



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS
eREGIONS

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

With tonight's first presidential debate and 47 days until the election, the Partnership for Public Service's **Center for Presidential Transition** provides information on who's who on the two candidates transition team and post-election activities.

Federal Fiscal Year Ends Friday with No Funding Agreement Yet

With only days left in the 2016 fiscal year, lawmakers may be meeting over the weekend to vote on a stop gap funding bill. Negotiators continue to meet on the spending bill but continue to be far apart on issues such as Securities and Exchange Commission rules on publicly traded companies, aid to Flint, Michigan, and funding for Louisiana floods. The fiscal year ends on September 30.

Senate Adopted Water Resources Bill; Action Moves to House

The Senate adopted the bipartisan Water Resources Development Act (S 2848) authorizing flood protection and water restoration projects and provisions for drinking water infrastructure. The House expects to vote on their bill HR 5303 this week. NARC joined colleagues in congratulating the Senate for its action and urging the House to pass its bill before Congress adjourns.

OTHER NEWS

NARC Convenes Regional Council Environmental Directors

With the help of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, NARC convened a group of environmental staff from various member regional councils at last week's Executive Directors Conference in South Bend, Indiana. Staff from SEMCOG, NIRPC, TCRPC, SCRCOG, MORPC, and DVRPC attended the meeting, sharing their COG's current environmental and energy work, as well as past and future initiatives and programs. The session offered an opportunity for staff to learn what other regional councils are doing in energy and environmental planning, as well as to exchange ideas and best practices. NARC plans to hold additional meetings at future conferences. If you or your staff are interested in attending the next meeting, please contact Cameron Herbolsheimer at cameron@narc.org.

Administration Calls on Local Governments to Reevaluate Zoning Laws

Today, the White House released a toolkit for cities and counties to use to update their zoning laws to fight high rents and income inequality. The Administration suggested that updating local land use policies could lead to more new housing construction, better leveraging of limited financial resources, and increased connectivity between housing to transportation, jobs and amenities. The toolkit promotes healthy, responsive, affordable, high-opportunity housing markets, including:

- Establishing by-right development
- Taxing vacant land or donate it to non - profit developers
- Streamlining or shortening permitting processes and timelines
- Eliminate off - street parking requirements
- Allowing accessory dwelling units
- Establishing density bonuses
- Enacting high -density and multifamily zoning

- Employing inclusionary zoning
- Establishing development tax or value capture incentives
- Using property tax abatements

MPO Coordination NPRM Comment Period Extended

In response to the many requests for extension of the comment period, USDOT is reopening the docket for the MPO Coordination Rule. The 30-day extension will begin once the announcement appears in the Federal Register. The new deadline will be mid-to-late October.

FHWA is specifically requesting feedback on several items, including the cost of implementing the NPRM, possible exemptions that could be granted, the circumstances in which exemptions should be applied, and the effect of the requirement that MPOs create joint planning documents. This might be another opportunity to state our displeasure with the rule and further highlight its potential costs and challenges.

Stay tuned for more information and contact Erich Zimmermann (erich@narc.org) with any questions, comments, or thoughts.

Federal Automated Vehicle Policy Released

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released their much anticipated guidance on autonomous vehicles this Tuesday. The policy is divided into four sections that include Vehicle Performance Guidance for Automated Vehicles, Model State Policy, NHTSA's Current Regulatory Tools, and New Tools and Authorities in addition to the current regulatory powers USDOT has to promote the safe operation of driverless vehicles. USDOT intends to update this policy annually and seeks public comment for future iterations. This guidance is one of the first steps of preparing for this technology on the federal level and will help to avoid patchwork laws from individual states. USDOT also released a short FAQ page to address general questions related to the policy.

Communities Find Economic Value in Parks

A study of the economic value of parks has found that parks offer communities an asset that generates savings for local governments, generates revenue for nearby businesses, improves community health, the environment, and supports tourism. The study, **Smart Parks**, measured the return on investment by how many people use parks or recreation facilities after capital improvements versus the baseline data that is collected prior to those improvements. The white paper estimates the total value of parks-based tourism in the 100 largest cities to be \$494.28 million.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

The YSEALI Professional Fellows Program

The **International City/County Management Association (ICMA)**, with funding from the U.S. Department of State, is offering the Fall 2016 Professional Fellows Program – an opportunity for young professionals from Southeast Asia to learn about a variety of topics such as environmental sustainability, good governance, economic development, and civic engagement through a four week fellowship with a host U.S. organization. Fellows are part of President Obama's **Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI)**, a program that strengthens leadership development and networking in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), deepens engagement with young leaders on key regional and global challenges, and strengthens people-to-people ties between the United States and young Southeast Asian leaders.

Organizations interested in participating in this program are expected to host two fellows each from October 15 through November 12. This is a reciprocal exchange. Selected hosts will have the opportunity to nominate a staff member to travel for two weeks to a Southeast Asian community post-program to deliver technical assistance and consultation to help engage citizens and civil society organizations. There are no fees associated with hosting fellows. Travel, accommodations, and a stipend for meals and incidentals for the fellows are covered by the program. There is, however, a cost share/in-kind contribution requirement. If you would like to learn more, please contact the program coordinator, Yelena Khotsevitch. She may be reached via email, lkhotsevitch@icma.org, or by phone, 202-962-3597.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Accountant

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

Chief Executive Officer

Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, Urbana, IL

Senior Principal Planner – Center for Livable Communities/Mobility Services Division

Atlanta Regional Commission, Atlanta, GA

Lead Manager

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Planner

Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, Youngstown, OH

FUNDING

View full list of grants!

Give Your Members FREE Access to GrantFinder

EfficientGov's GrantFinder tracks more than 7,000 federal, state and, foundation grants for specifically for municipalities - more than 50 regional commissions are using it to find grant funding for their members. Through the end of 2016, when you purchase a multi-user subscription to GrantFinder, all of your member cities can have access for one year at no cost – a \$995 value! Schedule an online demo today by visiting us at <http://grantfinder.com>.

Call to Action: Every Body Walk! Collaborative Micro Grants

America Walks and the Every Body Walk! Collaborative are pleased to announce a new micro grant program designed to assist local walking advocates build on the momentum of the newly released Surgeon General's Call to Action. This one time award will fund 10-15 community groups up to \$2500.00 for activities designed to increase local walking programming and stimulate community demand for infrastructure improvements that provide accessible, safe walkable places for the entire community. Grant applications (link below) are due by 5:00pm ET on October 15, 2015.

EVENTS

View full list of events!

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