



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

*Both House and Senate are in session.*

### **This Week in Congress...**

Congress must pass a spending bill by the December 11 deadline to avoid a government shutdown. Although House Appropriations Chairman Harold Rogers intended to give lawmakers a preview of the funding bill on Monday, controversial items appear to have prevented consensus on the bill. Most likely, lawmakers will be forced to adopt a short-term government funding stopgap measure while House-Senate negotiations continue over a \$1.1 trillion package for fiscal year 2016. House Republican leaders insist they will avoid a government shutdown and pass a spending bill in time.

On Tuesday, the House Committee on Financial Services will consider a bill to reform federal housing programs. The *Housing Opportunities through Modernization Act* (HOTMA; **HR 3700**) would reduce administrative burdens for state and local housing agencies and private owners while giving them added flexibility to further key goals such as reducing homelessness, improving access to higher-opportunity neighborhoods, and addressing repair needs in public housing. The bill would simplify rules for setting tenant rent payments, streamline housing quality inspections in the voucher program to encourage private owners to participate and enable families to occupy their homes more quickly, provide added flexibility to “project-base” vouchers to support affordable housing development and preservation, and enable more homeless families or individuals with disabilities to live in appropriate housing.

On Wednesday, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee will mark up the *Waterfront Community Revitalization and Resiliency Act of 2015* (**S 1935**), sponsored by Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI). The bill would require the U.S. Department of Commerce (Commerce) to designate a resilient waterfront community as a unit of local government. The communities would require Commerce to establish a grant program, making these communities eligible for a program to provide planning and implementation grants between \$50,000 and \$1 million that leverage other sources of public and private investment to assist with the development of resilient waterfront community plans, including planning, feasibility analysis costs, and implementation of strategic components of an approved plan. Regional councils would be eligible for funding.

### **DHS to Unveil New Terrorism Alert System**

On Monday, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Jeh Johnson announced plans for a new terrorism threat advisory system that would keep the public better informed of terrorism risks. Johnson also noted that DHS has tightened security at airports at home and boosted security on flights to the U.S. by inserting preclearance teams—U.S. customs officials who screen passengers and their luggage before departure—at 15 foreign airports. DHS is in talks to set up preclearance programs at ten more airports, he said.

## OTHER NEWS

## **Brooking Report: Broadband Adoption Rates and Gaps in U.S. Metropolitan Areas**

There is no question that the internet is a huge boom for the economy and society, but maximizing its potential is only possible if all individuals are online. See *Opportunities* section for a Brookings webcast on Boosting Broadband Uptake.

## **MEMBER REQUESTS**

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

### **PAG: Dispose-A-Med Program**

Pima Association of Governments (PAG) in Tucson, Arizona is working with local stakeholders to coordinate a region-wide Dispose-A-Med program. Has your COG/MPO successfully coordinated a similar effort? If so, please share information, web links, plans, documents, or best practices your organization employed to promote, implement, and quantify your efforts for the the program. Additionally, PAG is interested in how your organization addressed poison control, water quality, and partnerships with stakeholders.

## **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**

Have a story to feature here? Send details to [anna@narc.org](mailto:anna@narc.org).

### **Aging in the City**

Communities across the country are confronting challenges created by past six decades of urban development. Urban growth has occurred in a manner that inhibits residents' independence and ability to remain in their communities as they age. Increasingly, families and individuals find the quality of their lives compromised as the housing, transportation, and community services that they have relied on can no longer accommodate their needs. Local healthcare systems, social service networks, and local officials field increasing inquiries from older constituents stranded in their own homes and facing basic challenges surviving in their neighborhoods. At the same time, local budgets are tight and the concerns of elders compete amidst an array of issues that affect the quality and sustainability of community assets. Learn more in the Atlanta Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging's report, *Value Proposition Summit Report*.

