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## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

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# eRegions

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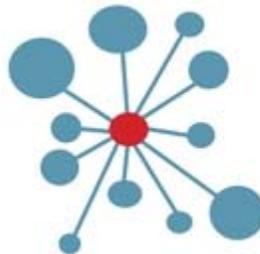
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### PROGRAM UPDATE POLICY UPDATE

#### REGIONS 360

### GRANT OPPORTUNITIES UPCOMING EVENTS



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executive directors' conference  
september 21 - september 24, 2014  
des moines, ia

**Register Today!**

**EDC Update:** Take look at the updated Executive Directors' Conference (EDC) program [HERE](#). There's still time to register! Click [HERE](#) for details.

## EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Dear Colleagues,

This week, Congress resumes legislative business for a final push before returning home to campaign for the midterm elections on November 4. Because so few legislative days remain, Congress is focused on passing a short term resolution to fund the federal government after current funding expires on October 1. Lawmakers are also looking to pass messaging bills, including legislation that addresses the *Affordable Care Act*, campaign finance, and equal pay for women.

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U.S. House of Representatives leadership also announced that the Chamber will vote this week on a series of economic bills that would make permanent some expired tax credits and repeal the medical device tax.

**Continuing Resolution:** On Tuesday, September 9, House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) introduced a continuing resolution (H.J. Res. 124) to keep the government funded through December 11, 2014. The CR extends the Export – Import bank through June 2015, extends the moratorium on taxing Internet access through December 11, and appropriates additional funding for Ebola, among other provisions. The House was originally scheduled to vote on the CR on Thursday, September 11, but the vote was ultimately pushed back to this week – likely on Wednesday - to consider a supplemental funding request from the White House for military action in connection with Islamic State militants.

**Sixth round of TIGER Grants Announced:** On Friday, The U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) announced the recipients of 2014 *Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery* (TIGER) grants totaling \$584 million for 72 transportation projects. Of the 72 grant awards, there are 31 planning awards in 25 states including D.C. totaling \$31.6 million. Of the four planning awards given to regional planning organizations, three were members of the National Association of Regional Councils: Mid-America Regional Council in Kansas City (\$1,200,000); North Central Texas Council of Government in Dallas (\$210,000); and Wasatch Front Regional Council in Salt Lake City (\$820,000). Congratulations to all the grant recipients!

Full details on all TIGER awards are available [HERE](#). For a list of Planning Grants, please see NARC's chart [HERE](#).

Thanks,  
Joanna

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## PROGRAMUPDATE

**Federal News Radio interview with EDA Asst. Secretary Jay Williams:** Economic Development Administration (EDA) Assistant Secretary Jay Williams recently joined Derrick Dortch on *Fed Access* to discuss EDA's role and efforts to help communities across the country create jobs and grow their economies. Assistant Secretary Williams

talked about the agency's mission, programs, and initiatives, and how it is helping to spur job growth in economically distressed communities around the country. Click [HERE](#) to listen to the interview.

**FRA Issues Proposed Rule Addressing Railcar Safety:** Last Tuesday, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released a proposed rule to address standards for brake system safety and for securing unattended freight trains. The proposal aims to increase safety regulations for train cars carrying domestically produced crude oil and codifies an emergency order issued by FRA in August 2013 after an unattended rail car carrying Bakken crude oil caused an explosion in Lac-Megantic, Quebec that killed 47 people. Written comments must be received by November 10. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

**Secretary Foxx Attends Daylong Summit on Infrastructure Investment:** Last Tuesday, the U.S. Department of the Treasury and U.S. DOT held a summit on infrastructure investment that brought together Wall Street financiers, institutional investors, project engineers, bankers, and state and federal transportation officials. The focus of the event was to encourage private investment in big infrastructure projects. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

**Secretary Foxx Announces New Initiative to Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety:** In an effort to reduce the growing number of pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities, U.S. DOT Secretary Anthony Foxx announced a new initiative that will address infrastructure safety, education, vehicle safety, and data collection. The initiative is an 18-month campaign that will begin with road safety assessments conducted by U.S. DOT field offices in every state, and will produce multiple resources to help communities build streets that are safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation users. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

**FTA Issues Final Rule on Value Engineering:** The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is updating the existing value engineering (VE) regulations to make them consistent with the statutory changes in the *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act* (MAP-21) and to make other non-substantive changes for clarity. The final rule includes increasing the project monetary thresholds that trigger a VE analysis; eliminating the VE analysis requirement for design-build projects; and defining the requirements for a State Transportation Agency to establish and sustain a VE program. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

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## POLICYUPDATE

*Congress is in session.*

**Ways and Means Committee Examines Social Impact Bonds:** Last week, the House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing on the use of Social Impact Bonds (SIBs), a tool designed to improve social services by ensuring that funds are spent only on programs that achieve their desired goals. SIB models are currently operating in Utah, Massachusetts, New York state, and New York City. During the hearing, the committee discussed the *Social Impact Bonds Act (H.R. 4885)* introduced by Representatives Todd Young (R-IN) and John Delaney (D-MD) to promote the use of SIBs at the federal level. The bill would solicit project proposals from state and local governments and provide federal funding for positive outcomes. Witnesses discussed the financial viability of the model, noting that SIBs can produce better outcomes, but tend to be more expensive than direct contracting.

