



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

## CONGRESS BRIEF

### Looking Ahead to the Lame Duck

With Congress on recess until after the election, it is a good time to look ahead to the lame duck session that will commence in November. The most important issue they will grapple with is how to continue funding the government past the December 9 expiration of the current continuing resolution (CR) funding agreement. We are likely to see one of a few options: another punt with a CR that carries us past the swearing-in of the new Congress, a series of “mini-buses” that contains a few appropriations bill together in one bill, or an omnibus that contains the remaining eleven appropriations bill in one large package. A number of domestic issues remain a possibility as well, but their viability will be tied to which party controls the Senate and White House after the election. The top infrastructure-related accomplishment could be passage of the *Water Resources and Development Act*, which the House passed last week.

## ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

### 2015 ACS Data Released

The Census Bureau released the 2015 one-year ACS statistics on September 15, offering a wealth of demographic and socio-economic data on more than 40 topics for communities with populations of 65,000 or more, including all states, large cities, and counties. The Bureau will release the 2011-2015 five-year statistics for areas as small as census tracts and block groups on December 8. The five-year estimates average data collected over the relevant time period from an annual sample of roughly 3.5 million addresses, to ensure acceptable levels of statistical reliability for data on neighborhoods, sparsely populated areas (such as rural counties), and numerically small population groups (such as veterans, persons with disabilities, and race and ethnic subgroups).

### Two New Tools for Improving Road Safety Reporting

USDOT developed and released two new tools to aid in the collection of information concerning how and where serious road injuries occur, an effort to help them achieve their goal of zero road fatalities. The Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC) was used to standardize a definition for reporting serious injuries to the federal government to improve data quality and accurate analysis. States must be compliant by April 15, 2019 with the new serious injury definitions. In the meantime, the State Serious Injury Conversion Tables can be used by state and local agencies to convert and report their serious injury data to help build better resources.

### Smart Cities are the Next Transportation Revolution

In opening remarks at the final day of Smart Cities Week, Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said the potential around smart cities could be as revolutionary as the Interstate Highway System was in the mid-1950s. “When we think about how we’re planning cities, we should be looking at these trends going forward and not be so nostalgic about how we planned 50 years ago,” Foxx said. Foxx felt that data is the one asset that communities have to help them address rising technological and citizen demand challenges. Cities have the opportunity to become smart from the ground up, Foxx said, and with that opportunity comes the responsibility to ensure that smart cities are inclusive to citizens whether they have access to advanced technology or not. The opportunity, in reality, is to include inclusion from the beginning. Last month, the U.S. Department of Transportation **released** its first autonomous vehicle policy to establish a

foundation for the integration of driverless cars into daily life, which Foxx called “the first, most comprehensive policy any nation has ever produced.”

## **REGIONS BRIEF**

### **Governor Cuomo Announces Transformational Plan to Reimagine NY Bridges and Tunnels**

Yesterday, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a plan to transform the state’s bridges and tunnels as part of the New York Crossings Project. The \$27 billion capital plan includes automatic tolling at all bridges and tunnels, improved security at high-profile crossings to enhance public safety, energy-efficient LED lighting, public art, and natural disaster preparation for floods and earthquakes. One of the first steps of the project will be to establish auto-pay tolling for tunnels early next year and bridges by the end of the year, thereby reducing traffic congestion and decreasing emissions.

## **JOBS**

*[View full list of jobs!](#)*

### **Senior Planner**

Central Texas Council of Governments, Belton, TX

### **Community and Economic Development Manager**

Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency, Omaha, NE

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

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

### **Highly Automated Vehicles: Challenges and Opportunities**

October 13, 12:00 – 12:45 PM ET

A world with highly automated vehicles presents many challenges that will need to be addressed if their life-saving potential can be realized. Join Dr. Mark R. Rosekind, administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, for his talk “Highly Automated Vehicles: Challenges and Opportunities” as part of Volpe’s speaker series *The Future of Transportation: Safety, Opportunity, and Innovation*.

### **Regional Models of Cooperation – Regional Collaboration in Freight Planning**

October 19, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

Most freight transportation, by its very nature, operates across municipal, county, state, and/or national boundaries, and those movements create economic impacts at all of those geographic levels. A significant portion of that freight also operates across multiple modes, and the infrastructure for those modes is often shared between freight movements and passenger movements. This webinar, which is a joint webinar between the FHWA Freight Office and FHWA Planning Office and part of the Planning Office’s Regional Models of Cooperation initiative, will focus on different types of regional collaboration in freight planning. Speakers from the City of Chicago, Kansas City SmartPort, and the Arizona DOT will share their regional freight planning success stories, focusing on how they have collaborated across jurisdictional boundaries and with non-traditional partners to address the growing freight transportation-related issues and needs.

### **EPA Offers Assistance to Help Rural Communities Revitalize Downtowns**

Letters of Interest Due: November 6

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has invited rural communities to apply for planning assistance to develop strategies that help grow the economy and revitalize downtown neighborhoods. EPA is offering this assistance as part of Rural Advantage, a suite of federal economic development planning assistance programs for rural communities. Rural Advantage is part of the Obama Administration’s commitment to place-based strategies to help communities develop competitive advantages. In these places, federal experts are working side by side with residents and local leaders to create customized solutions, bolstering coordination across agencies, and improving how we interact with and serve community partners.

### **Every Body Walk! 2016 Micro Grants**

Applications Due: November 18 at 5:00 PM ET

America Walks and the Every Body Walk! Collaborative announce their second year of Micro Grant Funding. This program will award grantees up to \$1,500.00 for projects related to increasing walking and walkability. Walkable communities encourage broad involvement by all in the design and planning process, and are places where safe, accessible, and delightful opportunities to be physically active are available to everyone. Most importantly, walking and walkability can help to bridge community divides and overcome existing disparities. Funded projects will increase walking and benefits of walkability in communities, work to develop the walking movement by growing the number and diversity of people and organizations pushing for more walkability, and they should make walking safe, easy, and enjoyable for all community members.

## CONTACT US

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