



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

## NARC REPORT

### **Advancement of Performance-Based Scenario Planning for Regional Planning and Decision-Making: A Synthesis Report**

FHWA has posted the report that resulted from NARC's grant project on scenario planning with FHWA, TransitCenter, and the Summit Foundation, which details research on the state of scenario planning and the resulting recommendations based on interviews with regional organizations and a two-day convening in Washington, D.C. The report discusses current tools and provides suggestions on how to lower the barriers to entry and expand the use of scenario planning. This work played a role in establishing the **scenario planning consortium** with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

## CONGRESS BRIEF

### **Emergency Response and Recovery: Central Takeaways from the Unprecedented 2017 Hurricane Season**

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing today to explore the key takeaways from this year's unprecedented hurricane season. The discussions will help inform long-term solutions and legislative proposals to speed recovery in impacted communities. The committee heard from a panel of House Members affected by these disasters and a panel of witnesses from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and Environmental Protection Agency. The panels discussed existing challenges in recovering from the historic hurricane season.

### **Gas Tax Increase?**

There has been a renewed, if not confusing, discussion on Capitol Hill the past few weeks about the possibility of increasing the federal gas tax. Senator John Thune (R-SD), chairman of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, told reporters this week that he is open to the idea. White House officials, including Director of the Council of Economic Advisors Gary Cohn, told House lawmakers last week that they are considering an increase to fund an infrastructure bill. *The Hill* reports that the administration is considering a seven-cent per gallon increase, which would be the first increase in over 20 years and would bring the per gallon tax on gasoline to 25.4 cents. In April, President Trump himself appeared open to the idea. However, House Transportation Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) has indicated he sees no appetite in that chamber for a gas tax increase. One thing we know for sure: a gas tax increase will not be included in today's tax plan released by House Republicans. Though it could be tied-in later, there is little reason to believe that will be the case.

## ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

### **FHWA Reopens Tolling Pilot Program to Support Interstate Improvements**

FHWA is reopening the Interstate System Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Pilot Program (ISRRPP), which allows tolling on existing interstates to support the rehabilitation or reconstruction of the road. The program was originally established in 1998 under TEA-21, but the *FAST Act* established deadlines for states that receive approval under the program to begin implementing tolls and added that proper state legislation should be in place to allow tolling. FHWA has reclaimed three slots in the program that did not advance and issued a new **Federal**

**Register Notice** to solicit applications from states interested in interstate tolling.

### **Truck Industry Halts GHG Rule**

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit granted the trucking industry's request to halt portions of EPA's first greenhouse gas (GHG) regulations for truck trailers. The 2016 EPA rule would require trucks to achieve a nine-percent carbon dioxide emissions reduction by 2027. This follows the lawsuit filed by the Truck Trailer Manufacturers Association claiming that EPA did not have the authority to regulate trailers. The agency is also reviewing the GHG requirements on heavy-duty trucks.

### **Applicability Determination: CMAQ Traffic Congestion and CMAQ On-Road Mobile Source Emissions Measures**

FHWA posted this document that lists the state DOTs and MPOs required to establish targets and report progress for the performance measures related to the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ). The document covers two measures related to traffic congestion and one measure related to on-road mobile source emissions. The first performance period for the on-road mobile source emissions measure began October 1, 2017, and will continue through September 30, 2021. The performance period for the traffic congestion measures (peak hour excessive delay and non-single occupancy vehicle travel) begins on January 1, 2018, and runs through December 31, 2021.

### **Scenario Planning of Future Freight and Passenger Traffic Flows Across the US/Mexico and US/Canada Borders**

FHWA, in cooperation with Transport Canada and the Mexican Secretariat of Transportation and Communications, developed US-Canada and US-Mexico projections of future freight and passenger volumes over the next 30 years (2015-2045) from a North American framework and a regional border perspective. The study developed national macro-level data projections between the two borders and regional micro-level data projections along and within the border regions of the U.S. The planning scenarios and data projections are displayed in a visualization tool compatible with FHWA's Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty GIS Planning Tool (HEPGIS).

