



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

## CONGRESS BRIEF

*The Senate is in session. The House adjourned two days early due to a sit-in by Democrats attempting to force a vote on gun legislation. They will return on July 5.*

### FAA Extension Inevitable

Earlier this week, Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Chairman John Thune (R-SD) expressed optimism that quick House action on an FAA reauthorization would provide enough time to avoid a short-term extension. However, last night's sit-in by Democrats to force votes on gun legislation led the Republican majority to adjourn the chamber early. This delays additional House action on FAA legislation until at least July 5, leaving little time to maneuver before the July 15 expiration. At this point, House leaders are preparing a year-long extension, though several provisions still need to be negotiated and Thune will push for many items in the extension that were included in the Senate version.

## ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

### Smart City Challenge Winner

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) announced this week that Columbus, Ohio was named the winner of the USDOT Smart City Challenge. Columbus will receive \$40 million from USDOT and \$10 million from Vulcan, Inc. to implement its winning plan to increase electric vehicle access, test autonomous vehicles, and improve access to transportation in low-income neighborhoods. USDOT and Vulcan also plan to provide support to the other six cities to push their plans forward.

### Transportation Dictionary

USDOT released a searchable online dictionary that includes over 9,000 transportation terms and acronyms. The terms were collected from a variety of public and private transportation publications and databases.

### National Aging and Disability Transportation Center Celebration & Briefing

Yesterday, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), Easterseals, and FTA celebrated the launch of the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). Speakers at the celebration, including CEOs Randy Rutta of Easterseals, Inc. and Sandy Markwood of n4a, emphasized how essential transportation is for the independence, health, wellbeing, and quality of life for the elderly and those with disabilities and thanked the many partners, groups, and individuals who helped the center become a reality. The NADTC will work to offer technical assistance, training, and research to ensure that transportation is both available and accessible to older adults and people with disabilities.

## REGIONS BRIEF

### New Public Transit Program Launches in Southern California

Two new programs recently launched in Southern California that provide Amtrak passengers free transfers to bus and shuttle services and discounted bus and light rail tickets. Passengers can connect for free between Amtrak Pacific Surfliner trains and twelve smaller local transit providers

along the Amtrak route. The 351-mile route includes San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties. The discount program allows Amtrak customers to purchase one-day transit passes for the larger San Diego and Los Angeles systems. The programs aim to encourage passengers to use public transit for the entirety of their trip by selling the discount passes on the train and offering free transfers in smaller cities.

### **Florida Transit Agency Partners With Uber**

In February, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority became the first transit agency to subsidize Uber and taxi rides for first-and-last mile trips. Now the agency is expanding its program to provide access to low-income riders. The Transit Disadvantaged pilot program offers eligible participants 23 free rides per month from Uber or United Taxi, a local company, between 9 pm and 6 am. This program aims to assist service workers who might not have access to a car or a means to get home after their late shift when bus routes stop running. The program is also the first to allow riders to use a landline or cell phone for a telephone dispatch service to call their Uber or taxi, providing low-income residents without a smartphone access to these services.

### **Walking & Rolling Kept Tons of Pollutants from San Antonio's Air**

The Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) in San Antonio hosted its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Walk & Roll Challenge in May. The purpose of the challenge was to raise awareness of the connection between transportation and air quality, promote new means of transportation, and recognize employers and individuals committed to cleaner air and healthy living in the region. Using [NuRide.com](#) to view participants' records of walks, bike rides, bus rides, carpools, and trips saved, AACOG recorded that over 94,000 trips were taken or saved through alternative means, leading to a reduction in vehicle emissions of 1.2 million road miles and the prevention of 3.5 tons of ozone-forming pollutants from going into the air.

### **SEMCOG Announces Results of Commuter Challenge 2016**

During May, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) held a **Commuter Challenge**, encouraging commuters across the region to explore alternative methods of traveling to work instead of driving alone, and reminding them of **the benefits of doing so**. Overall, the Commuter Challenge reduced carbon dioxide emissions by over 166,000 pounds, surpassing the 130,000 pound goal. The program's 500 participants **recorded** 6,200 green commute trips and traveled 270,000 miles in May. Quicken had the largest impact on air quality with a 35,133 pound reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

## **JOBS**

*[View full list of jobs!](#)*

### **Transportation Planner/Engineers**

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Detroit, MI

### **Assistant-Associate Planner**

Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle, WA

### **Grants/Budget Analyst**

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

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

### **Grading the Walking Movement**

July 12, 1:00 PM ET

America Walks, in partnership with the Safe Routes to School National Partnership and YMCA of the USA, recently released the **2016 State Report Cards** as a way to measure the efforts of the walking movement. The 2016 State Report Cards provide a snapshot of how supportive each state is of walking, bicycling, and physical activity for children and adults as of 2016. Attendees of the webinar will learn about the development of the State Report Cards and hear from two YMCA's on how they plan to use the information to increase support for physical activity. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in a discussion on how they can use the State Report Cards in their own communities.

## **NCHRP Snapshot Survey: Impacts of HOV to HOT Lane Conversion**

Survey Closes July 16

The AASHTO Standing Committee on Planning (SCOP), through the NCHRP 8-36 program, invites your participation in a brief survey covering current and future planning activities at state DOTs, MPOs, and regional organizations. The insights and responses you provide will be used to develop a quarterly series of "snapshot" publications. These snapshots highlight current practices, address trending topics, provide best practice examples, and act as a resource for planners, executives, legislators, and others interested in planning practices. This survey explores the topics of HOV/HOT lanes and managed motorways concepts to help maximize existing capacity. **Prior snapshots** have addressed issues such as: freight, bike/ped, operations, scenario planning, innovative long range planning, crash data, and integrated planning.

## **2016: Communicating the Connection Transportation and Public Health**

Submissions Due July 25

The Planning and Environment Group of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) is seeking out best practices in communicating the connection between transportation and public health to the public. Contest entries should focus on efforts to ensure the public has input into the health-related aspects of transportation plans, projects, and activities. Entries can include, but are not limited to: studies, publications, multi-media communications campaigns, websites, graphics, illustrations, social media strategies, photos, videos, software, interactive exercises, and presentations. Individuals, agencies, and organizations that communicate transportation needs and issues (all modes) are eligible to submit an entry. Winning entries will be showcased at the TRB Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.

## **Accessibility Survey**

The Brookings Institution is currently undertaking research to understand how accessibility metrics are designed and implemented into transportation planning in different cities around the world. For the purpose of this study, accessibility is understood as the geographic access to urban opportunities and not in terms of universal accessibility. The survey takes 10-15 minutes to complete and will help identify challenges and best practices associated with accessibility planning.

## **CONTACT US**

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