



NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

Major Federal Agency Overhauls

The White House is preparing an executive order that asks federal departments and agencies to come up with plans to restructure their operations and streamline programs. According to CQ Roll Call, the aim is to find ways to reorganize agencies to deliver government services in a more efficient and effective way, eliminate duplicative spending, and potentially reduce the cost of programs. President Trump could potentially sign the order as early as this week, asking agencies to submit reorganization plans to the Office of Management and Budget within 90 days.

President's Budget to be Released Later this Week

On Thursday, March 16, the White House is expected to release its "skinny budget" that will outline how much the administration wants for each federal agency and how the administration will spend it. The president will request a \$54 billion cut to non-defense discretionary spending taken largely from the Environmental Protection Agency, the State Department, and various social programs – to fund an equivalent increase in defense discretionary spending.

The impact of these proposed cuts on transportation and infrastructure programs is likely to be small, but the impact on community development, economic development, aging, home energy assistance, workforce training, education, environmental, energy, and human services programs is likely to be very large. NARC will provide you with an overview and analysis of the budget shortly after its release. For more information, read NARC's blog, ***Budget and Appropriations: Where Do We Go From Here?***

Community Development Block Grant

On Thursday, March 9, the ***Washington Post*** reported that the Trump administration is planning to eliminate all funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). In

response to the Post's requests for clarification, a spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) said the budget document is still a work in progress. According to the Post, the budget document the newspaper obtained "appears to be part of a back-and-forth with federal budget officials," though the Post also stated that it is "unclear whether the proposed cuts will be included in the president's final budget proposal," which is scheduled to be released this week. Read more about it in NARC's latest blog, ***Is the Community Development Block Grant on the Chopping Block?***

National Flood Insurance Program

Congress is gearing up for a **debate over the future of the National Flood Insurance Program**, which is set to expire in September. Over the past 12 years, many storms and flooding events, including Hurricane Katrina, Superstorm Sandy, and last year's flooding in Louisiana, increased the program's debt to \$24.6 billion. Some lawmakers argue that rewriting the pricing structure of the program with a different risk-based formula could improve its solvency and encourage the private sector to offer competing products. Others are concerned that changes could result in higher premiums and price out low- and moderate-income households. An **Enterprise analysis** of low-income homeowners in the U.S. finds that in the hurricane-prone states of Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina, more than 3 in 10 homeowners in each state earn less than 80 percent of area median income.

Protect Municipal Bonds as Key Tool for Local Infrastructure Investment

Last week, **156 Members of Congress called on the leadership of the House Ways and Means Committee** to protect the tax exemption for municipal bonds as the committee considers tax reform and infrastructure finance. Noting that municipal bonds financed nearly two-thirds of core infrastructure investments in the U.S., the letter details some of the programs that bonds fund: roads, schools, housing, water system, courthouses, hospitals and clinics, airports, and utilities. Although not on the agenda for tax reform specifically, advocates are concerned that the tax exemption for municipal bonds continues to be a potential target as legislators look for ways to raise revenue. NARC is a member of the Public Finance Network supporting continued tax exemption.

NARC Joins Local Government FCC Filing

Last week, NARC joined with local government organizations to submit comments to the Federal Communications Commission in support of local authority to balance the needs of advanced communications infrastructure with public health and safety concerns. Local governments of all sizes are eager to deploy advanced communications infrastructure in their communities. 5G wireless technologies would bring many benefits to residents, schools, and businesses - with speeds of up to 10 gigabits per second, 5G networks could reshape entire industries and change how planners think about managing critical infrastructures.

OTHER NEWS

FEMA Seeks Applicants for the NAC's RESPONSE Subcommittee

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is establishing a subcommittee under the National Advisory Council (NAC) to provide recommendations regarding emergency responder training related to hazardous materials incidents involving railroads. Qualified individuals who are interested in serving on the Railroad Emergency Services Preparedness, Operational Needs, and Safety Evaluation (RESPONSE) Subcommittee of the NAC are encouraged to submit an application for consideration by April 3.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

NARC's New Blog Platform: Regions Lead

NARC's new blog platform, Regions Lead, just went live today. You can subscribe directly to Regions Lead on the **main page** of the site, make comments, and even **submit your own blogs** to share with NARC and other regions. Read NARC Senior Policy Advisor Neil Bomberg's first two posts today!

