



EXECUTIVE NOTE

Dear NARC Members,

The 49th Annual Conference & Exhibition is rapidly approaching. In addition to providing an opportunity to learn about successful regional strategies from across the country, this Conference also includes NARC's Board of Directors and Executive Directors Council elections. The 2015/2016 NARC Board of Directors Elections is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10 at 9:00 AM. The 2015/2016 NARC EDC Election is scheduled for Tuesday, June 9 at 11:45 AM. There are several opportunities for you to serve your membership organization on these strategic bodies, so please consider running for either the Board or the EDC. You must be present to run for a seat, so register soon! For more information, see our [elections post](#).

Last week, we confirmed U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Anthony R. Foxx, who will provide a luncheon keynote on Monday, June 8 and will discuss his perspective on the reauthorization of federal highway and transit laws, along with his ideas on how to plan for the nation's transportation needs for the next 30 years. The deadline to receive the hotel discount is this Friday, May 15. You don't want to miss this exciting keynote, so [register today!](#)

See you in Raleigh!

Thanks,
Joanna L. Turner

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

Senate in Brief

The Senate will focus this week on trade promotion authority ([HR 1314](#)) and could begin discussions on a short-term extension of federal highway and transit laws before they expire on May 31.

House in Brief

On Tuesday, the House will vote on the *Regulatory Integrity Protection Act of 2015* ([HR 1732](#)), which prohibits the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) from finalizing a proposed rule that would define federal authority to regulate certain waterways under the *Clean Water Act*. HR 1732 requires EPA and USACE to consult with state and local officials to develop a new regulatory proposal to regulate waters of the U.S. The rule for consideration of HR 1732 allows for two amendments. The House will also consider the FY 2016 defense authorization bill ([HR 1753](#)). See [NARC's letter of support](#). NARC members are encouraged to call their Representatives to urge them to vote "YES" on this legislation.

Tax Credit Infrastructure Bond Proposal Introduced in the Senate

Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and John Hoeven (R-ND) introduced the *Move America Act of 2015*, which creates a new tax credit bond for infrastructure investments by state and local issuers. The Move America bonds would be available to help finance publicly available transportation infrastructure, including airports, docks, public transportation facilities, highways, freight transfer facilities, and flood diversion projects. Up to 50 percent of a bond's proceeds could go to land acquisitions in connection with a qualified project, doubling the current limit. Additionally, the bonds may include tradable tax credits to attract private investment.

Chairman Murkowski Introduces 17 Bills on Energy

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, introduced a package of 17 bills addressing key energy issues. These bills, combined with legislation introduced earlier this session, will provide the basis for comprehensive energy legislation. Proposals include a bill (**S 784**) that directs the Secretary of Energy to establish microlabs to improve regional engagement with national laboratories; a bill (**S 1054**) to improve the productivity and energy efficiency of the manufacturing sector by directing the Secretary of Energy to develop a national smart manufacturing plan; and a bill (**S 1241**) to provide for the modernization, security, and resiliency of the electric grid. In the House, Energy and Commerce Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI) is developing similar comprehensive energy legislation for introduction in that chamber.

OTHER NEWS

Climate Change Adaptation Training for Local Governments

EPA released a new online tool, Climate Adaptation Training for Local Governments. The training module is designed to help local public officials, municipal staff, and community leaders prepare for the impacts that climate change may have on the services they provide to their communities. It includes examples of effective resilience strategies that have been successfully implemented in several cities and towns across the nation. It also provides information and resources to help local government officials get started with adaptation planning in their own communities. See the **related blog post** from Mayor Finch, Bridgeport, Connecticut for more information.

Safe Routes to School Impact on Walking and Biking

Active Living Research released a new report on the **impact of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs on walking and biking**. The research review highlights evidence on walking and biking rates, safety, and economic issues associated with SRTS. The research review shows that actively commuting to and from school could improve mental and physical health. SRTS increased the number of students who walk or bike to and from school, made it safer for students to walk or bike to or from school, and can lower health care and transportation costs for school districts and families.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

SEMCOG: Apartment Construction Fueled Positive Trends in 2014

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) region finished 2014 with a total of 7,855 new residential building permits issued. The report, *Residential Construction in Southeast Michigan, 2014*, notes that while single-family and condominium construction each saw 12 percent decreases in 2014, apartment construction increased 65 percent and was responsible for the region's positive trend. Out of a total of 2,154 apartment permits, Detroit had the most at 732. "Detroit's numbers are a testament to the renewed interest in living in or close to downtowns, especially by young professionals looking for an urban, walkable environment," said SEMCOG Executive Director Kathleen Lomako. The demand for multi-family/apartments was fueled by low vacancy rates in existing apartments and gains in employment.

DVRPC: Pedestrian Safety Action Plan Includes Concrete Measures to Decrease Fatal Crashes

In 2013 alone, 362 people were killed in crashes in the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) region, 89 were pedestrians. You can view pedestrian and other crash data by municipality and county with DVRPC's **Data Navigator**. The Toolbox, which is geared toward municipalities, counties, and other road owners and advocates, includes sections on Complete Streets, intersection treatments, mid-block crossings, and other considerations. Even relatively smaller investments such as effective lighting can dramatically increase pedestrian safety.

