



July 28 – 29, 2020

Live Virtual Event

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SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Tuesday, July 28		
11:00 – 11:45 a.m. ET	Welcome and Opening Plenary Session: RPO America and National RPO Council of Peers Business Meeting	
11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. ET	Session Room A: Regional Approaches to Improving Mobility	Session B: Regional Planning Models for Partnerships and Public Outreach
12:45 – 1:30 p.m. ET	Lunch (or snack) on your own	
1:30 – 2:30 p.m. ET	Session Room A: New Mobility Resources	Session B: Value Capture and Innovative Finance for Rural and Small Metro Regions
2:30 – 3:15 p.m. ET	USDOT’s New Applicant Toolkit for Competitive Funding Programs	
3:15 – 3:30 p.m. ET	Break	
3:30 – 5:00 p.m. ET	Conversation Café Facilitated Networking Roundtables	

Wednesday, July 29		
11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. ET	Interactive Plenary: Impacts of COVID-19 on Rural and Small Metro Communities and Transportation	
12:15 – 1:00 p.m. ET	Session A: Regional Freight Planning	Session B: Rural and Small Metro Transportation Safety
1:00 – 1:20 p.m. ET	Lunch (or snack) on your own	
1:20 – 2:00 p.m. ET:	2020 Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards Showcase	
2:00 – 3:00 p.m. ET	Session A: Virtual Public Involvement Workshop	Session B: Regional Resilience for Transportation and Economic Development (<i>separate join URL</i>)
3:00 – 3:45 p.m. ET	Closing Plenary: Addressing Equity in Transportation Planning and Services	
3:45 – 4:00 p.m. ET	Conference Wrap-up and Evaluation	

11:00 – 11:45 a.m. EDT

Welcome and Opening Session: RPO America and National RPO Council of Peers Business Meeting and Policy Update (Session Room A)

RPO America is a program affiliate of NADO and serves as the professional network for rural and small metro transportation professionals. Attend the business meeting (open to all attendees) to hear a legislative update relating to regional and rural transportation, as well as more general regional planning and community and economic development appropriations and federal-level legislation.

11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. EDT: Concurrent breakout sessions

Regional Approaches to Improving Mobility (Session Room A)

Although COVID-19 has changed transit agencies' operations and the demand for transportation in many places, the mobility barriers that residents face have not gone away. Addressing mobility requires meaningful engagement with partners and stakeholders. Learn how regional development organizations and their partners are working together to develop and implement regional plans and identify opportunities to increase regional mobility.

- Moderator: Kevin Buettner, AICP, Transportation Director, Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association
- Patty Cantrell, Community Wealth Building Director, New Growth (MO)
- Marybeth Soderstrom, Transportation Director, Central Florida Regional Planning Commission

Regional Planning Models for Partnerships and Public Outreach (Session Room B)

2020 is a significant year for some planning programs around the United States. As North Carolina celebrates 20 years since the very beginning of the Rural Planning Organization Program, the state is also looking back on a year of new processes and programmatic improvements. Similarly, the regional organization PlanRVA (headquartered in Richmond, VA) is celebrating its fiftieth year of regional planning while looking ahead to new engagement approaches and a focus on equity through its regional planning programming including the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

- Moderator: Daniel Landon, Executive Director, Nevada County Transportation Commission (CA)
- Chet Parsons, AICP CTP, Director of Transportation, PlanRVA (VA)
- Tim Brock, PhD, AICP, MPO/RPO Staff Engineer, North Carolina Department of Transportation
- Matt Day, Principal Planner, Triangle J Council of Governments, Triangle J Rural Planning Organization (NC)

12:45 – 1:30 p.m. EDT: Lunch (or snack) on your own

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. EDT: Concurrent breakout sessions

New Mobility Resources (Session Room A)

The Federal Transit Administration has invested in resources to benefit rural, small urban, and other transportation providers. Learn about the National Center for Applied Transit Technology and the recently released Federal Fund Braiding Guide, as well as other FTA-supported resources for improving rural and regional mobility.

