



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

Congresses Calendar Filling Up

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) delayed a vote on the health care bill this week, adding to the list of “must dos” following the July 4th recess. McConnell wanted to use the 15 working days before the August recess to raise the federal debt limit and renew expiring federal programs. With this delay, the timing for these items becomes much tighter. In addition to the must-pass items, almost 30 administration nominees are ready for floor action. When Congress returns in September, they will have only a few weeks until the end of the fiscal year, so appropriations bills and several expiring programs will have to be tackled as well.

Missing NHTSA Appointees Cause AV Policy Delays

The House Energy and Commerce Committee held **a hearing** on Tuesday to hear reaction to the 14 draft bills on connected and automated vehicles the committee is considering. Committee members reiterated the need for federal legislation to protect drivers on the road and avoid a patchwork of laws across the states. However, Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ) expressed his concern over the slow pace of progress due to a lack of resources and leadership at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the agency tasked with implementing federal safety rules. President Trump has yet to appoint top leadership at NHTSA and Mr. Pallone feels that hearing from the agency on these bills is critical for the committee to move forward.

Both Chamber Committees Approve Respective FAA Reauthorization Bills

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved the **21st Century AIRR Act** on Tuesday after almost 10 hours in a markup. Several amendments were considered and approved, including banning e-cigarettes aboard commercial airlines and requiring new aircrafts to have secondary cockpit barriers. Today the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation **passed** its version of an FAA reauthorization bill by voice vote that did not include privatizing the air traffic control system. It seems unlikely that we will see a final bill before the August recess, but with a September 30th expiration date looming, the issue will have to be resolved soon.

WOTUS Rulemaking to be Rescinded

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a hearing earlier this week that the agency would revert back to 2008 standards by withdrawing the Obama Administration’s Waters of the United States rule (WOTUS). The 42-page proposal will be submitted to the Federal Register for comment and falls in line with the February executive order from the president to review the rule and rescind it.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

INFRA Program Will Replace FASTLANE Grants

USDOT announced changes today in the Federal Register to the FASTLANE freight grant program that was created in the FAST Act reauthorization. The Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program, with a new set of criteria for project selection, will have \$1.5 billion available for its first round of awards (this is most of the funding for fiscal year 2017 and all of the funding for 2018). The Notice of Funding Opportunity can be found **here**. Applications submitted at the end of 2016 under the Obama Administration’s FASTLANE program will have to be modified and

resubmitted to respond to the new criteria. New applications will also be accepted at this time.

On a call with USDOT yesterday, staff indicated the new criteria would focus less on actual project outcomes, and more on developing process improvements and innovations. While the national or regional economic vitality the project will create is still important, applications will also be rewarded for the amount of local effort exhibited in a project, including the amount of funding a local sponsor will provide, the availability of ongoing operations and maintenance funding to support a project, and performance and accountability assurances as to project budget and timing. Streamlining and other project delivery innovations will also be considered. USDOT released a **fact sheet** and **FAQ page** and will be holding webinars and an outreach summit to discuss these changes.

Rescission of Federal-aid Apportionments

Last week FHWA released a notice to states about how an \$857 million cut in highway contract authority will be implemented at the end of June. FHWA is required to calculate the rescission proportionately by state and program and the notice includes tables showing the breakdown. Thirteen and half percent of the rescission comes from CMAQ with 58.6% coming from Core Construction Programs. President Obama had previously proposed a \$2.4 billion highway rescission, but the final compromise settled on \$857 million.

USDOT Releases Integrated ITS Reference Architecture with Connected Vehicle Capabilities

USDOT's Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Joint Program Office just announced the release of the first version of the ITS National Reference Architecture to fully incorporate connected vehicle capabilities in detail. Version 8.0 of the *Architecture Reference for Cooperative and Intelligent Transportation* (ARC-IT) and its accompanying software tools are available at no cost online. ARC-IT and the accompanying toolsets help implementers develop regional architectures to effectively meet their needs and ensure regulatory compliance, while facilitating efficient, secure, and interoperable ITS deployments. USDOT will host two public workshops on ARC-IT. For further information and to register, visit:

- **Dearborn, MI, workshop** on July 26- 27
- **San Jose, CA, workshop** on August 9-10

REGIONS BRIEF

Another Successful Annual TRAC Training at the Broward MPO

Last week Broward MPO hosted Broward County teachers for a two-day Transportation and Civil Engineering (TRAC) training workshop. Fifteen Broward schools were represented, as well as a representative from the Hillsborough County (Tampa) Public Schools District, helping Broward's efforts to expand this program across the state of Florida. This is the MPO's fourth year working with teachers through the TRAC program. In addition to TRAC, the MPO has also worked with teachers and students through the Roadways In Developing Elementary Students (RIDES) program, and by hosting "Think Like a Planner" workshops at the MPO office. TRAC and RIDES are American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) led initiatives.

Incorporating Health into Long-Range Transportation Planning in North Central Texas

This new case study from FHWA focuses on incorporating health into planning at the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). In developing *Mobility 2040*, NCTCOG used resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to compare counties and identify health status indicators to select six transportation strategies to improve health outcomes.

Evaluating Efforts to Improve the Equity of Bike Share Systems

Portland State University recently released a report on barriers to bike share and how to better serve disadvantaged communities. The researchers conducted several surveys with residents, riders, and operators in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Brooklyn to explore how bike share is perceived and ways to improve access and usability.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Data Analyst

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Grants Assistant

West Florida Regional Planning Council, Pensacola, FL

Grants Coordinator

West Florida Regional Planning Council, Pensacola, FL

Executive Director

Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments, Sumter, SC

Lead – Transportation Planning

Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle, WA

Lead – Regional Planning

Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle, WA

Neighborhood Development Director

City of Greensboro, Greensboro, NC

OPPORTUNITIES

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

Successful Practices and Training Initiatives to Reduce Accidents and Incidents at Transit Agencies

July 19, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET

This webinar will present the findings from *TCRP Synthesis 126: Successful Practices and Training Initiatives to Reduce Accidents and Incidents at Transit Agencies*. This session will discuss current practices and training initiatives, including bus operator training and retraining programs that have been effective in reducing accidents and incidents at transit agencies. The webinar will also focus on other system approaches that have been implemented to address safety hazards, including various technology applications, infrastructure modifications, and programs and initiatives like driver incentive programs and close call/near miss reporting.

Celebrating 20 Years of Making America a Great Place to Walk

July 26, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

It is the 20th anniversary of America Walks and they are celebrating by looking back at the growth of the organization and the walking movement. Join America Walks to hear from some of the founders of the organizations, experts in the walking movement, and their staff for an inside look at how they are making America a great place to walk.

Recording Available! New Approaches to Support the Next Generation of Scenario Planning in Transportation

NARC, FHWA, and the Eno Center for Transportation hosted a webinar on June 14th, discussing the trends, issues, and importance of scenario planning in transportation. The webinar focused on the FHWA publication, *The Next Generation of Scenario Planning - A Transportation Practitioner's Guide*, and the forthcoming NARC report, *Advancement of Performance-Based Scenario Planning for Regional Planning and Decision-Making*, which surveyed 24 regional entities on their use of scenario planning. Both reports will be available soon.

CONTACT US