MEMBER REQUESTS

NARC Request For Information

NARC has been invited to testify before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on EPA's new proposed ozone standard. (See NARC's coalition letter on the proposal [HERE](#).) We would like member input for our testimony. Please send answers to the following questions to joanna@narc.org by May 18:

1. What is the attainment status of your region under the current ozone standard? How will that change under EPA's proposal to tighten the standard to 65-70 ppb?
2. If your region is out of attainment, please provide specific examples of the types of local regulations or ordinances the county/region had to implement to comply with the nonattainment designation. For example, some regions/counties have regulations on burning or barbecue grill usage.
3. Please describe the transportation conformity process in your region under the current standard. How will that change if the standard is tightened? What projects would likely need to come off your plans as a result? Please provide specifics on the local impact(s) of those projects, if possible.
4. What other affects (beyond transportation conformity) would a change in the standard (and on your attainment designation) have on the region? Specific impacts on the region's economic development would be particularly helpful--for example, have new requirements impacted keeping or attracting new industries to your region? Or specific counties within the region?
5. Please describe any benefits the region has seen from implementation of the current ozone standard.

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Community Development Planner III

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, Kelso, WA

Regional Planner

San Joaquin Council of Governments, Stockton, CA

Planner

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Wausau, WI

Senior and Disability Services Director

Oregon Cascades West, Albany, OR

Associate Planner – Market Analysis Specialist

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

POWER Funding

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)

announced \$35.5 million in funding available through the **Partnership for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization** (POWER) initiative. POWER, is an EDA-led, coordinated effort among multiple federal agencies using existing resources to provide integrated and coordinated investments in communities and workers negatively impacted by changes in the coal industry and power sector. **The Federal Funding Opportunity**, which opened today, outlines the POWER Initiative implementation grant priorities, evaluation factors, and application guidance for the up to \$12.5 million in funding from the EDA, up to \$20 million from DOL's Employment and Training Administration, up to \$2.5 million from the Small Business Administration, and up to \$500,000 from Appalachian Regional Commission.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

NARC Infrastructure Week Event! Linking Communities Together Through Innovative Regional Transportation Planning

May 12, 5:30 PM ET

The American Planning Association will provide an overview of the innovative practices MPOs have adopted in how they work with communities to create long-range plans and how they work with local jurisdictions to implement land use, transportation, and development decisions that support regional outcomes. Mariia Zimmerman of MZ Strategies, LLC, will speak to emerging best practices found in research conducted through her company and highlighted in *The Innovative MPO* report published by Transportation for America. NARC's own Transportation Director Erich Zimmermann will focus on how MPOs and regional planners are innovating to provide better value to the communities they serve.

NARC Infrastructure Week Event! Economic Competitiveness: Transit's High-Value in the Knowledge Economy

May 13, 12:15 – 1:30 PM ET

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute and the American Public Transportation Association will host this luncheon briefing to discuss how transit investments affect American global economic competitiveness. Speakers Linda Watson, President and CEO of Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and Joanna Turner, NARC Executive Director, will call on their experience to answer key questions such as "What role does transit play in the location choices of high-value technology firms, and why?" and "Does transit help these firms attract the workforce they want?" The briefing will be available on **live webcast**.

NARC Infrastructure Week Event! Innovative Approaches to Infrastructure Funding

May 15, 2:00 – 3:15 PM ET

With federal transportation funding in jeopardy, regions and localities are exploring new options to address their infrastructure challenges. In collaboration with the Center for Transportation Excellence and the National League of Cities, NARC will host this webinar to highlight innovative and replicable approaches that regional and city leaders have taken to fund infrastructure projects. Speakers will explore ballot measure successes, user fee models, and VMT pilots, among other approaches best practices, and lessons learned.

Exploring the Health of Counties in Rural America

May 18, 11:00 -12:00 PM ET

One of the earliest indicators of a child's future health is whether or not he or she lives in poverty. Poverty impacts a family's ability to get health care when they are sick; to afford a safe place to live; to get healthy, nutritious food; and to send their children to schools with adequate resources – all of which impact health. According to the 2015 **County Health Rankings**, one out of four kids lives in poverty. Learn about the **County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Program** in this webinar that features experts from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. They will discuss the newly released 2015 **Rankings**, and the **Roadmaps to Health Action Center**. Program experts will also share insights on how rural communities can and have used the **Rankings** to transform health.

How to Use Technology to Enhance Organizational Performance

May 21, 3:00 PM ET

SSTI and JumpStart Inc. are hosting a free webinar on using software, mobile apps, and social media to support entrepreneurship and innovation in regions. **JumpStart, Inc.** is non-profit that partners with communities across the nation to build, strengthen and support entrepreneurial ecosystems—the interconnected network of organizations that provide capital and assistance to entrepreneurs. **SSTI** is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to improving initiatives that support prosperity through science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship.

NARC's 49th Annual Conference and Exhibition

June 7-10, Raleigh, NC - **Hotel Cut-off is this Friday, May 15th!**

Join the conversation on the latest in regional government at NARC's Annual Conference and Exhibition, hosted by the Triangle J Council of Governments. Events begin Sunday afternoon with two optional mobile workshops exploring Raleigh. Sessions will highlight economic development tools for regions, the impact of changing demographics, collaborating to reduce waste, economic transformation in the region, innovations in transportation, digital technology, street design, workforce, green infrastructure, and water resources.

CONTACT US

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