



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

## CONGRESS BRIEF

### **Surface Transportation and Public Area Security Act of 2017 Introduced**

Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ), vice ranking member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, introduced the *Surface Transportation and Public Area Security Act of 2017* this week. The legislation aims to better protect mass transit and public spaces from terrorism by strengthening critical programs and encouraging federal partnerships with state and local stakeholders. Coleman's measure would authorize \$400 million for the Transit Security Grant Program, increase bomb-sniffing dog teams, and restore funding for the Law Enforcement Officer Reimbursement Program. It would also direct a review of best practices for preventing vehicle-based attacks and reevaluate personal gun carrying rights in public transit space.

### **The GOP Tax Bills Are Infrastructure Bills Too. Here's Why.**

The tax code overhaul includes several major changes to financing mechanisms used for infrastructure. Several association directors, including the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, have expressed disappointment in the missed opportunity for including transportation tax incentives and revenue sources in the tax bill, like resolving Highway Trust Fund solvency problems. *Governing* outlines some key issues in the tax bill that infrastructure advocates are watching:

- **Private Activity Bonds (PABs) and Advance Refunding Bonds:** The Senate approach on this issue is favored as it does not eliminate PABs, while the House version calls for elimination. Historically, these tax-exempt bonds have financed infrastructure, affordable housing, and hospitals – they are also key components for driving public-private partnerships. Both bills eliminate advance refunding bonds, which allow governments to refinance debt earlier than they would have otherwise so that they can take advantage of lower interest rates years sooner. Many industry groups, including water infrastructure, say the bonds are an important tool for reducing costs.
- **Ending Electric Vehicle and Wind Tax Credits:** The House bill would eliminate a \$7,500 credit for consumers purchasing electric vehicles, which would severely impact future purchases. The House plan would also change the rules for how companies qualify for the investment or production wind tax credits. It would also reduce the value of the production credit, which jeopardizes the construction of current and planned wind farms.
- **Sports Stadiums:** The House tax overhaul would eliminate municipal bond tax exemptions for sports stadiums, whose biggest supporter is the National Football League. The Senate also has traction on this issue with support from Cory Booker (D-NJ).

## ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

### **USDOT Provides Additional \$36M to Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands for Repairs**

Just before Thanksgiving, FHWA announced \$30 million in quick release Emergency Relief (ER) funds for Puerto Rico and \$6 million for road repairs in the U.S. Virgin Islands for hurricane relief. The funds will be used to continue to restore essential traffic and repairs to bridges, guardrails, and traffic signal systems, and address a variety of damages related to mudslides and flooding.

## Senate AV Bill Moving Again

Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Chairman John Thune (R-SD) is looking to hotline his autonomous vehicle bill this week in the hopes of passing it with unanimous consent. The hotline process involves informal communications to identify potential issues that would keep the bill from being brought under unanimous consent. The House has already passed their version of the bill and Thune is looking to pass his by the end of the year.

## A Note from FHWA: Development of Written Procedures on Performance Based Planning and Programming for Metropolitan Areas

FHWA has sent a reminder that the May 27, 2016 Final Planning Rule requires that a written agreement be developed cooperatively by MPO(s), state(s), and transit provider(s) describing their mutual responsibilities for carrying out performance based planning and programming in metropolitan areas (23 CFR 450.314(h)).

- FHWA safety performance measures written provisions are due May 27, 2018,
- FHWA's pavement and bridge performance measures (PM-2 rule) and system performance measures (PM-3 rule) written provisions are due May 20, 2019,
- the greenhouse gas performance measure written provisions are due September 28, 2019, and
- the jointly written provisions to address FTA's Transit Assessment Management/State of Good Repair (TAM/SGR) performance measures must be completed by October 1, 2018.

## REGIONS BRIEF

### Tampa Connected Vehicle Pilot Success in Recruiting Participants

The Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority (THEA) is a part of the USDOT Connected Vehicle Pilot program and is installing radios and computers in over 1,600 vehicles (including private cars, buses, and streetcars) and in over 40 fixed locations at downtown intersections to enable ultra-fast vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V), vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) and smart phone-to-infrastructure communication. THEA's project plans include recruiting 1,580 volunteer drivers who agree to have Onboard Units (OBUs) and communications equipment installed in their cars and 500 area residents with cell phones who agree to install an application to alert equipped nearby vehicles when there are pedestrians walking across a street. So far, more than 1,200 people have completed the online eligibility questionnaire, and 800 of them have scheduled appointments. Arranging for a toll rebate and consistent branding were key factors in their participant recruiting process.

### New MAPA Transportation Tools

The Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) created new transportation tools to help its constituents get around the region. MAPA launched a new rideshare **website** and mobile **Apple** and **Google** apps to help users connect with others in the community who are interested in carpooling, biking, walking, or riding a bus together. Whether you are a resident or visiting the area, you can enter your travel route information and the tool will partner you with those that have similar routes and schedules. MAPA also developed a **metro area bike map** for its region, complete with information on the BikeOmaha System and Heartland B-Cycle, the region's growing bike sharing program.

