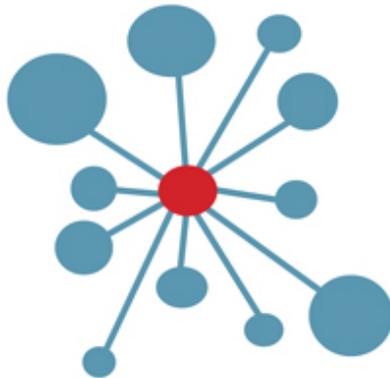




NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

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Hurricane Harvey

We are all aware of the magnitude of the recovery and rebuilding effort that will be required in Houston, Beaumont, and all the areas affected by the past week of never-before-seen rain and the flooding that resulted. This is a human story, and we at NARC wish all the people who have been impacted by this storm our very best. We know that the Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC) and many of the state's regional councils have a lot of work ahead, and we are prepared to help in whatever way we can from here in the nation's capital. This is also a transportation story as well, but one that will play out over the days, weeks, and months ahead. For now, we wish you well as the recovery process begins. Anybody who wants to help should consider making a financial contribution. One fund, started by Houston Texans football star J.J. Watt, keeps meeting and increasing their fundraising goal within hours. As of today, **this fund** has blown passed its \$10 million goal to almost \$12 million raised. There are plenty of other fundraising options, too.

CONGRESS BRIEF

Overview

Congress returns to Washington next week with a daunting "things to do" list, and only twelve days with both chambers in session (the House is on recess the week of September 18 for Rosh Hashanah). To wit:

- A funding package for the Hurricane Harvey recovery. Estimates range as high as \$190 billion; Congress is likely to provide some portion of that as a starting point.
- Reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- Renewal of the Federal Aviation Administration authority.
- Reauthorization of the state-based Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
- The debt ceiling needs to be raised by September 29 to keep the federal government from defaulting on its obligations.
- A continuing resolution for the appropriations bills that have not yet been signed into law (which is to say, most of them).

EPA to Host Hearings on WOTUS Rewrite

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) formally proposed in July to repeal the "Waters of the United States (WOTUS)" rule under the *Clean Water Act*, which the agency called too vague

and far-reaching. EPA is hosting a series of ten teleconference meetings this fall to discuss how they should rewrite the rule. Nine meetings will discuss specific interests affected by WOTUS, including agriculture, conservation and energy, and construction. The agency is also planning an in-person meeting where local governments, small businesses, and the public can submit comments.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

USDOT Releases Quick Grant to Texas

On Tuesday, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao directed FHWA to immediately release \$25 million in Emergency Relief (ER) funds to Texas. The funds were approved promptly after Texas' request and will help pay for necessary temporary repairs and the permanent restoration of service for flood-damaged roads and bridges following Hurricane Harvey.

Trump's Infrastructure Plan Will Rely on Incentives

In a meeting at the White House yesterday, Budget Director Mick Mulvaney and Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao briefed state and local leaders on the administration's infrastructure plan. They discussed breaking the package into three pieces with the largest piece focused on incentives to spur state, local, and private sector infrastructure spending. This could include incentives to encourage the use of asset recycling by state and local transportation agencies, whereby a profitable asset is leased or sold and the funds put toward a greenfield project. The administration's goal is to leverage \$200 billion in federal funding for \$1 trillion in overall investment, starting with projects that already have significant funding secured. The second piece of the package will focus on rural areas, and the third on transformative transportation technology.

Self-Driving Car Advisory Group Stalled

The latest Trump administration advisory council to be put on hold is the Federal Committee on Automation. It first met on January 16, but has not met since and has no plans to meet in the future. USDOT has said that they are determining how to best move the council forward.

ITS Benefits, Costs, and Lessons Learned: 2017 Update Report

To address transportation challenges facing today's communities, new technologies are being developed and applied to improve safety and mobility while reducing the environmental impact of transportation options. Connected vehicles, automation, accessible transportation, smart communities, and mobility on demand are some of these new technologies. This updated USDOT ITS-JPO report features new fact sheets for each of these topics and updates on traditional ITS topics.

REGIONS BRIEF

USDOT Announces \$900 Million for Maryland Purple Line Project

After overcoming several major hurdles, the Maryland Purple Line Light Rail Project officially received a \$900 million federal grant from the Capital Investment Grants Program, as well as a \$874.6 million *Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act* (TIFIA) loan. The 16.2-mile line will connect with Washington's metrorail, all three Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) rail lines, and Amtrak's Northeast Corridor line. It includes the construction of 21 stations and stretches across Montgomery and Prince George counties in Maryland.

