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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

June 19, 2014

## Transportation Thursdays

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

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## ADMINISTRATIVE BRIEF

**Secretary Foxx Pens Another Letter Regarding HTF:** Last week U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx sent a letter to state transportation officials regarding the approaching shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). The letter also served as a second notice of the potential cash management measures that will need to go into effect in the event of a HTF shortfall. Click [HERE](#) to view the Secretary's most recent letter. The earlier letter is [HERE](#).

**DOT's IG Reviews FHWA's Processes for Assessing Workforce Needs:** The U.S. Department of Transportation's Inspector General (IG) released a report that found inconsistencies in how individual offices of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) prepared work plans. The IG found that FHWA has not yet completed a comprehensive assessment on the workforce impact of MAP-21 (the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act) on its 2,900 staff. The report urges FHWA to assess the workforce impact of MAP-21, and provides four recommendations to help FHWA conduct its assessment. Click [HERE](#) for a summary and the full report.

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## LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

**NARC Sends Letter Urging Action on HTF Fix:** In advance of an “Open Executive Session” in the Senate Finance Committee to consider the Protecting American Taxpayers and Homeowners (PATH) Act – which will provide a patch until the end of 2014 for the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) – NARC sent a letter to the committee stressing the importance of keeping the HTF solvent, encouraging action on ensuring long-term program stability by increasing the gas tax, and opposing an amendment that would kill the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The letter can be found **[HERE](#)**. For more details about the Senate Finance Committee proposal, go **[HERE](#)**.

**Speaker Boehner Pushes for a Longer Highway Bill Extension:** House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) recently stated that the U.S. House would most likely only approve a highway bill that lasts for nine to twelve months. He said that such a package would allow highway projects that are already underway to continue. Republicans had previously proposed cutting Saturday U.S. Postal Service as a way to help pay for transportation funding in the short term, but have since stated they will seek other options.

**LA Times Editorial Just One of Many Calling for an Increase in the Gas Tax:** A recent *LA Times* editorial in favor of increasing the nation’s gas tax to pay for an extended transportation authorization is one of many in recent months, as the HTF approaches insolvency. The *LA Times* editorial acknowledges that increasing taxes in an election year is a tall order, but encourages Congress to do it just the same. Click **[HERE](#)** for the full editorial.

## REGIONAL BRIEF

**ETCOG’s GoBus Wins Outstanding Rural Transit System Award for 2014:** This past April, East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) received an award for its GoBus system from the Texas Transit Association (TTA). GoBus is a rural transportation system serving fourteen counties in East Texas. The press release states that “the award is given to a public transportation system each year that has designed and implemented programs that demonstrate innovative concepts or effective problem-solving techniques and have applied these successfully in the public transportation industry.” Click **[HERE](#)** for

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the full press release.

**CMAP Releases New O'Hare Subregional Freight-Manufacturing Drill-Down Report:** The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has released a new report that assesses how local conditions support the competitiveness of the subregion's freight and manufacturing cluster and describes opportunities to ensure its continued success. The report examines freight and manufacturing trends and assesses the impact that area infrastructure and land use have on the health of the cluster. Click [HERE](#) for a summary and to access the full report.

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## OPPORTUNITY BRIEF

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

### **WEBINAR: Scenario Planning Applications for Freight Transportation**

*July 30, 1:00 PM EST*

This webinar, led by the FHWA Offices of Planning and Freight Management and Operations, will explore the use of scenario planning as a way to inform freight infrastructure and supply chain management activities and investments. Scenario planning is an analytical process that can help public and private sector transportation professionals plan for the future and better understand what changes might happen in the future. Agencies are increasingly finding value in applying the principles of scenario planning to freight transportation planning and decision-making. Click [HERE](#) to register.

### **AWARDS: EPA's Clean Air Excellence Awards Now Being Accepted**

*Deadline: September 12, 2014*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is now accepting applications for the 2015 Clean Air Excellence Awards Program. Through this program, EPA recognizes and honors individuals and organizations whose efforts have helped to make progress in achieving cleaner air. The award recipients are selected for developing innovative, replicable, and sustainable programs; serving as pioneers in their fields; and improving air quality either directly or indirectly through reduced emissions of criteria pollutants, hazardous air pollutants, and/or greenhouse gases. Click [HERE](#) for additional information and to submit an application.

**CONFERENCE: TRB's Transportation Systems Performance  
Measurement and Data Conference**

*May 31-June 2, 2015*

The 5th International Transportation Systems Performance Measurement and Data Conference will examine the state of the practice and will identify priorities for future research in transportation systems performance measurement and the data resources supporting them. It will be a forum for U.S. and international experts from government, industry, and academia to exchange and collaborate on performance measurement information. Click [HERE](#) for additional information. U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx June 4 announced the availability of approximately \$100 million in competitive grant funds through the [Federal Transit Administration's \(FTA\)](#) new Ladders of Opportunity Initiative.

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