- Moderator: Judy Shanley, Ph.D. Asst VP, Education & Youth Transition Easterseals Director, National Center for Mobility Management (IL)
- Federal Transit Administration and Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility Marianne Stock, Chief, Rural and Targeted Programs, Federal Transit Administration (Washington, DC)
- Sheryl Gross-Glaser, Director, National Center for Applied Transit Technology, Community Transportation Association of America (Washington, DC)

Value Capture and Financing Practices for Rural and Small Metro Regions (Session Room B)

Value capture strategies can be used to help pay for roadway and transit improvements by leveraging localized benefits. Innovative finance allows state and local governments to use finance tools to substantially increase state and local governments' ability to deliver projects. Learn about techniques appropriate to rural and small metropolitan areas to leverage these different techniques to maximize their ability to fund projects.

- Moderator: Susan Christensen, Executive Director Greater Eastern Oregon Development Council
- Jill Stark, Transportation Planner, Federal Highway Administration (Washington, DC)

2:30 - 3:15 p.m. EDT:

USDOT's New Applicant Toolkit for Competitive Funding Programs (Session Room A)

Rural transportation networks are critical to support the economic wellbeing and quality of life of all Americans but face unique challenges in safety, infrastructure condition, usage—and funding. As part of the Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (R.O.U.T.E.S.) Initiative, USDOT has developed a new “Applicant Toolkit” to help potential transportation project sponsors in identifying and navigating USDOT discretionary grant funding opportunities for rural transportation projects. The toolkit provides user-friendly information and resources to support rural applicants' understanding of USDOT discretionary grant programs and the funding process. In this session, the presenters will explain the key features of the Toolkit and how it can help grant applicants at all levels of experience in accessing USDOT resources. *Speaker list continues on the following page.*

- Moderator: Rick Green, RPO America Chair and Government Services Director, Upper Savannah Council of Governments (SC)
- Loren Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, U.S. Department of Transportation (Washington, DC)

- George Riccardo, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation (Washington, DC)
- Robert Hyman, AICP, Transportation Policy Analyst, U.S. Department of Transportation (Washington, DC)

3:15 - 3:30 p.m. EDT: Break

3:30 - 5:00 p.m. EDT: Virtual Conversation Cafe Facilitated Networking Session (GoToMeeting Rooms)

Similar to the roundtable discussions typically hosted at NADO's in-person conferences, this Conversation Café session will feature small group discussions facilitated by a practitioner knowledgeable in the subject area. Participants will be able to choose two small group discussions to attend during the session for 45 minutes each.

Conference attendees: Check your email for the URL and password for each room.

- Regional transit approaches: Jason Kelly, Regional Transit Coordinator, Oregon Department of Transportation
- Bicycle and pedestrian issues: Jessica Blankenship, Regional Transportation Planner, Cumberland Valley Area Development District (KY)
- GIS to support regional planning: Clorisa Brown, GeoCIP, Regional Transportation Manager, Central Oklahoma Economic Development District
- Aging and transportation room: Virginia Dize, Co-Director of the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (Washington, DC)
- Local match sources for transportation: Miriam Gillow-Wiles, Executive Director, Southwest Colorado Council of Governments

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. EDT

Interactive Plenary: Impacts of COVID-19 on Rural and Small Metro Communities and Transportation (Session Room A)

- Welcome and Moderator: Robert Hiatt, RPO America Vice Chair and Executive Director, Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments (NC)
- Carrie Kissel, Associate Director, NADO
- Heather Hannon, AICP, Scenario Planning Manager, Lincoln Institute (MA)
- Jackie Davis, AICP, Senior Planner, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (PA)

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching effects in many regions around the United States. Beyond the health impacts on households and workers, COVID-19 is reshaping the business landscape, altering consumer behavior, and changing transportation demand and operations. This session will introduce exploratory scenario planning as a tool for envisioning multiple possible future scenarios, which will be a helpful skill for planners navigating uncertainty from COVID-19 and other issues. Engage in this interactive plenary session to share your experiences and hear perspectives on rural and small metro transportation and community and economic development.

