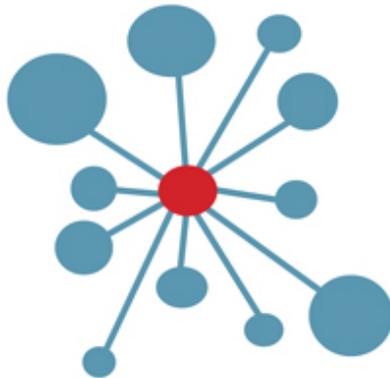




NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS



converge ■ learn ■ share

**2017 executive directors conference
october 22 - october 24
san antonio, tx**

register today!

CONGRESS BRIEF

Senate AV START Act

The Senate autonomous vehicles bill was approved by voice vote out of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee yesterday. An amendment to include vehicles heavier than 10,000 pounds was withdrawn, but Chairman John Thune (R-SD) has indicated this could still be added later by the full Senate.

The National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, and U.S. Conference of Mayors **sent a joint letter** to the committee expressing concern about language preempting state and local authority, and other pieces of the bill. The group asked the committee to narrow and clarify the scope of federal preemption and cited concerns about the provisions for data sharing with local governments. During the committee hearing, an amendment to the preemption section was accepted, and the new language is still being analyzed to determine if it resolves these concerns.

Democrats Introduce Smart Cities Bill

Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Maria Cantwell (D-WA), and Congressmen Suzan DelBene (D-WA) and Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM) introduced legislation to promote the advancement of smart cities earlier this week. The bill authorizes \$220 million for each of five years to improve and promote smart city technology and enhance cybersecurity. It would also set best practices and improve federal coordination efforts to provide more rural and urban municipalities with the resources and assistance to leverage the technologies.

New Democrat Coalition Releases Infrastructure Principles

The 21st Century Infrastructure Task Force, co-chaired by Representatives John Delaney (D-MD), Elizabeth Esty (D-CT), Stacey Plaskett (D-US Virgin Islands), and Norma Torres (D-CA), has released a set of infrastructure principles. Though fairly light on details, the proposal includes three major pieces: fund it, fix it, and foster it. Their proposal relies on revenue from repatriation, investing more money in the Highway Trust Fund, and creating an Infrastructure Bank. Their fix it and foster it principles include fixing current deficiencies and streamlining regulations and permitting as well as supporting public-private partnerships. Democrats continue to promote their infrastructure priorities while the administration decides how to move forward.

Help Save the Transit Benefit

Last week, the White House and House and Senate Republican leadership unveiled a tax reform framework. As a part of tax reform, Congress is considering eliminating the transportation fringe benefit. This benefit provides commuters with tax-free employer provided parking and transit. Eliminating this benefit would impact almost all commuting Americans. Additionally, eliminating this benefit would impact transit ridership and thus result in more congestion. The Association for Commuter Transportation has prepared a **form letter** you can sign online to ask your member of Congress to save this benefit.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Infrastructure Spending Bill's Fate Still Unknown

After failing to deliver a legislative package over the summer, President Trump cast significantly more doubt on the prospects of a large infrastructure plan last week when he stated his skepticism about public-private partnerships. With no clear path forward and an attention shift toward tax reform it is uncertain how, when, or if an infrastructure legislative package will be released. Despite this, House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) told reporters that a legislative outline could be made public next week. Shuster thinks that tax reform will go together with an infrastructure plan and expects the Ways and Means Committee to work on it. On the Senate side however, Chairman John Thune (R-SD) doesn't think infrastructure will be enough to get Democrats on board with tax reform. Meanwhile, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Democrats wrote to Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao that they need an update on the \$1 trillion funding plan and stand ready to assist Republicans with a bill.

Cutting the Red Tape

On Monday, NARC attended an event with Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao to discuss regulatory reform and a **federal register notice** for comments on existing rules and other agency actions that are good candidates for repeal, replacement, suspension, or modification. The presentation included information on USDOT's vision and background motivation for regulatory reform, and a question and answer discussion. The notice requests comments by November 1. USDOT is specifically interested in regulatory burdens on regulated entities or the use or production of domestic energy resources.

