



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

Congress Faces Packed Schedule After August Recess

The August recess is a good time to take a breather and consider everything Congress needs to do before the end of the fiscal year on September 30, and for the end of the calendar year. A pressing item for Congress is the looming expiration of appropriations. Congress will have less than a month – and only ten legislative days in the House, fifteen in the Senate – to find a way to keep the government funded. Of the twelve appropriations bills, the House has passed six and the Senate has passed zero, with no additional action expected on individual bills. With the process at a standstill, the most likely short-term solution is a continuing resolution (CR) of last year’s funding levels. For the longer term, an extended CR is a possibility as is an omnibus bill, which would combine some or all of the necessary spending bills into one enormous spending package. No matter which option Congress eventually chooses, the dreaded ‘S’ word (shutdown) has been an all too constant refrain lately. Another related must-pass bill is defense authorization, which has passed both chambers and is being negotiated in conference. The biggest hurdle is a veto threat from the Administration, which wants to force an increase in spending caps in exchange for signing a bill that is popular among Republicans. This is key because the sequestration-mandated budget caps, which were on hiatus for a couple of years under a budget deal negotiated in 2013, will be reinstated October 1.

The end of the fiscal year also marks the expiration of the authorization for the nation’s aviation program. The House was supposed to mark up a reauthorization last month but that plan was scratched, and now the path forward is unclear. An extension will be required, and at least one congressman publicly stated the possibility that we won’t see action on FAA reauthorization until 2016.

The end of October also brings the expiration of the surface transportation program, which was just extended last week. However, that extension includes enough funding to carry the program until the end of December, obviating the need to find the funding should Congress require the time to pass a longer-term bill. The House has said it will pass a reauthorization bill in September that can be conferenced with the Senate’s recently-passed *DRIVE Act*, but longer-term funding remains a major problem that will need to be resolved before a bill is released. The surface transportation reauthorization is also now associated with several other thorny issues that will themselves likely need resolution before 2016: the Export-Import Bank (already expired), a tax extenders bill, and tax reform.

Also looming – perhaps largest of all – is the need to increase the debt ceiling by the end of October. This debt ceiling has become as big of an issue as the annual dance around the appropriations process, with both sides seeking to extract maximum value from this “must-pass” increase in the nation’s borrowing limit. As a result, we will exchange one cliff at the end of September (appropriations) to another at the end of October (debt ceiling)! As they say, if the thunder don’t get you than the lightning will.

Also in the mix are the approval of the Iranian nuclear deal, looming congressional battles over domestic policy issues (including Planned Parenthood and Obamacare), and tonight's first GOP presidential debate, which marks an unofficial start to the so-called "silly season" here in Washington. Feel free to take a deep breath in August and forget about Congress for a while, because the fall is looking to be a wild and bumpy ride to say the least.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Census Bureau Announces ACS Release Dates

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an essential source of data about the social, economic, and housing characteristics of the nation and how they are changing over time. The Census Bureau announced last week that the public release of the 1-year ACS estimates, which includes data about metropolitan areas, counties, and areas above 65,000 population, is slated for September 17, and the 5-year estimates, which include data about all geographic areas, for December 10. Unfortunately, this marks the first time the 3-year estimates will not be available, as this product was discontinued as a cost-cutting measure.

REGIONS BRIEF

Want your organization featured here? Send details to erich@narc.org.

CMAP Launches Divvy for Everyone Program

Launched in the summer of 2013, Chicago's Divvy bike-share program comprised 300 stations primarily located in opportunity-dense areas near Downtown. This original bike sharing network of stations often left half-mile gaps between stations and limited access to low-income communities to the south and west of Downtown. In an effort to resolve these oversights, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) expanded the network and established a one-time, one-year Divvy for Everyone program using CMAQ funding. Divvy for Everyone makes ridership affordable to low-income users by offering adjusted rates for residents whose income is less than 300% of the federal poverty line.

JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Transportation Intern

National Association of Regional Councils, Washington, DC

Regional Planner

Central Texas Council of Governments, Belton, TX

Principal Planner – Local Technical Assistance Program

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

Senior Planner – Local Technical Assistance Program

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

Executive Director

Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region, Houghton, MI

OPPORTUNITIES

View full list of grants and events!

NARC Conference! Becoming Your Best: Professional Development Training for Executive Directors

August 9-11, Austin, TX

Join NARC and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for the 2015 Professional Development Training for Executive Directors conference in Austin, TX. At the first

ever Professional Development Training for Executive Directors conference put on by NARC and NADO, you will have the opportunity to network, share best practices, and explore opportunities for strengthening professional capacity and development. You won't want to miss it!