12:15 - 1:00 p.m. EDT: Concurrent breakout sessions

Regional Freight Planning (Session Room A)

Freight is a significant concern for rural areas, with a significant amount of freight generated from rural production of energy, agriculture, natural resources, and rural-based industries. The Texas Department of Transportation is developing a Permian Basin Regional Freight and Energy Sector Transportation Plan that identifies freight activities, opportunities, challenges, and strategies. The plan's goals are to integrate multimodal regional and statewide energy sector transportation considerations into the local and regional transportation planning, programming, and implementation processes and to identify energy sector-related transportation needs and opportunities impacting the Texas Multimodal Freight Network and statewide economic competitiveness. Although many view California through the urban lens of Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area, more than half of the state is rural. The rural environment results in challenges for freight planning and goods movement but also opportunities for collaboration. The second presentation explores current freight conditions in California, funding programs, and how local governments and regional agencies are working with Caltrans to support corridor improvements, planning studies, and development of performance measures for highway projects.

- Moderator: Hugh Conroy, Director of Planning, Whatcom Council of Governments (WA)
- Casey Wells, Freight Planner, Texas Department of Transportation
- Maura Twomey, Executive Director, Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (CA)

Rural and Small Metro Transportation Safety (Session Room B)

Transportation safety and safety planning affect every region, regardless of population size or density, although it's a particular concern in rural areas where distances may be longer for EMS response and to reach a trauma center. Hear from the Federal Highway Administration about the Reducing Rural Roadway Departures initiative to reduce the approximately 12,000 annual fatalities that occur when cars leave their travel lane on a rural road, which can be addressed through countermeasures and approaches proven to reduce these deaths. Also hear from the National Center for Rural Road Safety about opportunities to raise awareness, learn about training, and grow safety champions within rural regions.

- Moderator: Krishna Kunapareddy, Boonslick Regional Planning Commission (MO)
- Jaime Sullivan, Director, National Center for Rural Road Safety, Western Transportation Institute (MT)
- Dick Albin, Senior Safety Engineer, Federal Highway Administration (CO)

1:00 – 1:20 p.m. EDT: Lunch (or snack) on your own

1:20 – 2:00 p.m. EDT: 2020 Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards Showcase (Session Room A)

Join us for a virtual version of our conference awards networking session! This year's Excellence in Regional Transportation award-winning projects are featured in your agenda program. At 1:20 pm Eastern, join a live, facilitated Q&A session with award winners to hear about their recent initiatives in the areas of bicycle and pedestrian planning, highway safety, climate resilience, and transit services. We'll see you there!

- Moderator: Rick Green, RPO America Chair and Government Services Director, Upper Savannah Council of Governments (SC)
- Nicole Hood, State Highway Safety and Traffic Engineer, Missouri Department of Transportation
- Krishna Kunapareddy, Regional Planner, Boonslick Regional Planning Commission (MO)
- Sean Sullivan, Executive Director, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
- Emily Hathcock, Associate Director of Planning and Development, Barren River Area Development District
- Jim Livingston, Executive Director, River Valley Regional Commission
- Walter Turner, Mayor, City of Reynolds, Georgia

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. EDT: Concurrent breakout sessions:

Virtual Public Involvement Workshop (Session Room A)

Innovative virtual public involvement techniques provide State departments of transportation (DOTs), transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and rural transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) with a platform to inform the public and receive feedback. These strategies create efficiencies in how information is disseminated and how input is collected and considered, which can potentially accelerate planning and project development processes. While virtual public involvement can be useful during any time to provide information and seek public input from individuals who may not have easy access to in-person engagement events, it can provide strategies for continuing public outreach when in-person events are impossible due to COVID-19.