National Plug-In Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Analysis

This report addresses the fundamental question of how much plug-in electric vehicle (PEV) charging infrastructure—also known as electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE)—is needed in the U.S. to support both plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) and battery electric vehicles (BEVs). It complements ongoing EVSE initiatives by providing a comprehensive analysis of national PEV charging infrastructure requirements. The analysis also provides guidance to public and private stakeholders seeking to provide nationwide charging coverage, improve the EVSE business case by maximizing station utilization, and promote effective use of private/public infrastructure investments.

Next Generation Scenario Planning: A Transportation Practitioner's Guide

This FHWA report profiles the next generation of scenario planning for transportation practitioners. It provides a summary of the history, key benefits, and driving issues that warrant a scenario-based approach; a framework for scoping a scenario planning process tailored to specific issues and local agency capacity; and profiles of recent scenario planning efforts in the U.S. The report also illustrates the different considerations associated with conducting a scenario planning process based on variable future orientations: what is likely to happen (probable), what we want to happen (desirable), and what could happen (uncertain). Finally, it walks through the six-phase scenario planning process and highlights key considerations practitioners should address when developing and implementing a scenario-based process.

FAA Restricts Drones over Statue of Liberty, Other Landmarks

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has put in place restrictions on unauthorized drone operations over ten U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) sites. This is the first time the agency has placed airspace restrictions for drones over DOI landmarks, though they have placed similar airspace restrictions over military bases that currently remain in place. The sites include the

Statue of Liberty, Hoover Dam, and Mount Rushmore.

FRA Releases Georgia-Tennessee High-Speed Rail Record of Decision

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released a Tier I combined *Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision* (FEIS/ROD) for the high-speed rail project that would connect Atlanta, Georgia to Chattanooga, Tennessee. The project would run approximately 120 miles along Interstate 75 and provide a competitive and more reliable transportation choice for people traveling between Atlanta and Chattanooga. The chosen corridor includes eight rail stations and is estimated to take 88 minutes of travel time from the first to last station along the corridor.

Program for Eliminating Duplication of Environmental Reviews

FHWA, FTA, and FRA have proposed a pilot program to allow up to five states to use their own laws for transportation project reviews in lieu of federal requirements. This federal register notice is in line with the administration's desire to reduce regulatory burden; however, many parties believe that only California has the proper state laws in place to participate in this pilot.

REGIONS BRIEF

Free Bus Passes for Workers: Columbus's Big Idea to Relieve Congestion Downtown

Columbus, Ohio will be piloting a program that gives downtown workers free bus passes. The city has struggled with downtown parking availability and a low public transit usage rate, which has led to business expansion in suburban areas. To help combat these difficulties and ensure a bustling downtown, the Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District (SID) has convinced its members to pay for free transit passes for their employees through a fee calculated by their square footage. The two-year trial will begin next summer and the organization is hoping to see a threefold increase in public transit usage.

Mapping the Hard-to-Count Populations in the 2020 Census

The mapping team at the Center for Urban Research of the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center has developed an **interactive map of hard-to-count districts** for the 2020 Census. Search by congressional district or state legislative district to display hard-to-count neighborhoods and other details.

Impaired Driving Campaign Toolkit

Driving while impaired is a factor in nearly 40% percent of fatal crashes. To help combat this problem, the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) has put together a set of materials aimed at preventing impaired driving. The set includes email templates, social media posts, and fact sheets.

Musk Wants to Build a Rocket That Will Get You Anywhere on Earth in an Hour

Elon Musk announced that he plans to build a new rocket ship capable of traveling anywhere on earth in under one hour. His presentation discussed flying from New York to Shanghai in 30 minutes and showed images of the BFR rocket that can hold 100 people. This announcement follows his plans to make travel to Mars a reality and indicates a desire to provide Earth with benefits of his space program. Musk stated that the cost would be similar to a full fare economy ticket. If this plan becomes a reality, it would disrupt the commercial airline industry as we know it.

A First Experience with AVs

By: Erich W. Zimmermann

At the invitation of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC), I recently took my very first ride in a fully automated vehicle (AV), as part of an Industry Day event held at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall (JBM-HH) just outside of Washington, D.C. in the Northern Virginia suburbs. Behind the wheel of the modified Cadillac SRX was Dr. Raj Rajkumar, the head of the U.S. DOT Center for Transportation Safety at Carnegie Mellon, and a big name in the world of AVs.

