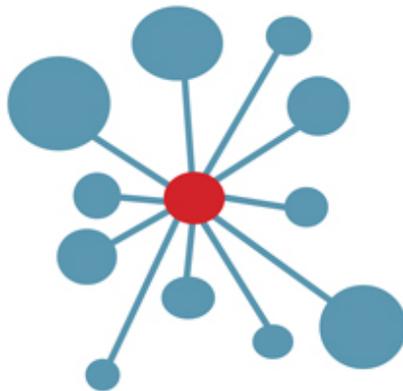




NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



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**executive directors conference
september 18 - september 20, 2016
south bend, in**

Register Today!

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is not in session and will return after Labor Day to work on funding bills before the end of the fiscal year on September 30.

NARC President Shaffer Attends USDOT Roundtable

NARC President Ron Shaffer was among a group of NARC members joining U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx for a White House meeting on metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and their role in the fabric of communities. Secretary Foxx served on the board of his local MPO when he was mayor of Charlotte, NC.

The July 12 roundtable called by Secretary Foxx included local elected officials, MPO officials, and others to focus on how the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) could better tap into the potential of MPOs to enhance transportation dollars and meet local needs. Foxx noted that a heavier reliance on MPO decision-making and increased funding could lead to stronger communities. While Foxx said that the timing of the meeting was coincidental to the release of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on MPO consolidation, some NARC members raised the issue as a concern.

MPO leaders highlighted the innovative work of regional organizations as a whole and the broader community issues that they work on, such as economic development, land use planning, and the shift to more transit solutions. A recording of the meeting will be available soon.

Water Infrastructure is Everyone's Business

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently posted a blog entry concerning its assessments of drinking water and wastewater infrastructure in the U.S and what **funding** will be necessary to fix and maintain infrastructure that has already failed. It mentions three newly created EPA programs designed to help urban, rural, and low-income communities find sustainable and adaptable solutions for the failing infrastructure and the resulting health issues. The *Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA)* loans funds to groups implementing large-scale infrastructure upgrades. The **Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center** currently offers communities new methods of obtaining technical and financial

support. Finally, the **WaterCARE** project functions similarly to the Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Financing Center but with a more specific and narrow focus on smaller towns and cities. The EPA will soon release **an action plan** on how it will work with state officials to make and keep water sources clean while ensuring that equity and environmental justice are considered when dispersing funds for infrastructure projects.

Administration Announces Additional \$60M to Fight Zika

The Obama Administration recently announced that \$60 million will be available for the **CDC** to disperse to states and territories to fight the Zika virus. According to the Office of Management and Budget, the \$60 million will be pulled from the \$589 million set aside by the administration in April after it determined that the \$510 million Congress awarded in 2014 to fight Ebola was needed to fight Zika. This decision likely results from tensions between Democrats and Republicans as they debate the need for more funds versus the use of pre-existing ones. The CDC will use its **Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Infectious Diseases Cooperative Agreement** to distribute the \$60 million to states and territories beginning August 1. This new fund serves to study and trace how Zika spreads in populations, strengthen labs' ability to handle Zika, enhance observation and regulation of mosquitos, and encourage women infected with Zika to partake in a pregnancy registry to track the infection of Zika in women and infants.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Des Moines Area Growth

The Des Moines Area is experiencing new growth in its urban real estate development, a change from the area's usual norm of seeing only the suburbs develop well. Part of the new regional success is credited to residents and developers taking a closer look at what regional collaboration can offer. Todd Ashby, Executive Director of the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, told Iowa Public Radio, "there are certain economies of scale where you're not having people do repetitive types of planning or programming of projects." Regional planning in Iowa did not always seem the most appealing to local communities - some mayors preferred local planning for their towns while others generally adopted the regional plans, adapting them slightly when needed to better suit their towns. Now, the city and region of Des Moines is successfully boosting its real estate development in all parts of the region.

MEMBER REQUESTS

Please email responses to anna@narc.org.

Eastgate Regional Council of Governments Request for Information

At Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, a common issue for our members is blight and the lack of resources for addressing blight outside of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) brownfield grants and loans and the U.S. Department of Treasury Hardest Hit Fund. Now that the Hardest Hit Fund is winding down and the demand for EPA's resources is greater than ever, how are other regional councils addressing blight? Eastgate is researching options, there are federal programs, state programs, and county land banks, but regional councils do not seem to be a large part of this mix. The Northeast-Midwest Institute recently released a report that further highlights the lack of federal resources. Please share any funding resources or information your COG has found to address blight.

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Assistant or Associate Regional Planner

San Joaquin Council of Governments, Stockton, CA

Director of Senior and Disability Services

Rogue Valley Council of Governments, Central Point, OR

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

Texas Funding Opportunity: Community Development Fund

Application Deadline: February 9, 2017

Discover how your Texas state planning region can receive funds from the TxCDBG Program's largest funding category for public or other projects. The 2017-2018 **Community Development Fund Application Guide**, released by the Texas Department of Agriculture, explains who is eligible to apply, how applications will be scored, and what award amounts are available. Contact **Trenton Engledow** with any questions.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Registration is open! NARC's 2016 Executive Directors Conference and Board Retreat

EDC: September 18-20 – South Bend, IN

Board Retreat: September 20-21 – South Bend, IN

Join NARC and the Michiana Area Council of Governments for the 2016 Executive Directors Conference in South Bend, Indiana. This conference brings executive directors, deputy directors, and senior staff together to network, share best practices, and explore opportunities for strengthening professional capacity and development.

CONTACT US

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