**House Votes to Limit EPA's Ability to Expand Jurisdiction under the *Clean Water Act*:**

Last week, the House passed the *Waters of the United States Regulatory Overreach Protection Act (H.R. 5078)* by a bipartisan vote of 262-152. The legislation would require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to consult with state and local officials before finalizing its proposed rule to increase the number of rivers, streams, and creeks that fall under the jurisdiction of the *Clean Water Act (CWA)*. EPA's proposed rule would clarify which waters are regulated by the CWA and includes water bodies that do not flow throughout the entire year. In a [Statement of Administration Policy](#), the White House stated that the bill would "derail current efforts to clarify the scope of the CWA, hamstring future regulatory efforts and create significant ambiguity regarding existing regulations and guidance," and indicated that President Obama would veto the legislation.

**Senate Hearing on Federal Programs that Provide Equipment to State and Local Law Enforcement:** Last week, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee held a hearing to discuss federal programs that provide funding to state and local law enforcement to acquire military-grade equipment. Federal witnesses discussed current program rules and requirements regulating state and local purchase of controlled military-grade equipment with federal

funding. Several senators from both sides of the aisle indicated their intentions to introduce legislation to address concerns with the programs. Click [HERE](#) to watch the hearing.

**House Holds Hearing on Federal Permitting and Environmental Reviews for Infrastructure Projects:**

On Tuesday, the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit held a hearing, *Surface Transportation Infrastructure Projects: Case Studies of the Federal Environmental Review and Permitting Process*, to receive testimony from project sponsors regarding their experiences. Witnesses included Utah, Washington State, and Texas Departments of Transportation as well as the Transportation Corridor Agencies. The witnesses made numerous recommendations on how to improve the environmental review and project approval process, and discussed challenges they faced with regards to specific sections of MAP-21. Click [HERE](#) to read witness testimony and watch the hearing.

**House Committee Leaders Introduce Bipartisan Passenger Rail Legislation:**

Last week, Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA); T&I Ranking Member Nick J. Rahall, II (D-WV); Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee Chairman Jeff Denham (R-CA); and Subcommittee Ranking Member Corrine Brown (D-FL) introduced *The Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2014*, or PRRIA (H.R. 5449). This legislation is designed to improve infrastructure, reduce costs, leverage private sector resources, create greater accountability and transparency, and accelerate project delivery for Amtrak and the Nation's passenger rail transportation system. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

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## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of grants still open!

**FTA withdraws its *Ladders of Opportunity Initiative* NOFA with**

**Intent to Issue a Revised Document:** The notice of funding availability (NOFA) indicated that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) was making Fiscal Year 2013 and prior year funds available for this effort. FTA intends to make additional funds available, providing a consolidated way for potential applicants to seek funding. Since this additional funding may have a bearing on whether a potential applicant decides to apply for funds, FTA has determined the best course of

action is to withdraw the NOFA and issue a revised NOFA. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

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## UPCOMINGEVENTS

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of events still open!

**REPORT: *Going Local: Connecting the National Labs to their Regions to Maximize Innovation and Growth*:**

The Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings has released a report on enhancing the national labs' impact on regional economies and innovation. The report argues that the frequently rule-bound, "behind the fence" operating style of the Department of Energy (DOE) lab system has likely limited these invaluable institutions' contributions both to local innovation and growth. Senior Fellow and Policy Director Mark Muro stated that the report argues that the hubs need to engage more with local industry clusters in order to deliver fully on their national mission and it recommends a number of ways to allow for that. Click [HERE](#) to read the report and to access additional information.

**REPORT: *Small Legacy Cities, Equity, and a Changing Economy*:**

"*Small Legacy Cities, Equity, and a Changing Economy*," is a report completed by a group of graduate students from the University of Pennsylvania's Department of City and Regional Planning in spring 2014. With the Federal Reserve's Department of Community Development Studies and Education acting as client, the students were tasked with evaluating the extent to which economic revitalization strategies in Wilmington, DE, Lancaster, PA, and Bethlehem, PA had led to equitable outcomes for low- and moderate-income residents. The report also presents city-specific recommendations and proposes a framework for integrating equity as a strategic priority into local economic development efforts. Click [HERE](#) to read the report.

**WEBINAR: The Location Affordability Portal, Version 2: A Better Understanding of How Location Impacts Affordability**

*October 1, 2:00 PM ET*

There is more to housing affordability than how much rent or mortgage you pay. Transportation costs are the second-biggest budget item for most families, but previously there hadn't been an easy way for people to fully factor transportation costs into decisions about where to live and work. The goal of the Location Affordability Portal ([www.locationaffordability.info](http://www.locationaffordability.info)) is to fill this gap by providing the public

with robust, standardized data and resources on combined housing and transportation costs to help consumers, policymakers, and developers make more informed decisions about where to live, work, and invest. The webinar, cohosted by NARC, the National Association of Counties (NACO), and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), will feature a comprehensive site demo, testimony from practitioners on its applications, and an opportunity for questions and answers. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**NARC CONFERENCE: Executive Directors' Conference**

*September 21 - 24; Des Moines, IA*

Join NARC and the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization for the 2014 Executive Directors' Conference in Des Moines, IA! For more than 40 years, NARC has brought hundreds of Executive Directors, their Deputies, and Senior Staff together to network, share best practices, and explore opportunities for strengthening professional capacity and development. Click [HERE](#) to register.

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