### Access to Jobs by Transit Increases in Many U.S. Metros

The University of Minnesota ranks 49 of the 50 largest metropolitan areas annually based on the connectivity of workers with jobs via transit. This year's report, **Access Across America: Transit 2016**, presents detailed accessibility values for each of the 49 metropolitan areas, as well as detailed block-level color maps that illustrate the spatial patterns of accessibility within each area. The top five areas with the largest increase in accessibility are Cincinnati, Charlotte, Orlando, Seattle, and Providence.

### Lyft Receives Permit to Test Self-Driving Cars in California

The California Department of Motor Vehicles has approved Lyft's permit to test its self-driving vehicles on public roads. Lyft joins Uber, Apple, Waymo, and several other automakers and tech companies that have already secured testing permits.

## **JOBS**

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

### **Transportation Planner**

Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments, Toledo, OH

### **Public Administration Specialist**

Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments, Toledo, OH

### **Transportation Modeler**

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

### **Manager, Office of Contracts & Purchasing**

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Philadelphia, PA

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

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

### **BATIC Institute Webinar: Bundling Small-Scale Projects: P3 Opportunities and Challenges**

December 6, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

Explore innovative and accessible ways transportation agencies can partner with the private sector on smaller-scale projects by bundling assets and standardizing procurements. The webinar will look beyond the traditional example of a toll road P3 and explain different opportunities for utilizing private sector expertise and financing to deliver new capital investments.

### **T3e Webinar: Advances in Modeling Transportation Supply and Demand**

December 12, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

U.C. Berkeley's Smart Cities Research Center and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory worked jointly to develop new capabilities to synthesize activity-based travel demand and to model the supply of the transportation system through agent-based modeling. They applied machine learning techniques to cellular data to extract statistically representative mobility patterns, allowing them to generate synthetic populations from any urban region. They have also developed next generation transportation simulation capabilities through the BEAM Framework for Behavior, Energy, Autonomy, and Mobility, a tool designed for scalability and to capture the increasingly connected and dynamic transportation system. Join this webinar to learn about new applications of machine learning to cellular data to infer activity patterns from populations and recent innovations in agent-based transportation systems modeling.

### **Elements of a Transportation Asset Management Plan - Process Improvements**

December 13, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET

This is the fourth in a four-part TAM webinar miniseries, Elements of a Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP), focused on understanding federal requirements that guide TAMP development. This webinar addresses Process Improvements. Previous webinars addressed asset inventory, condition, target setting, and ten-year projections; risk management; and financial plans and investment strategies.

### **Turning Data into Action**

December 13, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

What do we mean when we talk about the walking movement? Join America Walks to hear from walking representatives on work they have been doing to map, track, and evaluate walking and walkability in the U.S. Attendees will learn about new and existing data sources, what they are telling us about the state of walking in the U.S., and how to use that information to make the case for walkability. This webinar is intended for advocates just getting started on the walking path as well as anyone interested in learning more about this topic.

### **Smart Cities Readiness Challenge Grant**

Applications Due: December 15

The Smart Cities Council, the world's largest smart cities network, will award additional benefits through its 2018 Readiness Challenge Grants to five North American communities looking to

accelerate their smart city initiatives. The program is available for all communities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, including cities, counties, states, provinces, and regional authorities. Each grant recipient will receive a year's worth of free mentoring; a custom-designed, on-site Readiness Workshop; membership in the Smart Cities Leadership Circle; and worldwide publicity. The winning communities will also receive free products and services worth hundreds of thousands from leading organizations, including Qualcomm, Battelle, SYNEXXUS, CompTIA, and IES.

**International Symposium on Heavy Vehicle Transport Technology: Economy on wheels, fast changes, slow structures**

October 2 – 5, 2018, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

The 15th International Symposium on Heavy Vehicle Transport Technology (HVTT15) offers a worldwide platform for researchers, policy makers, regulators, road agencies, heavy vehicle manufacturers, and suppliers of the transport industry to exchange knowledge and experiences to support the development of a safe, sustainable, efficient and productive road freight transport. The central question during the HVTT15 is how to integrate fast technological and socio-economic developments that affects road freight transport in existing structures: aging infrastructure, historical grown cities, established market structures and social order, and ingrained habits. The aim is to adapt the road freight transport system to an increasing social and economic complexity, against technological opportunities, and with significant safety and environmental constraints.

**NCHRP 20-114: Multimodal Freight Transportation Research Roadmap Survey**

The Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) and the Supply Chain Transportation and Logistics Center at the University of Washington were awarded a project titled National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) 20-114: Multimodal Freight Transportation Research Roadmap. This research team invites you to participate in a brief web survey, to help identify areas of critical need in multimodal freight system research. The survey should take about ten minutes to complete.

**CONTACT US**