- ***Is the Community Development Block Grant on the Chopping Block?***
- ***Budget and Appropriations: Where Do We Go From Here?***

2017 NARC Awards

NARC is accepting nominations for its 2017 Achievement and Leadership Awards, which will be presented at the Awards Gala Dinner during the 51st Annual Conference and Exhibition, June 4-7, in Monterey, CA. The awards provide an excellent opportunity for winners to promote their successes to a larger audience, as well as share best practices with their partners and peers. The nomination deadline is April 28th.

SEMCOG and MAC "Pulse of the Region" Survey

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) and its partner organization, the Metropolitan Affairs Coalition (MAC), launched a survey to gather residents' perceptions on pedestrian and bicycle safety in Southeast Michigan. "With the increased emphasis on biking and walking as a quality-of-life and public health enhancement, it is critical that motorists and nonmotorists understand the rules of the road so that everyone stays safe," said Kathleen Lomako, SEMCOG Executive Director and MAC President. "This survey will help us target our upcoming public safety campaign."

MEMBER REQUEST

Please send responses to anna@narc.org.

Emergency Planning and Evacuation

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is exploring opportunities in the areas of emergency planning and evacuation. They seek feedback from other NARC members that are currently working in these areas. They are especially interested in speaking with COGs or other regional councils who have received federal grant funding for these activities.

Please provide us with a general overview of what you are doing, and indicate if you are willing to speak with SACOG about these efforts.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Planning Principal

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

Regional Planner

Madera County Transportation Commission, Madera, CA

Regional Transportation Planner

Michiana Area Council of Governments, South Bend, IN

Public Outreach Planner

South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization, Vineland, NJ

Assistant Planner/Engineer

South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization, Vineland, NJ

Director of Public & Government Affairs

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Columbus, OH

AirCheck Texas Administrative Assistant

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Administrative Assistant

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Outreach Coordinator

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Regional Planner

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Director of Transportation Alternatives Planning

Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Dayton, OH

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation: Healthcare Grant

Initial Applications Due: March 20

Full Proposals Due: July 10

Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation is seeking grant applications from nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and faith-based organizations for programs that deliver patient- and family-centered approaches that challenge conventional strategies, improve health outcomes, lower costs, and enhance the patient and family caregiver experience. The goal of the Hillman Innovations in Care Program, an initiative of the Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation, is to advance leading-edge, nursing-driven models of care that will improve the health and healthcare of vulnerable populations. Two grants of up to \$600,000 are awarded each year.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Advancing Neighborhood Change Through Equity and Inclusion Webinar

March 21, 1:00 PM ET

Walkability is at the cornerstone of creating neighborhoods that are vital and vibrant, allowing all members of a community to enjoy health, social, and economic benefits in a variety of forms. How do we create neighborhoods where change and new development can happen along with the protection and promotion of a community's identity and culture? Join America Walks as they share recent work on the issues of gentrification and displacement, then hear from three communities tackling this challenge.

Exploring the Outdoors: Partners in Outdoor Spaces Webinar

April 12, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET

The outdoors offers beautiful places to walk and be physically active. How can we work with our friends and allies to make sure every person has the opportunity to enjoy the many benefits of being in nature? Join America Walks and some of their partners to learn about the tools, resources, and work being done to make sure every community member has safe, accessible, and enjoyable places to be physically active outside.

Save the date! 51st Annual Conference & Exhibition

June 4-7 - Monterey, CA

Join NARC and the California Association of Councils of Governments for NARC's 51st Annual Conference and Exhibition, which focuses on promoting effective regional cooperation and solutions through interaction and education.

CONTACT US

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