## **FEATURED JOBS**

*View full list of jobs!*

### **Community Development Manager**

Flint Hills Regional Council, Ogden, KS

### **Transportation Planner III**

Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, Colorado Springs, CO

### **Resource Development – Principal Planner**

Community Planning Association, Meridian, ID

### **Alamo Service Connection Veteran's Care Specialist**

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

### **Alamo Service Connection Care Specialist – Local Contact Agent**

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

### **Solicitation RFQ No. 15-06: Mobility Hub Planning, Design and Implementation**

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, Fort Lauderdale, FL

## **FUNDING**

*View full list of grants!*

### **Notice of Funding for Beyond Traffic: The Smart City Challenge Grant**

*Applications Due: February 4, 2016*

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced a new grant that will demonstrate how advanced intelligent transportation systems (ITS) technologies and applications can be used to reduce congestion, keep travelers safe, and support economic vitality in innovative ways. It is similar to the newly-passed FAST Act's Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program designed to accelerate the deployment of new technology and innovations.

### **Solar Powering America by Recognizing Communities**

The U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Powering America by Recognizing Communities (SPARC) program offers no-cost technical assistance from national solar experts to help communities around the country evaluate, develop, and implement better solar plans and policies. By participating in the program and earning SPARC designation, communities will set themselves apart as leaders in solar policy, and will signal to solar companies that they are "open for business."

Right now, **there is an opportunity for a select few communities to join an elite group of "SPARC Early Adopters" and gain access to exclusive program benefits.** The first 30 communities to receive technical assistance from the SPARC team and to be on track to implement a majority of its recommendations (based on proven, national best practices) for improving **planning and zoning, permitting and inspection, and financing options** for solar by March 31, 2016, will receive recognition as "Early Adopters."

## **EVENTS**

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

### **Nuclear Plant Decommissioning: Host Community Engagement Webinar**

December 9, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM ET

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) is hosting a webinar to highlight issues communities face when a nuclear plant closes. The webinar will introduce participants to the closure and decommissioning regulatory process which currently lacks local influence in closure and decommissioning decision-making.

### **Boosting Broadband Uptake in America's Cities and Metro Areas**

December 10, 9:30 - 11:00 AM ET

While a high-speed Internet connection is a necessary ingredient for economic prosperity, service quality and adoption remain uneven across the country. Pricing and speeds vary between and within cities and metropolitan areas, limiting growth opportunities for businesses and digital entrepreneurs. Brookings and the National League of Cities will examine how a new federalist framework can promote a network build-out that supports local independence while meeting national objectives around economic opportunity. Senator Cory Booker (D-N.J.) will provide a federal perspective and will be followed by a panel of metropolitan and industry leaders.

### **BroadbandUSA Webinar: Rural Broadband and Digital Inclusion Planning**

#### **Part 1: Gathering Information**

December 10, 1:30-3:00 PM ET

National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) is hosting a webinar on broadband and digital inclusion planning in rural areas. This is the first in a series of webinars about rural planning - future topics will include building partnerships, marketing and outreach, broadband adoption, and digital literacy training programs. Part 1 will cover how to gather information to best inform your broadband and digital inclusion plan, including asset inventory, survey data, community input, and other planning resources. Speakers will share their rural planning experiences, including a range of local, regional, and state planning efforts.

### **Scenario Planning Webinar**

January 4, 2016, 3:00 PM ET

Join PlaceMatters and NARC to learn about recent research on the use of scenario planning tools

to support transportation and land use planning in regions and recommendations to make them more readily available and valuable to regions planning for their future.

### **2016 National Conference of Regions**

February 7-9, 2016\* – Washington, DC

The National Conference of Regions is NARC's forum to determine key policy issues and a legislative agenda for the year ahead, targeting topics central to our members' missions and their local elected officials' focus. *\*Note: Capitol Hill Day is February 10. Please make room in your travel plans to meet with your representatives.*

## **CONTACT US**

*Copyright © 2015 National Association of Regional Councils, All rights reserved.*

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)