

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS**

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

Both chambers are in session.

House Delays Transportation Bill Release

Despite initial indications that a House transportation reauthorization bill would be released today, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) said last night that they were still working out the details and the release would be delayed, possibly until next week. No word on what this means for next Thursday's expected, but not yet officially announced, markup. Reports are surfacing that a faction of House Republicans are unhappy with the idea of marking up a policy bill without identified funding. It is hard to get a read on whether this is the first indication that the transportation bill is slipping down the priority list or whether a temporary delay is really all that is needed to get a bill released in the near term.

Shuster Acknowledges Likelihood of Highway, FAA Extensions

Yesterday, Chairman Shuster indicated that Congress will need to extend the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) authorization bill (which expires September 30) and will likely need to do the same for the surface transportation bill (which expires October 29). Realistically, neither bill will be able to get through a House-Senate conference and to the President before those deadlines.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Transportation Infrastructure Panel Advocates Long-term Planning and Funding

At a National Press Club Newsmakers panel on Wednesday, Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, Teamsters President James P. Hoffa, and former Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour (R) discussed the need for infrastructure growth and expressed shared frustration over the current trend of short-term extension bills. Secretary Foxx encouraged Congress not to see a solvent Highway Trust Fund (HTF) as the goal of a reauthorization package, but as a tool for addressing our infrastructure needs. All three speakers emphasized the importance of a long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill and the need to improve America's infrastructure, as opposed to focusing solely on system maintenance.

XPEDITE Initiative

FTA launched an online dialogue to discuss its new Expedited Public Transportation Improvement (XPEDITE) Initiative. XPEDITE seeks to speed up planning, approval, and delivery of FTA supported capital investments as well as support innovative financing methods. FTA seeks to increase the transit industry's access to new technologies, proven methods to speedup project delivery, and enhanced financing opportunities through public-private partnerships and "value capture." FTA specifically seeks feedback from MPOs on XPEDITE. The online dialogue will run through October 16.

Step It Up! Surgeon General's Call to Action

This week, the U.S. Surgeon General announced a new campaign promoting walking and

walkable communities. The campaign encourages walking as a key to improving the health of the nation and calls upon cities to create safe and inviting walking environments.

Feds: Highway Funding Will Last Until June 2016

According to the latest estimates by USDOT, the HTF is expected to have adequate funding resources until June of 2016, six months later than previously thought. After Congress transferred funds to the HTF in its most recent extension, estimates had this carrying the account until December. But with outlays lower over the winter, available funding is expected to go much longer. This estimate has caused concerns regarding the fate of a long-term bill, as this revelation eases the pressure on Congress to get something done by the end of 2015.

REGIONS BRIEF

Local Government Internship Program Impactful for Students

This summer, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) provided college students with the opportunity to gain experience in public service through their Local Government Internship Pilot Program. Interns worked at various central Ohio local government entities for ten weeks and participated in commission meetings, work groups, and other events. Several students received offers to continue their work and all reported a positive learning experience through the new program.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Assistant Data Analyst

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

Outreach Principal

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

Executive Director

Western Illinois Regional Council and Community Action Agency, Macomb, IL

Energy Conservation Service Technician

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Columbus, OH

Human Resources Generalist

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Transportation Planner / MPO Director

City of Columbus-Bartholomew County Planning Department, Columbus, IN

OPPORTUNITIES

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

Reminder! Call for TRB Presentations

Proposal Deadline: September 11

ADA20, the TRB Standing Committee on Metropolitan Policy, Planning, and Processes, is seeking case studies with examples of exemplary leadership in key transportation topic areas to be highlighted at the *2016 Annual Meeting* in Washington, D.C., January 10-14, 2016, in a session tentatively called: *Odd But Effective Bedfellows: Innovative and Effective Partnerships*. The committee 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. Interested parties should submit a brief abstract of their presentation proposal, including speaker's name, and brief biography to Benjamin Rasmussen at

Benjamin.Rasmussen@dot.gov.

WEBINAR: The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Transportation

September 18, 12:00 - 1:00 PM ET

At the first event in Volpe's new speaker series, *Beyond Traffic 2045: Reimagining Transportation*, Dr. Andrew McAfee will discuss the rapidly shifting technology landscape and its implications for transportation.

WEBINAR: MAP-21 Freight Provisions – Status Review and Discussion

September 23, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

MAP-21 included a new emphasis on freight transportation by establishing requirements for a *National Freight Strategic Plan* and National Freight Network, as well as introducing provisions related to performance measurement, state freight plans, and state freight advisory committees. Staff from FHWA's Office of Freight Management and Operations will provide an update on the status of these provisions.

GRANT: Call to Action: Every Body Walk! Collaborative Micro Grants

Application Deadline: October 15

In response to the Surgeon General's Call to Action, *America Walks* will fund 10-15 community groups for activities designed to increase local walking programs and stimulate community demand for infrastructure improvements that provide accessible, safe, and walkable places for the entire community. This micro grant program is designed to assist groups and organizations in setting priorities and implementing targeted projects to get them started.

CONTACT US

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