- Moderator: Stephanie Carver, Transportation Director, Southern Maine PDC
- Carolyn Nelson, Environmental Protection Specialist, Federal Highway Administration (Washington, DC)

Regional Resilience for Transportation and Economic Development (Session Room B)

Recent events have demonstrated that “resilience” is not merely a planning buzzword, but rather an important framework to prepare communities and regions for an uncertain future. This session, presented in conjunction with the NADO Research Foundation’s *Summertime with the CEDS* series, will feature how two regional organizations have incorporated resilience into transportation and economic development planning. Bi-State Regional Commission (serving parts of Illinois and Iowa) has applied a Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Framework process to identify vulnerable and critical facilities in the Quad Cities related to extreme weather and its impacts on the area transportation system, and has also included adaptation strategies in its Long Range Transportation Plan update. The Houston-Galveston Area Council developed a Regional Economic Resilience Plan in 2018 that analyzed threats and proposed solutions to help the regional and county economies bounce back more quickly from disruptions, including from natural disasters, downturns in the economy, or the loss of a major employer. It also created an economic profile for each of the region’s thirteen counties, detailing land use and demographics, housing, commute patterns, and much more.

- Moderator: Brett Schwartz, Associate Director, NADO
- Josh Owens, Senior Planner, Gulf Coast Economic Development District/Houston-Galveston Area Council (TX)
- Gena McCullough, RPO America Secretary and Assistant Executive Director/Planning Director, Bi-State Regional Commission (IL/IA)

3:00 - 3:45 p.m. EDT

Closing Plenary: Addressing Equity in Transportation Planning and Services (Session Room A)

Equity in rural and small metro regional transportation planning and service delivery includes addressing racial and ethnic inequality, but also inclusion of people with disabilities, people with limited incomes, and others who are historically underserved or not typically at the table for transportation planning and service delivery design. Hear an introduction to social equity and how it relates to transportation and the issues that intersect with transportation demand, such as land use and community and economic development.

- Moderator: Gena McCullough, RPO America Secretary and Assistant Executive Director/Planning Director, Bi-State Regional Commission (IL/IA)
- Sarita Turner, Vice President for U.S. Programs, Institute for Sustainable Communities (CA)

3:45 - 4:00 p.m. EDT: Conference Wrap-up and Evaluation (Session Room A)

- Joe McKinney, Executive Director, NADO



Thank you

RPO America Subscribers

Special thanks to the 2020 RPO America Subscribers for providing voluntary contributions to NADO and RPO America. This funding supports rural and regional transportation research and training efforts, outreach to decision makers and partners, and tracking of federal policies and key trends.

2020

Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards

An awards program of NADO's RPO America and the NADO Research Foundation.

Hear from [award winners](#) during a live Q&A on July 29.

Visit RuralTransportation.org to watch Excellence Award videos and link to project websites.

FLORIDA

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and Hillsborough MPO, *Resilient Tampa Bay*

Hillsborough MPO led a three-county effort to review the impact of extreme weather on regional transportation. This project assessed the potential climate vulnerability and risks on transportation networks due to storm surge, flooding, and sea level rise and provided recommendations for inclusion of resiliency strategies in the decision-making process of transportation planning.

[Watch the Resilient Tampa Bay video.](#) (6 minutes)

GEORGIA

Coastal Regional Commission, *Transportation Responding to Regional Needs*

The Coastal Regional Commission (CRC) operates a 10-county regional transportation program in partnership with the Georgia Department of Transportation, the Georgia Department of Human Resources, and the Department of Aging Services. A flex-route pilot program was initiated to provide transportation services for seniors to have access for medical trips while these individuals were placed on a waiting list to be enrolled in the existing transportation program. In addition, the project included a new "Quality of Life" parameter. This initiative went beyond access to medical services and included all aspects that could enhance the overall quality of life for individuals. Finally, the transit program made the system's vehicles available during Hurricane Dorian to evacuate 287 qualifying residents from harm's way in September 2019.

