

September 8, 2015

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

## EXECUTIVE NOTE

Dear NARC Members:

Welcome back from the Labor Day weekend! Today, Congress returns to Washington to face several daunting challenges. First, lawmakers must determine a path forward to keep the federal government open past September 30, when current funding expires, followed by major votes on the Iran nuclear deal. Congress must also pass legislation on aviation before September 30. The congressional calendar poses a real challenge to reaching these goals, as there are just a scant ten legislative days scheduled for September, which also includes the first-ever papal address to a joint session of Congress that will virtually close Washington, D.C. for a three-day period this month.

Later this Fall, Congress must address a number of other pressing matters, including raising the nation's debt ceiling by early December, extending the Export-Import Bank, and of course, developing a long-term surface transportation bill or passing a short-term extension once the current authorization expires October 29. It will be a busy few months for sure. Keep reading *eRegions* to stay on top of what's happening here in D.C., and how legislative proposals could affect your work in your regions!

Thanks,  
Joanna L. Turner

## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

*Congress is in session.*

### **Rumors Abound on House Transportation Bill**

Indications from the House are that a Transportation and Infrastructure Committee markup of a transportation reauthorization bill could occur on September 17 and that bill language could become available as early as this Thursday. This would likely indicate a willingness to move forward on the policy provisions absent a funding package that would actually pay for the bill. Details remain murky at this point and no official announcement of a markup has been released. Continue to check the NARC website for updates as they become available.

### **Surgeon General's Call to Action on Promoting Walking and Walkable Communities**

The *Call to Action* will highlight the significant health burden that exists in the U.S. today due to physical inactivity – contributing to more than 10% of the preventable mortality in America today. More specifically, it will make recommendations to a number of key sectors about critical actions they can take to improve community walkability and increase walking throughout the U.S. For more information about the larger effort, you can visit the [Surgeon General's website](#) or the [EveryBody Walk Collaborative website](#). Watch the webcast tomorrow, September 9 at 10am. Details below.

## **National Preparedness Month**

*Don't wait. Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today.* September is **National Preparedness Month (NPM)**. All across the country, federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, community organizations, and members of the private sector have embraced NPM and America's *PrepareAthon!* by planning events. You can take the lead in planning an activity for **National PrepareAthon! Day** in your organization or community. The America's *PrepareAthon!* website has many resources available to help plan a successful event. Additionally, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) is offering FREE online preparedness courses. To get a complete listing of courses, visit [www.training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.aspx](http://www.training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.aspx). For more information on NPM, visit [www.ready.gov/september](http://www.ready.gov/september).

## **EPA's Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities**

The *Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities* (2015) is a compilation of strategies, organized by 11 common "goal areas," that villages, towns, and small cities can use to evaluate their existing policies to create healthy, environmentally resilient, and economically robust places. This self-assessment was developed as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) **Smart Growth Implementation Assistance** project in Madison County, NY. This self-assessment helps communities identify gaps in their policies, plans, codes, and zoning regulations by asking a series of "Yes" or "No" questions. All communities begin by completing the self-assessment's *Revitalize Village and Town Centers* section, which gives a baseline indication of smart growth development policies within the jurisdiction.

## **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**

*Want your organization featured here? Send details to [anna@narc.org](mailto:anna@narc.org).*

## **CRCOG Road Diet and Safety Study**

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) in Hartford, CT is conducting a study to explore the potential of adding bicycle lanes and improving safety on a two-mile stretch of North Main Street. One tool they are using, the Road Diet, helps create streets that are more accessible to all users. This is usually done by condensing a four-lane road into a three-lane road and converting the extra space for bicycle and pedestrian use. Governor Dannel Malloy spoke early last month about the safety impact road diets can have on a community, including significantly reducing crashes. Road diets can also improve community connectivity and vitality while enhancing the quality of life for residents.

## **MEMBER REQUESTS**

*Email responses to [anna@narc.org](mailto:anna@narc.org)*

## **Central Yavapai Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Does your MPO/COG contract out transit service using Section 5307 funds from the Federal Transit Administration? And how much of your service is contracted out? If your MPO/COG does contract out the service, how do you handle matching requirements (e.g. does the contracted transit company provide the matching funds? Does the contractor partner with others to pay for the matching funds)?

## **Sacramento Area Council of Governments**

Has your Metropolitan Planning Organization set up a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other form of agreement with a neighboring MPO to provide common services? Is your MPO working with nearby MPOs on common activities? What types of activities and services are you working on together?

## **FEATURED JOBS**

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

### **Human Resources Generalist**

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

### **Transportation Planner / MPO Director**

City of Columbus-Bartholomew County Planning Department, Columbus, IN

### **Associate Planner**

Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle, WA

### **Director of Transportation**

East Texas Council of Governments, Kilgore, TX

### **Planner – Data Analysis Group**

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Detroit, MI

### **Planner – Plan Implementation Group**

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Detroit, MI

### **Transportation Engineer/Planner**

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Detroit, MI

### **Database Developer**

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Detroit, MI

## **FUNDING**

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

### **Improvements to EDA Grant Application Processes**

In April 2015, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) issued a Federal Register Notice announcing some proposed improvements to EDA forms as part of overall enhancements to the grant application process. Very soon, those changes will become institutionalized. A couple of key things you need to know once the FY2016 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs Federal Funding Opportunity is posted: the ED-900, as you know it, has been reformed and there is a new proposal form to assess viability of potential projects under EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs. EDA is planning several webinars once the FFO is published. Keep watching for updates on social media ([@US\\_EDA](#)) and at [eda.gov](#).

## **EVENTS**

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

### **Surgeon General's Call to Action on Promoting Walking and Walkable Communities**

September 9, 10:00 AM ET

Walking is an easy way to start and maintain a physically active lifestyle. The Surgeon General aims to increase walking across the nation by calling for access to safe and convenient places to walk and wheelchair roll. Join the Office of the Surgeon General via live webcast for the launch of this important Call to Action that will offer strategies for increasing walking and walkable communities for people of all ages and abilities.

### **ETCOG's 24<sup>th</sup> Annual REACH Conference**

October 7-8, Maude Cobb Convention Center, Longview, TX

The East Texas Council of Governments' (ETCOG) Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is hosting their 24th Annual REACH (Regional Education on Aging, Caregiver, and Healthcare) Conference to provide educational workshops, plenary sessions, and networking opportunities for professionals, caregivers, and anyone interested in aging issues. Taking into consideration the diversity of aging concerns, ETCOG has attempted to include local, regional, state, and national service providers and educators to address a variety of topics that may be of interest to anyone who works with older

adults, their caregivers, or the families.

## CONTACT US

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