Four Types of Cyclists: A National Look

August 11, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

Originally developed by Roger Geller for the City of Portland, the “Four Types of Cyclists” typology has been adopted widely to help guide efforts to increase bicycling as transportation. Using the findings from a new national survey conducted in collaboration with the National Association of Realtors, this webinar will address the characteristics of each type of cyclist, whether the Four Types of Cyclists typology applies nationally, how the existing environment affects the share of people in each category/type, and what programs or infrastructure might increase bicycling as transportation among the different types of cyclists.

Transportation Revenue Forecasting in the States

August 13, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) will present the results of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) in the report, *Synthesis 479: Forecasting Transportation Revenue Sources: Survey of State Practices*, which features a survey of all state DOTs and documents current methods of revenue forecasting. The webinar will explore the current state of practice regarding revenue forecasting, and panelists will highlight current and proposed forecasting methodologies, as well as some of the shortcomings of methods as reported by state DOTs.

The Geeks are in Charge: Big Data, Autonomous Vehicles, and the Sharing Economy

August 19, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

This Community Builders webinar will examine emerging transportation technologies and their implications for state and local government policies and programs. Jim Charlier, member of the Association of Independent Commercial Producers and President of Charlier Associates Inc., will address questions like “How much will carshare companies affect car ownership?” and “Will Uber and Lyft flood our streets with for-hire cars?”

Innovative Intersections for Pedestrians and Bicycles

August 19, 1:00 – 3:00 PM ET

Organized by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Standing Committee on Operational Effects of Geometrics, this webinar will examine how to integrate pedestrian and bicycle facilities into innovative intersection designs. Presenters and participants will discuss examples from states where innovative designs have become common and explain how innovative geometric design and operations may result in complete street solutions.

Streetscape Design to Improve Walking and Cycling

August 19, 3:00 – 4:00 PM ET

Hosted by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, Details TBA.

Call for TRB Presentations

Deadline: August 20, 2015

ADA20, the TRB Standing Committee on Metropolitan Policy, Planning, and Processes, is seeking case studies to highlight at the 2016 Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. from January 10-14, 2016, in a session tentatively entitled, *Odd But Effective Bedfellows: Innovative and Effective Partnerships*, to present examples of exemplary leadership in key transportation topic areas. The committee has expressed interest in innovative partnerships that advance USDOT's 2016 Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) transition to performance based planning and programming/MAP-21 implementation, regional planning cooperation, and ladders of opportunity/access to essential services, but encourages participation of other planning focus areas, from climate change resiliency to aging in place. The planned session will be 90 minutes, with approximately 15 minutes allocated for each of four speakers, plus questions and answers. Interested parties should submit a brief abstract of their presentation proposal, including speaker's name and brief

biography to Benjamin Rasmussen (Benjamin.Rasmussen@dot.gov) by August 20.

Planning for Complete Streets: City Examples

August 20, 12:00 – 1:30 PM ET

Learn how design decisions for roadways affect the potential character of new development and economic development along corridors. Three examples of Enhanced Travel Corridors (ETCs) in Fort Collins will be featured, each designed with an emphasis on high-frequency transit, biking, and walking.

Towards Sustainable Pavements: Maintenance, Rehabilitation, and End-of-Life

August 20, 1:00 – 3:00 PM ET

FHWA's Sustainable Pavements Program recently published a major technical resource, *Towards Sustainable Pavement Systems: A Reference Document*, and is now delivering a series of five webinars to help implement and promote key elements of pavement sustainability. This fourth webinar in the series will focus on asphalt and concrete pavement maintenance and preservation strategies, recycling, and other end-of-life strategies.

Transit Funding Opportunities: Bridge the Money Gap

August 25, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

In the upcoming months, \$22 million will become available through the federal and California state agencies for the deployment and demonstration of low and no emission transit buses. CALSTART will host this webinar to provide a detailed analysis of the competitive opportunities for FTA's Low or No Emission Vehicle Deployment Program (LoNo) funding. The webinar will also provide details on the CARB Zero Emission Bus funds, pilot funding for the California cap-and-trade program, and updates on the new rules for the Hybrid and Zero Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Program.

Connected Vehicle Tracking to Improve Operational Efficiency

August 26, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET

TRB's Standing Committee on Maintenance Equipment and the National Operations Center of Excellence will discuss how telematics information from connected vehicles, such as vehicle location, engine diagnostic codes, snow plow operation details, Antilock Brake Systems (ABS) activation, differential wheel speeds, and camera images, can provide data to improve operational efficiency. Iowa DOT will be featured as an example of how connected vehicle technologies track snow plows for winter operations management and how the information is shared with the public.

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