California Looking to Boost EV Consumer Rebates

California has spent \$449 million over the past seven years to boost electric vehicle (EV) adoption, but EV uptake is still not at desired levels. A new bill in the California Legislature would increase rebates from \$2,500 to \$10,000 or more for a compact EV. The legislature has until September 15 to send the bill to the governor's desk. Assemblyman Phil Ting (D-San Francisco), the bill's sponsor, is concerned that the state will fall behind Governor Brown's goal of 1.5 million zero-emission vehicles on the road by 2025. The bill includes other provisions, such as expanding the state's "cash for clunkers" program and a safety net for the federal tax rebate should the new administration cut it. Funding for the \$3 billion bill is still under discussion and skeptics on both sides are concerned over the large price tag.

Ford and Domino's to Test Driverless Pizza Delivery

Ford Motor Co. and Domino's Pizza have teamed up to test driverless pizza delivery in Ann Arbor,

Michigan. While the autonomous-capable Ford Fusions will still have drivers, the companies are testing how customers react to retrieving their own pizza from a locked warming compartment rather than having it delivered to their doorstep. Domino's is also testing whether not tipping a driver will offset the extra effort customers will have to make to get their pizza. Testing will not occur on rainy days or college football Saturdays. Ford is also planning to test grocery delivery as a way to develop the market for autonomous vehicles.

Oregon Governor Celebrates Passage of H.B. 2017

Governor Kate Brown of Oregon toured the state this week to celebrate the enactment of H.B. 2017, a \$5.3 billion **transportation package**. The package is funded with various taxes and fees. Beginning January 1, 2018, motorists will pay four cents more per gallon at the pump, and this will continue to rise every two years. The bill also includes a payroll tax increase and a new vehicle dealer privilege tax on new car sales.

JOBS

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Manager – Bexar Area Agency on Aging

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

OPPORTUNITIES

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USDOT Webinar Series on the Status of the Connected Vehicle Pilot Deployment Sites

September 13 - **Wyoming DOT Webinar: Update at the System Design Milestone**

September 18 - **Tampa (THEA) Webinar: Update at the System Design Milestone**

September 27 - **NYCDOT Webinar: Update at the System Design Milestone**

USDOT is hosting a webinar series to update the public on each of the Connected Vehicle Pilot sites--New York City; WY; and Tampa, FL. As part of USDOT's Connected Vehicle Pilot Deployment Program, these sites are designing, building, and testing the nation's most complex and extensive deployment of integrated wireless in-vehicle, mobile device, and roadside technologies.

Route Fifty Navigator Awards: Spotlight on Innovation - Emergency Response

September 14, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET

California's old guidelines for an active shooter situation? Run. hide. fight. But what happens if you are in a wheelchair? Join Route Fifty for a digital event featuring the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services to learn about why FEMA has adopted the state's new active shooter awareness guide. Hear from this innovator and more as they explore what makes these programs so successful and what lessons can be applied to governments across the country.

The New Agenda in State and Local Government

September 19, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

The fundamental nature of intergovernmental relations is changing. From immigration to climate change, state and local governments sometimes find themselves at odds with federal policy. Governors and mayors are stepping to the forefront on international relations and trade. Funding formulas for healthcare, homeland security, social services, taxation and infrastructure are all up for debate. This webinar will look at what the Trump administration's agenda means for state and local governments across the country.

Inside the FAF4: Truck Flow Estimation Method and Visualization

September 25, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

During the webinar, Birat Pandey of FHWA and Maks Alam of Maks Inc. will describe the approach and methodology used to assign truck flows on the national highway network for FAF4. Supin Yoder of FHWA will provide an overview and demonstration of HEPGIS, FHWA's interactive, web-based data visualization tool. With HEPGIS, users can develop customized data visualizations and maps using FAF4 data. This webinar is aimed at practitioners with basic or no knowledge of the FAF but who would like to move to the next experience level. This webinar will also provide a useful foundation for future webinars in this three-part series.

Shared Use Ambassador Highlight: Ohio Department of Health, Creating Healthy Communities Program

September 27, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

This webinar will highlight the first Organization Shared Use Ambassador; the Ohio Department of Health, Creating Healthy Communities Program; and their commitment to shared use policy adoption, implementation, advocacy, and education in communities with chronic disease concerns. A statewide health initiative since 2010, Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) is a CDC funded program committed to preventing and reducing chronic disease statewide. Currently in 23 counties in Ohio, the CHC program is found in rural, suburban and urban communities and assists with the implementation of sustainable evidence-based strategies. Attend this webinar to learn more about the state level program, support and resources, and hear from select communities on how they are implementing shared use to advance physical activity and healthy living in areas of high need.

EconWorks from the MPO Perspective

September 28, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

This FHWA webinar will cover:

- Background on wider economic benefits and standard traveler benefits
- The effectiveness of the EconWorks Wider Economic Benefits (W.E.B.) tools in evaluating projects for MPOs
- Decision-making implications for MPOs using the tools
- Benefits and limitations of the tools for MPOs
- Future use of the tools

CONTACT US

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