

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS**

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

Transportation Reauthorization: Decidedly Hopeful

After the Senate surprised us in August with its version of a long-term transportation reauthorization bill, the House is on the verge of doing the same next week. Though the schedule hasn't been finalized, the House appears ready to provide floor time to the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform (STRR) Act, which passed out of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee last week. The House bill will likely include the Senate's package of payfors, which would help clear the single biggest hurdle to getting a bill through the chamber. If a House bill does pass, the road to a conferenced version that can be signed by the President becomes a very real possibility. Not a done deal, mind you, but possible.

Neither piece of legislation is perfect, of course, and NARC is working to improve the House version during the floor debate. In particular, Representatives Rodney Davis (R-IL) and Dina Titus (D-NV) are expected to file an amendment that would increase STP suballocation substantially and provide billions in additional funds for local projects. We'll send more information soon on how to weigh-in on this important amendment, and if you are able, please make your voice heard. In the meantime, if you want to watch the inspiring remarks made about STP during the T&I markup, you can find them [here](#).

Congress Passes Three Week Highway Bill Extension

The House and Senate this week approved an extension of the nation's transportation program, and provided a three-year extension of Positive Train Control (PTC) requirements. The measure extends federal funding for transportation for three weeks, until November 20th. This three week extension was passed in hopes that an agreement can be reached on a long term bill next month.

Paul Ryan Elected Speaker of the House

After being approved by the House Republican conference yesterday, Paul Ryan (R-WI) was elected Speaker of the House of Representatives this morning, receiving 236 votes. Ryan's departure leaves the House Ways and Means Committee without a Chairman, as a yet-unfunded transportation bill winds its way through the chamber. There is also some feeling, however, that the transportation reauthorization bill will serve as the first proof that Speaker Ryan can govern.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

DOT Announces TIGER Recipients

Earlier today, USDOT Secretary Anthony Foxx announced 39 projects selected to receive funding from the \$500 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive grant program. This program supports projects that have difficulty receiving traditional DOT funds and can provide capital funding directly to any public entity. **Selected projects** are located in 34 states in both rural and urban communities.

Laying the Groundwork for Smart, Connected Cities

In the smart/connected city of the future, connected vehicles will improve mobility, streetlights will turn off when no one is around, and garbage cans will tell trash collectors when they are full. Current technology can make these cities of the future a reality and the USDOT's Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office (ITS JPO) has recently released a **white paper** on the topic of smart/connected cities, including their current state and key questions for future research.

Amtrak: It's Time to Build

On Monday morning, Amtrak President and CEO Joe Boardman, along with the Chicago Gateway Blue Ribbon Panel members, spoke at the National Press Club on aging infrastructure and the dire need for rail funding. Boardman discussed successes in rural areas but noted the need to improve service in and out of Chicago, which was emphasized by the Blue Ribbon Panel members. The Amtrak CEO also brought attention to the New York Area where the Gateway Project is working to address age and capacity problems on the very busy route between Newark and Penn Station. Boardman emphasized the work Amtrak is doing and the desperate need for funding to prepare for future population growth.

Final Designation of the Highway Primary Freight Network

As required by MAP-21, the Department of Transportation recently published the final designation of the highway-only Primary Freight Network (PFN). While this designation meets the requirements by law, the USDOT recognizes that the PFN fails to include the multimodal freight system. To address this, the USDOT is also proposing a comprehensive Multimodal Freight Network for public comment in the draft National Freight Strategic Plan to identify key infrastructure for all modes that are critical for moving freight, in addition to highways.

REGIONS BRIEF

California Active Transportation Funds Awarded

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) announced the recommendation of 114 bicycle, pedestrian, and Safe Routes to School **projects for funding** from the Active Transportation Program (ATP). This statewide grant program has three components, including one for MPOs, and the project release included the statewide (\$179.9 million) and small urban and rural components (\$35.5 million).

JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Transportation Modeling Data Analyst

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Pittsburgh, PA

Data Coordinator

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Transportation Planner

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

OPPORTUNITIES

View full list of grants and events!

(SRFreight) NPMRDS Quarterly Webinar

November 3, 1:00 – 3:00 PM ET

The National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS) is the probe data that FHWA is using internally for passenger and freight analysis and making available to states and MPOs. FHWA and its contractors will provide an overview of the probe data set, demonstrate data applications, and respond to technical assistance questions in this webinar. Officials from Florida DOT and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) will also review examples of how

their agencies have used NPMRDS.

Innovations in P3 Procurement: Pennsylvania DOT's Rapid Bridge Replacement Project

November 4, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

Join the Build America Transportation Investment Center (BATIC) Institute's premier webinar featuring the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's (PennDOT) Rapid Bridge Replacement Project. This project uses an innovative public-private partnership (P3) arrangement to replace 558 structurally deficient bridges throughout the state in three years. The webinar will review the project's financing, PennDOT's decision to pursue the project as a P3, their experience navigating federal processes, and the project procurement and oversight process.

Towards 2050: Options for Reducing Light-Duty Vehicle Energy Use and GHG Emissions

November 5, 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET

What reductions can we realistically, over time, expect? How can we cut through the hype and use the resources we have to best effect? Dr. John B. Heywood will address these questions during Volpe's newest thought leadership series, *Beyond Traffic 2045: Reimagining Transportation*. This series will discuss the ongoing national dialogue on *Beyond Traffic*, U.S. DOT's 30-year framework for the future.

Survey on Bicycle and Pedestrian Treatments

Complete Deadline: November 16

A research team at Georgia Tech in Atlanta is trying to answer questions about bicycle and pedestrian treatments for an ongoing project. You are asked to fill out the survey to help the team better understand the process that agencies use to determine which bicycle and pedestrian treatments to install in their region. The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. The link to the survey can be found [here](#). Please complete the survey by Monday, November 16th.

CONTACT US