Coming Soon! NCSL Report on Regional Coordinating Councils

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In the coming weeks, NCSL will release a report about regional coordinating councils. Some of the most successful coordination efforts in the United States have been led by a state coordinating entity, complemented by regional coordinating councils that are responsible for coordinated service delivery within their geographic areas. The forthcoming report will describe the regional coordinating council model, how it works and its contribution to coordination, with a focus on select state case studies. The report also will include a state-by-state directory of regional councils.

Inside This Issue

1 STATE ACTIVITY
2 GEORGIA RELEASES HB 277 STUDY
2 CONGRESS ENACTS, CONSIDERS TRANSIT-RELATED BILLS
3 NCSL MEETINGS, POLICIES AND RESOURCES
4 NEW RESOURCES

State Activity

Coordination-related legislative activity slowed during the third quarter of 2011, since all but 10 states—Calif., Ill., Mass., Mich., N.J, N.Y., N.C., Ohio, Pa. and Wis.—had ended their legislative sessions before July 1.

- The California Legislature passed two medical transportation bills in August and September. Assembly Bill 215 requires counties to deposit revenues from certain fines into the state Emergency Medical Air Transportation Act Fund, which is used to offset and augment state Medi-Cal reimbursements for emergency medical air transportation services. Assembly Bill 678 authorizes eligible providers to receive additional Medi-Cal reimbursement for ground emergency medical transportation services, equal to the amount of federal reimbursement but not to exceed actual costs. Both bills were signed by Governor Jerry Brown on Oct. 2.
- On Aug. 26, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn signed a bill to establish an appeals process for ground ambulance service providers of non-emergency medical transportation.
- On June 30, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett signed legislation that will apportion proceeds from the sale of lottery tickets to free or reduced fare transit service for the elderly.
- Also in Pennsylvania, Rep. Dwight Evans introduced a transportation bill on Sept. 26 that, among other provisions, would require the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to review the findings and recommendations of the Human Service Transportation Coordination Study of 2009, evaluate potential strategies for improving the coordination of Commonwealth human services transportation management, and identify any needed legislative and policy actions.
**Georgia Releases HB 277 Study**

In August, Georgia’s Governor’s Development Council (GDC) released its final report on how to improve coordination of the state’s rural and human services transportation system. The study was required by the Georgia 2020 Transportation Act, enacted in June 2010, and intended to help ensure cost-effective service delivery and best serve the system’s clients.

The report recommends establishing a statewide rural and human services transportation office—led by a state coordinating council and staffed by a state-level mobility manager—and regional coordinating councils staffed by regional mobility managers. It also calls for consistent policies and procedures across programs.

**Federal Surface Transportation Programs Extended**

A short-term extension of SAFETEA-LU was signed into law on Sept. 16, sustaining most federal highway and transit at current funding levels through March 31, 2012. The same legislation, known as the Surface and Air Transportation Programs Extension Act of 2011 (H.R. 2887), also extends federal aviation programs through Jan. 31, 2012.

This is the eighth short-term extension of SAFETEA-LU since it expired in 2009, and the 22nd extension of federal aviation programs since they expired in 2007.

**U.S. Senate, House Differ on FY 2012 Transit Appropriations**

On Sept. 21, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of a FY 2012 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill that would fund most federal transit programs at just 0.01 percent under their FY 2011 levels. The measure also would allocate an additional $358 million above FY 2011 levels for New Starts.

In contrast, the version approved by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Sept. 8 would cut most federal transit and highway spending by about 34 percent, reducing spending to levels sustainable by current Highway Trust Fund revenues. As amended, it also allows local transit systems to use a portion of section 5307 federal funds to offset fuel costs.

**House Republicans Seek More Transportation Funding**

Despite a proposal earlier this year to limit federal transportation spending to anticipated Highway Trust Fund revenues, U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica said on Sept. 22 that he is now seeking an additional $15 billion per year beyond current revenues to fund a six-year transportation bill—without raising the federal gas tax.

**U.S. Representative Carson Introduces Three Transit Bills**

On Sept. 22, Rep. André Carson (Ind.) introduced three bills to support community and public transit systems.

- The Protecting Transit Through Increased Flexibility Act of 2011 (H.R. 3022) would allow urbanized area formula grants to be used for transit operating costs in areas with a population of at least 200,000.

- The Modernizing Public Transit Act of 2011 (H.R. 3019) would direct the U.S. transportation secretary to consider certain factors in evaluating transit projects for capital investment grants, including population density, current and proposed land use, local development goals, the impacts of sprawl, and estimated reductions in trip times.

- The Community Transit Promotion Act of 2011 (H.R. 3021) would modify local share definitions and flexibility for certain transit grant programs.

**Transportation Planning Excellence Awards Open for Nomination**

The Transportation Planning Excellence Awards (TPEA) Program—sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in partnership with the Transportation Research Board (TRB)—recognizes outstanding initiatives across the country to develop, plan and implement innovative transportation planning practices. Winners represent a variety of planning organizations from across the county.

The application period will be open from Oct. 1 through Dec. 1, 2011, and winners will receive their awards at the TRB Summer Meeting in 2012.
NCSL Legislative Summit Features Coordination-Related Sessions

NCSL’s annual Legislative Summit is the largest, most substantive meeting of its kind. This year, more than 4,800 legislators, staff and others interested in public policy gathered in San Antonio, Texas, to attend informative sessions on critical problems and hear from nationally renowned speakers.