The first thing I noticed as I approached the car was, well, nothing. By which I mean, there were no external sensors or LIDAR or anything else that would indicate it's different than any other vehicle. Dr. Rajkumar explained that the necessary components were hidden behind plastic

bumpers, along with a couple of sensors at the top of the vehicle's windshield. Upon entering the vehicle, the large computer display signaled that this was not your father's Cadillac. Though the ride was a little choppy (Dr. Rajkumar had to switch back and forth between autonomous and manual mode many times due to some GPS and mapping issues), the car made a beautiful steep right turn all by itself at one point that really gave you the idea of what it could do. For the most part, it also did a great job of sensing other vehicles and pedestrians. The pedestrian crossing signs in the middle of the road were the exception, as the car saw them as living, breathing pedestrians rather than physical signs.

Though a military installation might not be the first place you think of when it comes to AVs, I learned a good deal about the coordination NVRC is doing with JBM-HH and Marine Corps Base Quantico, farther south in Virginia. Both are large employers in the region that are near, but not immediately adjacent to, transit. As a result, both could be on the leading edge of autonomous shuttle deployment, to get commuters from the nearby Metro station (in the case of JBM-HH) or Virginia Railway Express (VRE) station (in the case of Quantico). Though both installations currently have commuter services in place, autonomous shuttles offer the promise of more frequent service at a reduced cost. JBM-HH has a long history in transportation innovation, including the birthplace of military aviation when the Wright Brothers tested their plane there in 1908 and as the first base to adopt electric vehicles into their fleet. This military base hopes to take advantage of the controlled environment and low speed limits to be an early adopter of AVs and continue to lead in transportation innovation.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Executive Director

Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, Salisbury, MD

Principal Planner

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Legislation Manager

Southern California Association of Governments, Los Angeles, CA

OPPORTUNITIES

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

How to Deploy MOD: Lessons from Leading Cities

October 11, 1:00 – 5:30 PM ET, Atlanta, GA

The Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America) and the Shared-Use Mobility Center are hosting a free, two-part workshop to discuss the challenges of Mobility On Demand (MOD) and explore solutions. The workshop immediately follows APTA's Annual Meeting & EXPO at the Georgia World Congress Center. Over the past several years, the MOD ecosystem has evolved significantly. From the expansion of bikeshare and carshare partnerships to the rapid rise of transportation network companies (TNCs), MOD is impacting transportation networks worldwide. With these expanding options, however, comes important questions: How can these transportation modes best be used within the existing transportation system? What are some common issues that MOD providers face, and what are the solutions? How can successful MOD partnerships be implemented across the country?

Tools of the Trade 2018 Conference: Call for Abstracts

Deadline: October 15

Tools of the Trade is a national conference providing practical techniques for transportation professionals in small (under 50,000) and medium-sized (50,000 - 250,000) communities. All practitioners, researchers, academics, and others involved in transportation planning are encouraged to attend. The Committee seeks exceptional papers, presentations, or case study demonstrations on transportation planning topics and tools that are applicable to small and medium-sized communities. Abstracts are due by October 15.

2017 Alternative Fuels Corridor Request for Designation Nominations Webinar

October 16, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET

Join FHWA and USDOT's Volpe Center for a webinar on the 2017 request for alternative fuel corridor nominations.

Federal Automated Vehicle Policy Update with NHTSA

October 18, 2:00 – 2:30 PM ET

This September, USDOT and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released an update to their federal policy statement on automated vehicles (AVs). Automated Driving Systems: A Vision for Safety 2.0 provides voluntary guidance for AV manufacturers as they continue developing the nascent technology. On October 18, the Eno Center for Transportation will host Nat Beuse, Associate Administrator for Vehicle Safety Research at NHTSA for a webinar on the newly updated policy statement. Mr. Beuse will discuss what has changed in the policy guidance and how NHTSA plans to oversee the ongoing development of automated vehicles.

National Coalition on Truck Parking Annual Meeting

October 19, 1:30 – 3:30 PM ET

USDOT will be hosting a web conference as part of the National Coalition on Truck Parking to discuss the implementation of truck parking initiatives. The objectives of the upcoming Coalition web conference are to discuss identification of top priorities, solicit working groups champions, and highlight a few best practices in truck parking initiatives already underway. The agenda includes a review of the recently published **National Coalition on Truck Parking Activity Report**, 2015-2016.

CONTACT US

Copyright © 2017 National Association of Regional Councils, All rights reserved.