to means-tested, mandatory spending programs including Medicaid. Trump's plan would require passing comprehensive tax reform to jump start the economy, which he says will spur significant economic growth. Means-tested, mandatory spending programs include: food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, child nutrition programs, and the Pell Grant program, but it is not clear which programs would be cut. Trump's full budget is expected to be released the week of May 22.

Amtrak Needs \$38 Billion for Northeast Corridor Repairs

The busiest U.S. passenger rail route needs a newly estimated \$38 billion just to stay in good working order. Amtrak and the regional railroads that use the tracks have pledged \$3.3 billion over five years, but these funds will not go towards the backlog of needed projects released by the Northeast Corridor Commission. Without proper funding the 820,000 daily riders face increased service disruptions and potentially dangerous failures. This summer, Amtrak has a project schedule that will cause 44 days of major disruptions over two months.

Transportation Alternatives Annual Report

As part of FAST Act requirements, FHWA created a report on the transportation alternatives (TA) projects. Their interactive map shows each state with details on the projects awarded and applications received.

2017 FHWA Transportation Planning Excellence Award Winners

FHWA has announced the winners of its 2017 Transportation Planning Excellence Awards, a biennial awards program developed by FHWA and co-sponsored by the American Planning Association. The program provides a unique opportunity to recognize and celebrate the outstanding transportation planning practices performed by planners and decision makers in communities across the country. Congratulations to NARC member award winners: the San Diego Association of Governments, Southern California Association of Governments, and Atlanta Regional Commission!

Experts Reveal Safety Impact of Following Distances between Heavy Trucks in Automated Platoons

A team of vehicle technology experts at Volpe have released their final report on some of the specifics involved with automated truck platooning. The study generated the baseline statistics for researchers to determine the optimum following distances in automated truck platoons. Key results showed that trucks followed at an average distance of about two seconds on freeways in the real world. Based on Volpe's findings, following distances of around one second might satisfy the following-behavior criteria of an automated truck platoon; feel natural and comfortable for the truck driver; prevent other vehicles from cutting in between platooning trucks; and minimize crash risk.

New U.S. Community Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation

The Community Preventive Services Task Force was established in 1996 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to identify population health interventions that are scientifically proven to save lives, increase lifespans, and improve quality of life. The Task Force provides recommendations to help inform decision makers. Their newest recommendation is to increase physical activity through built environment approaches that combine transportation system interventions with land use and environmental design. The recommendation encourages improvements such as street connectivity and bike and pedestrian infrastructure to make physical activity more accessible.

REGIONS BRIEF

USCM Creates Infrastructure Task Force

The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) created a task force of mayors involved in various infrastructure sectors to help shape the new administration's package. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti will lead the new effort because of his experiences in Los Angeles' initiatives. The Task Force will work with the administration and Congress to develop and pass an infrastructure package.

Ten Communities Receive Walk Friendly Designation

The Walk Friendly Communities (WFC) program recognized seven new communities and renewed designations for three past recipients for their commitment to prioritizing pedestrians and creating safe, comfortable, and inviting places to walk. The latest designees represent a wide range of communities, from dense urban centers to small rural towns. Cities and towns interested in joining the ranks of WFC are encouraged to submit an application. The next round of applications is open now, and submissions are due by June 15, 2017.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Engineer/Planner

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Detroit, MI

Homeland Security Regional SAP

Oakland County Michigan, Waterford, MI

Senior Planner

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Philadelphia, PA

Data Analyst

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Transportation Planner

East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission/Calhoun Area MPO, Anniston, AL

Labor Compliance Analyst

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

OPPORTUNITIES

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

Investing in U.S. Infrastructure for Maximum Dividends

May 12, 12:00 – 1:30 PM ET

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) and the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) are holding a briefing on America's infrastructure needs and the business case for investing in long-term reliability and sustainability. Both political parties have floated plans to spend \$1 trillion to upgrade U.S. infrastructure, with different ideas on how to pay for it. What could \$1 trillion buy for the country? How can policymakers help set priorities and ensure smart investments that produce the best possible outcomes? In this briefing, infrastructure experts will help answer these questions and discuss the value of building for resilience. A **live webcast** will be available.

Infrastructure Week 2017 - NARC and NLC Event

May 19, 10:00 – 11:30 PM ET, Washington, DC

For years, autonomous vehicles, or self-driving cars, seemed like a fantasy unlikely to come to fruition. However, autonomous vehicles are here now and communities face the challenge of how to prepare for them and integrate them into mixed mobility environments. This panel discussion will feature several experts in this field and local government officials who will discuss the current landscape of autonomous vehicle research and technology development. Learn what this means for communities and how they should prepare, including how autonomous vehicles are expected to work with existing mobility and transit systems.

Uncovering Innovation in Salt Lake City

May 23, 8:15 - 10:15 AM MT

The *Route Fifty* Navigator Awards seek to identify and highlight individuals and teams of state and local innovators, technologists, leaders, and rising stars who have demonstrated their ability to conceive and implement great ideas. On May 23, *Route Fifty* will be in Salt Lake City to highlight the innovations driving Utah's state, county, and municipal governments. They'll talk with state and local officials about what makes these leaders, teams, and programs successful, as well as what lessons can be applied to governments across the country.

Building a TAM Asset Inventory

May 23, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

This FTA webinar will highlight examples of how transit agencies can build their asset inventories, and feature presentations from Doug Holcomb and Athena Ullah, from Greater Bridgeport Transit and Metrolink, respectively.

TRB Webinar: Innovative Financing for Public Transportation: Value Capture and Small-and Medium-sized Public Private Partnerships

June 7, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET

Presenters will discuss the best practices of value capture (VC) and public-private partnerships (P3s) in transportation funding. Value capture, the public recovery of a portion of increased property value created from public infrastructure investment, has been successful in several U.S. cities, and the presenters will review these case studies. P3s can also be used by transit agencies to improve existing services and deliver new services and facilities. Presenters will demonstrate an interactive tool for identifying, evaluating, and screening opportunities for small- and medium-sized P3 initiatives.

Let's Talk Performance: Lessons Learned from Target Setting Coordination

June 13, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET

During this webinar, FHWA will provide an overview of available resources to assist with coordinating target setting. Presenters from a state DOT and MPO will discuss their experiences working with internal and external stakeholders to coordinate target setting. The event is open to staff from FHWA, state DOTs, SHSOs, MPOs, and other stakeholder agencies.

Bloomberg Government NEXT Infrastructure

June 21, 8:00 – 11:30 AM ET

America's aging infrastructure is a top priority for the White House, Congress, and the American people. Understanding and addressing the needs of America's infrastructure requires the bridging of old and new—the upkeep of an expansive and aging infrastructure and the implementation of new technologies that allow infrastructure to become smarter and more sustainable. Bloomberg Government will convene a conversation on the latest innovations for America's infrastructure and the financing partnerships to bring these ideas to life. A live stream will be available.

CONTACT US

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