



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

The House and Senate are both in session this week. The Pope is in Washington, DC for three days next week, including an address to a joint session of Congress on Wednesday. The House is on recess next week, while the Senate will be in session for most of the week.

The Big Question: When?

Today was supposed to be the day the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee marked up a multi-year surface transportation reauthorization proposal. This would be the House answer to the Senate's *DRIVE Act*, which passed at the end of August. Cracks in the House plan began showing last week when the release of the bill text was delayed, and the death blow came last Friday when T&I Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) announced the markup itself would be delayed as well. So, the question has become: *When will we see a bill?* [Editor's note: some in Washington would say the question is: *Will we see a bill?* We are taking the more optimistic approach.]

Chairman Shuster indicated the release of a bill will be pushed off until the end of September or early October. Unless there is some serious progress by the House Ways and Means Committee on a pay for, there is good reason to doubt that prediction as well. Meanwhile, it has become crystal clear that Congress will need to extend – again – the existing program when it expires at the end of October. There is no way a bill can pass the House, be conferenced, pass both chambers again, and make it to the President in time. Meanwhile, NARC is using this delay wisely. We have held dozens of meetings with individual offices to put a laser focus on our priorities and help ensure a good outcome when a bill is finally released.

GAO Report Confirms Need for Positive Train Control Deadline Extension

A recent report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) concluded that most U.S. railroads will not meet the Positive Train Control (PTC) deadline currently set for December 31. Other findings of the report conclude that most railroads will need one to five years to complete implementation and that the Federal Railway Administration was insufficient in monitoring implementation. The Administration and Senate and House leaders are working to extend the deadline to prevent hardships for passengers and freight service.

TAP Letter

Last week, House transportation Democrats sent a letter to fellow minority party ranking members outlining the importance of continued support for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) in the House transportation bill.

Freight Movement Letter

Representatives from Illinois sent House transportation leadership a letter emphasizing the importance of the American freight system and requesting multiple aspects of a freight program to be included in the draft transportation bill.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Planning to Maximize the Benefits of Public Transit

Earlier this week, FTA announced 21 projects from across the country that will receive a share of \$19.5 million in grants from the Pilot Program for Transit-Orientated Planning. These grants support cities with transit comprehensive planning efforts to plan for jobs, housing, and services centered around public transit.

2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Released Today

The U.S. Census Bureau has released the 2014 one-year census data, along with documents to help users understand what it contains.

REGIONS BRIEF

Governors Support Hudson River Rail Tunnel

This week, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (D) and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie (R) sent a joint letter to President Obama asking for federal funds to replace the Hudson River rail tunnel. This tunnel is part of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor route and was put into further disrepair by Hurricane Sandy. The two states agreed to provide half the funding for this \$20 billion project that will take many years to complete.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Executive Director

New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, New York, NY

Executive Director

Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District, Taunton, MA

Transportation Planner III

Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, Colorado Springs, CO

Chief Executive Officer

Newark Alliance, Newark, NJ

Senior Planner – Regional & Community Planning

Capital Area Council of Governments, Austin, TX

OPPORTUNITIES

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

The Social Justice (of) Movement: How Transit Administrators Define Social Justice

September 17, 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET

This webcast explores the relationship between justice considerations – how transit administrators perceive, define, and then implement socially just policies - to further the study of transportation equity and raise awareness of the importance of effective decision making in public transportation agencies.

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.

Neighborhood Rx: Mapping Community Health

September 23, 3:00 – 4:00 PM ET

Learn how multiple data sources can be combined to understand health issues in communities and improve care. Panelists will discuss different methods of assessing neighborhood health in the context of demographics, economics, and other social determinants of health.

Large-Scale Strategic Transport Models in Australia and Europe

September 24, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM ET

The first in a series of webinars will focus on the development of the Sydney Strategic Travel Model in New South Wales, Australia. The presentation will focus on the design of the travel demand model, the available data, model estimation and validation, and the maintenance and continued development of the model.

Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study - Closing of Comment Period

Closing Date: October 13

FHWA's Freight Office has just published a Federal Register notice announcing the closing of the comment period for the *Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study*. Comments must be received on or before Tuesday, October 13th to receive full consideration by USDOT with respect to the *MAP-21 Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study Report* to Congress.

GlidePath Prototype Application – Automated Eco-Friendly Cruise Control using Wireless V2I Communications at Signalized Intersections

October 28, 1:30 – 3:00 PM ET

The GlidePath prototype application is an application of a cooperative adaptive cruise control that automatically communicates wirelessly with a traffic signal and controls a vehicle's approaching and departing speed in an eco-friendly manner. This webinar will provide an overview and discuss initial testing, results from testing and demonstrations, and identify next steps for the project.

CONTACT US

Copyright © 2015 National Association of Regional Councils, All rights reserved.