### **Trump Announces Pilot Program to Integrate Drones into National Airspace**

In a **memorandum** last week, President Trump directed Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao to establish an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Integration Pilot Program by which state, local, and tribal governments, in partnership with private sector entities, would help advance the integration of drones into the National Airspace System. The program hopes to tackle the most significant challenges in integrating drones into the national airspace while reducing risks to public safety and security. The administration also plans to use this program to develop a regulatory framework on specific issues relating to UAS. The pilot program will evaluate a variety of operational concepts, including night operations, flights over people, flights beyond the pilot's line of sight, package delivery, detect-and-avoid technologies, counter-UAS security operations, and the reliability and security of data links between pilot and aircraft. USDOT advises prospective local government participants to partner with the private sector to develop pilot proposals. They will select a minimum of five partnerships for the pilot program.

### **Draft DOT Strategic Plan for FY 2018-2022: Open for Public Comment**

Comments Due: November 13

USDOT invites public comment on the draft *DOT Strategic Plan for FY 2018-2022*. The draft DOT Strategic Plan reflects the transportation secretary's priorities for achieving DOT's mission through four strategic goals: safety, infrastructure investment, innovation, and accountability. Comments must be received by Monday, November 13, 2017, and emailed comments are encouraged. Include your name, title, organization, postal address, telephone number, and email address. Email: [dotstrategicplanning@dot.gov](mailto:dotstrategicplanning@dot.gov).

## **REGIONS BRIEF**

### **How Local Governments are Making Smarter Decisions with Data**

This *Route Fifty* eBook offers best practices and provides an overview of data in local government over the past year. The resource focuses on five stories with information and interviews on how data allows local governments to improve their communities and make smarter decisions on issues such as streets management, disaster response, sewage treatment, and civic engagement.

## **California, Oregon Testing Per-Mile Transportation Fee**

Following individual pilot programs, California and Oregon are preparing to launch the first interstate per-mile fee pilot program. Oregon will use a \$2.6 million FHWA grant to link with California's system in July 2019, and hopes to create a regional platform that other states can join once the program is operational. One of the challenges will be ensuring each state receives the correct amount of fees based on interstate travel in each jurisdiction.

## **JOBS**

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

### **Transportation Director**

Greater Portland Council of Governments, Portland, ME

### **Accountant**

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

### **Cooperative Purchasing Program Manager**

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Washington, DC

### **Senior Environmental Planner**

Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments, Cincinnati, OH

### **Communications Specialist**

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Detroit, MI

### **Developer/Data Analyst**

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Detroit, MI

### **Planner/Engineer**

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Detroit, MI

### **Regional Planner II**

Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Dayton, OH

### **Water Quality Program Administrator**

Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments, Toledo, OH

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

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

### **NPMRDS Users Quarterly Technical Assistance Webinar**

November 7, 1:00-3:00 PM ET

The National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS) is the probe data that FHWA uses internally for passenger and freight analysis and makes available to states and MPOs. In this webinar, FHWA and its contractors will provide an overview of the probe data set, demonstrate data applications, and respond to technical assistance questions. This webinar is open to USDOT, state DOT, MPO, academic, and private sector participants.

### **Accessible Transportation Technologies Research Initiative Update**

November 7, 3:00 – 4:00 PM ET

USDOT will provide an update on one of the Accessible Transportation Technologies Research Initiative (ATTRI) projects: AbleLink's pre-trip concierge and virtualization project. Participants will hear directly from AbleLink about the successes and challenges of its virtualization initiative. AbleLink was one of six projects awarded contracts by USDOT this year to develop technology prototypes to improve mobility options for all travelers, particularly those with disabilities.

### **Transportation and Airport Planning Survey – MPOs**

Survey Due: November 14

The Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) is funding **research on Integrating Airport Ground Access and Metropolitan Surface Planning Efforts**. A key part of the

research is understanding the current state of ground access planning collaboration between MPOs and airports. The program requests your assistance in responding to a brief survey about current ground access and planning for airports in your region. The web-based survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete, and data will remain confidential. The goal of this research is to develop a guidebook to help airports and transportation planning agencies develop compatible ground access plans.

### **America Walks Webinar: Tackling Gentrification and Displacement in Creating Vibrant Communities**

November 15, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

Jobs, affordable housing, and transportation are three pillars of providing opportunities and supporting human potential and well-being. As advocates for active transportation and connected mobility options, these pillars are essential to our work and it is important that we continue to explore ways they come together in developing healthy, active, and engaged communities. By doing so, we create opportunities for new jobs, economic vitality, and community cohesion. This webinar assumes a basic knowledge of issues related to walking and walkability.

## **CONTACT US**

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