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ADMINISTRATIVE BRIEF

FTA Publishes Guidance on Corridor Preservation: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) developed the final guidance on a provision of MAP-21 regarding corridor preservation for future transit projects. Under certain conditions, the FTA can now assist in the acquisition of both non-railroad and railroad right-of-way (ROW) for corridor preservation before the environmental review process under the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA). This final guidance and assistance is for any transit project that could eventually use ROW or could later receive FTA financial assistance. This authority was effective on November 12th. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

CRCOG Executive Director Dr. Lyle Wray Elected to NAPA: Dr. Lyle Wray, Executive Director of the Capitol Region Council of Governments in Hartford, CT, will be welcomed as a member of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) in Washington, D.C. NAPA is chartered by Congress and is made up of 800 elected fellows. Dr. Wray's work on metropolitan regional issues, outcomes and performance measurement, and public service reform were several of the areas in his nomination. His most recent publication was co-authored with CT Representative Jason Rojas on metropolitan Hartford issues, and is part of the book *Confronting Urban Legacy: The Transformation and Renewal of Hartford*.

LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

NARC Hosts Webinar on Midterm Elections: Today, NARC hosted a webinar designed to help participants navigate the new Congressional landscape. We reviewed the results of the 2014 elections and what it means for regional and local governments, potential Committee leadership, and top legislative issues for the lame duck session and the early days of the 114th Congress. [Thank you for those who participated!](#) Click [HERE](#) for the slides from the webinar presentation.

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House Dems Push for Transit Tax Break: Many U.S. House of Representatives Democrats plan to push for an increase in a tax break for commuters who take public transportation to work. Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Tom Downs from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) urged Congress to increase the transit tax benefit to make it level with parking benefits. A Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) report indicated that setting the benefit at \$235 a month in 2015, with indexing for inflation thereafter, “is the proposal that is closest to being revenue neutral.” Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Tax Reform Becoming an Early Favorite: As a result of the new Republican majority, President Obama has already pitched funding a transportation bill with repatriated tax dollars. At a news conference on Wednesday, President Obama said “I think we can hone in on a way to pay for it through tax reform that closes loopholes and makes it more attractive for companies to create jobs here in the United States.” Since Tuesday’s election, the idea of using tax reform to pay for transportation has gotten some renewed attention; however, striking such a deal would require the kind of bipartisan cooperation that has eluded Congress recently. Many lawmakers believe that one-time revenue from a tax overhaul to fund infrastructure would not solve the country’s long-term transportation funding needs. The current transportation reauthorization expires on May 31, 2015, so there is hope that an infrastructure agreement might be one of the early successes of the 114th Congress. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Republicans Urge President Not to Use Executive Authority: Last Friday, President Obama engaged in a “frank discussion” as Republicans urged the president not to use executive authority to act alone on significant issues in advance of the Republican-controlled 114th Congress. Sen. John Thune’s (R-SD), expected to become Chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science, & Transportation Committee, talked with the president about a federal highway bill, Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization, cybersecurity legislation, and telecommunications measures. Thune also mentioned rail congestion caused in part by trains transporting oil from North Dakota that makes it harder for South Dakota farmers to ship their crops to market.

Omnibus Spending Bill Tops Priority List: As Congress returns this week for a lame duck session, an omnibus spending bill is at the top of the priority list. The current continuing resolution expires December 11. Appropriators are likely to seek middle ground between the House and U.S. Senate versions of the Transportation-HUD spending bills, if leadership can gain support in the lame duck. The House measure, which passed the chamber in June, would

provide \$70.2 billion for the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) but would slash the popular TIGER grant program from \$600 million this year to \$100 million. The Senate bill would fund U.S. DOT at \$71.7 billion and would appropriate \$550 million for TIGER.

REGIONAL BRIEF

Tennessee Delays Infrastructure Projects: Tennessee

Transportation Commissioner John Schroer has delayed twelve infrastructure projects, totaling about \$400 million, as a result of federal funding uncertainty. Schroer sent a letter to his state's General Assembly and congressional delegation emphasizing that the temporary government funding measure Congress passed in September only allowed money from federal programs to be used through December 11. Schroer believes in "developing a long term transportation funding legislation that will allow us as Americans to remain leaders in transportation and thus support the strong economic prosperity we have so long enjoyed." Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Major L.A. Subway Extension Breaks Ground: FTA's Acting

Administrator Therese McMillan attended the groundbreaking of the 3.9-mile Westside Purple Line extension that will expand transit options in one of the most congested parts of L.A. The Westside Purple Line extension, which is the first of three planned extensions of the Purple Line, is expected to improve travel times and transit capacity from Beverly Hills to downtown Los Angeles, North Hollywood, Union Station, and other Los Angeles County communities. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Toward Zero Death Advancements: As part of the *National Cooperative Highway Research Program's (NCHRP) U.S. Domestic Scan Program*, a team of safety practitioners and experts from state, local, and national agencies took part in a two-week "scanning tour" in the spring to identify advances and opportunities in *Toward Zero Death (TZD)* program practices. The team observed that TZD provides a philosophy that brings safety partners together and helps articulate a unifying vision. Another finding was that TZD adoption is a leading indicator of a change in an agency's safety culture. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

OPPORTUNITY BRIEF

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of grants and events still open!

WEBINAR: Let's Talk Performance: Theory vs. Practice--

Linking Performance Measures to Improved Performance

Outcomes

December 9 2:00-3:30 PM ET

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with FTA and several national stakeholder groups, would like you to join their third webinar in a series of six webinars focusing on transportation performance management implementation activities. During this webinar, presenters will showcase examples of how using performance measures/management data impacts and improves transportation performance outcomes.

Click [HERE](#) to register.

WEBINAR: MAP-21 Freight Provisions: Status Review and Discussion

November 19 1:00-2:30 PM ET

FHWA Freight Planning invites you to join their Talking Freight Seminar to review and discuss MAP-21 Freight Provisions. As MAP-21 recently hit its two-year milestone, the discussion will be formed around freight provisions significant progress, achievements, and what work still needs to be done in order to meet all of the freight requirements under MAP-21. This webinar will provide an overview of some of the MAP-21 freight provisions that have been enacted or are in the process of being enacted. The webinar is intended to allow for active discussion between U.S. DOT and webinar participants on items related to the implementation of MAP-21 freight provisions.

Click [HERE](#) to register

New CEs Available: On October 6, FTA published a joint final rule with FHWA that adds a number of new categorical exclusions (CEs) for FHWA and FTA pursuant to Section 1318 of MAP-21. The CEs were developed based on responses to a stakeholder survey conducted in September 2012 and published in a notice of proposed rulemaking in September 2013 for public review and comment. The new CEs became effective November 5th. Click [HERE](#) for access to the new *Guidance for Implementation of FTA's Categorical Exclusions* webinar recording.

CONFERENCE: NARC's 2015 National Conference of Regions

February 8-10, 2015 - Washington, DC

The National Conference of Regions is NARC's forum to determine key policy issues and a legislative agenda for the year ahead, targeting topics central to our members' missions and their local elected officials' focus. Additional information will be available soon.