Coordination-related sessions included:

- **How Livability Policies and Practices Help Older Adults Age in Place.** Most older adults want to live in their own homes and communities, but can be thwarted by community design, unaffordable and inaccessible housing, and lack of access to needed services. In this session, NCSL staff and Jana Lynott from the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) highlighted an upcoming report about how livability principles can help older adults age in place. The full report—Aging in Place: A State Survey of Livability Policies and Practices—is due to be released in late October. Please contact Doug Shinkle for a copy or more information.

- **Non-Emergency Medical Transportation and Medicaid Cost Savings for States.** States must ensure necessary transportation of Medicaid beneficiaries to and from medical providers, under current Medicaid rules. In this session, Dan Dirks from the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and Marlene Slusser from American Medical Response spoke to state legislators and legislative staff about how states are saving on non-emergency medical transportation costs while complying with Medicaid requirements.

Materials from these and other transportation sessions at Legislative Summit are available online.

NCSL Legislative Summit Also Sees Passage of New Transportation Policies

Attendees at this year’s Legislative Summit also voted on many policies that will guide NCSL’s advocacy efforts before Congress and the administration. This year saw the passage of four core transportation policies, including those on surface transportation federalism and rail.

NCSL Offers Up-to-Date Transportation Resources

NCSL makes many of its resources available to the general public. These include searchable, online databases of state legislation and regular newsletters.

- The NCSL State Transportation Coordination Legislation Database tracks pending legislation, executive orders and statutes on various transportation coordination topics, dating to 2000.

- The NCSL Transportation Funding Legislation Database provides information about 17 different transportation funding issues under consideration in the states, including transit funding.

- The Transport Report, a monthly newsletter from NCSL’s Transportation Committee and Programs, focuses on state and federal transportation news, trends and analysis. For more details or to join the distribution list, please contact Jaime Rall.

Calendar

- **14th Annual National Tribal Transportation Conference** – hosted by the U.S. Tribal Technical Assistance (TTAP) Centers and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Nov. 14-17, 2011

- **Webinar: Successful Collaboration between Aging and Transit** – hosted by the U.S. Administration on Aging and the National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST) – Nov. 15, 2011, 2 pm ET

- **NCSL Fall Forum** – Tampa, Fla. – Nov. 30-Dec. 2, 2011

- **Webinar: Community Transportation and Travel Counseling** – hosted by the U.S. Administration on Aging and the National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST) – Dec. 6, 2011, 2 pm ET


- **2012 Training/Technical Assistance Conference & Roadeo** – hosted by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), National Rural Transit Assistance Program (National RTAP) and National Tribal Transit Association (NTTA) – Scottsdale, Ariz. – March 18-21, 2012

- **NCSL Legislative Summit** – Chicago, Ill. – Aug. 6-9, 2012


**New Resources**

**A Primer on Rural and Human Services Transportation in Georgia**

This primer—the first report released in August by the Governor’s Development Council (GDC) with help from the Georgia Coordinating Council for Rural and Human Services Transportation—answers key questions about rural human services transportation and what coordination seeks to accomplish.

**HB 277 Report: Coordinating Rural and Human Services Transportation in Ga.**

This second August report from Georgia’s GDC is on how to improve coordination of the state’s rural and human services transportation system, and recommends both state and regional coordinating councils.

**A Review of Human Services Transportation Plans and Grant Programs**

In July, the Transportation Research Board released a study that explores level of effort, costs and successes associated with coordinated public transit-human services transportation plans.

**Community Transportation Magazine: “Telling the Truth about Transit”**

The Fall 2011 issue of Community Transportation focuses on communications, outreach and working with elected officials. It also reports on the relationships between transportation access and health outcomes.

**Exploring the Role of Regional Transportation Projects as Rural Economy Drivers**

In this new NADO Research Foundation report, case studies from Alabama, Oregon and Vermont highlight regional transit projects that are facilitating improved mobility and in turn supporting regional economies.

**Crossing Great Divides: A Guide to Elder Mobility Resources and Solutions in Indian Country**

This National Rural Transit Assistance Program and National Center on Senior Transportation report offers innovative options for improving transportation services for elders on reservations or other Indian lands.

**Senior Travelers’ Trip Chaining Behavior: Survey Results and Data Analysis**

The Illinois Center for Transportation released this report in August about senior citizens’ travel behaviors, intended to inform efficient transit services for seniors and help change their attitudes toward transit.

**Supplemental Transportation Providers (STPs) in America**

The Beverly Foundation has released a map of U.S. supplemental transportation providers (STPs), community-based service providers that supplement existing transportation services for older adults.

**OnTheMap: Transit–Oriented Census Data**

This updated, free Web tool from the Census Bureau combines Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and U.S. census data to answer questions about workforce, transportation and economic development.

**Toolkit for Estimating Demand for Rural Intercity Bus Services**

This Transit Cooperative Research Program toolkit provides a sketch-planning guide and supporting CD-ROM tools that can be used to forecast demand for rural intercity bus services. A PowerPoint presentation offering background on the model and a worked example is available for download.