[Learn more](#) about Coastal Regional Commission's transportation services.

River Valley Regional Commission, *Reynolds Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*

The City of Reynolds' Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan represents the efforts of local agencies, statewide advocacy groups, citizens of Reynolds and Taylor County, and the River Valley Regional Commission Bicycle and Planning Staff. The plan strives to improve the experience of bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the city, while also addressing issues such as education and awareness, encouragement programs, and facilities. The City of Reynolds Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was completed in August 2019. In July 2019, the Reynolds City Council passed a Complete Streets Policy. The Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) that was formed throughout the planning process continues to meet and has created a formal organization, Reynolds Ramblers, that helps advocate for bicycling and walking as well as plan events in the community.

River Valley Regional Commission, *Connecting Americus*

Residents and officials in Americus, Georgia, had been having discussions for nearly 10 years on how to implement bicycle and pedestrian changes and have created the Americus Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Americus/Sumter Comprehensive Plan, and the Sumter County Long Range Transportation Plan. A community charrette was conducted in late 2019, providing momentum and bringing together community members, city and county officials, and cycling advocates to discuss the future of cycling infrastructure in Americus and Sumter County. As a result, a cycling network was identified. The effort is ongoing, and hopefully construction will begin shortly on a network connecting neighborhoods, schools, churches, recreation centers, grocery stores, and other highly utilized places throughout the community.

[Read more](#) about River Valley Regional Commission's bicycle and pedestrian initiatives.

River Valley Regional Commission, *DHS Transit Emergency Services Gap*

When the Department of Human Service (DHS) transit subcontractor exited from the busiest portion of the region, the River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) worked with two entities to quickly fill the transit service gap. This preserved senior residents' much needed access to senior centers, where they receive meals and a range of important services. In addition, employment-supporting transit and access to dialysis were also sustained. Despite challenges, the two contracted agencies worked diligently to fulfill the region's transportation needs for many months. Through River Valley Regional Commission's contractor and coordinator role, senior center services were preserved along with their funding and transit funding. Seniors retained access to these programs, meals, and dialysis. Job access and the associated transit funds were also protected.

[Read more](#) about River Valley Regional Commission's transit programs.

KENTUCKY

Barren River Area Development District, *Glasgow Transit Rider Experience Improvements*

In 2019, the Barren River Area Development District (BRADD)'s Regional Transportation program assisted the City of Glasgow, Kentucky, in transit modernization activities. With technical assistance

from the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (National RTAP), BRADD staff developed and launched full General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) support for Glasgow's transit system. Thanks to BRADD's efforts, riders can now use apps like Google Maps to get transit directions and learn more about their city's transit system. BRADD staff went even further by creating a brand-new transit system map for Glasgow.

[Watch the BRADD Excellence Award video.](#) (8 minutes)

MISSOURI

Boonslick Regional Planning Commission and Missouri Department of Transportation *Buckle Up Phone Down Statewide Challenge*

Missouri Department of Transportation's Highway Safety and Traffic Division was tasked to decrease the number of deaths on the state's roadways. The Buckle Up Phone Down (BUPD) Challenge raises awareness about seat belt use and the dangers of distracted driving. What makes BUPD innovative is the challenge aspect. Drivers and businesses can take the BUPD challenge by going to www.modot.org/BuckleUpPhoneDown and pledging to always buckle up and put the phone down while driving. BUPD is a partnership between the Missouri Department of Transportation and the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety. Boonslick Regional Planning Commission and its member jurisdictions provide support to the state effort through their participation in the coalition.

[Watch the Missouri DOT Buckle Up Phone Down video.](#) (4 minutes)

[Watch or listen to the interview](#) with Boonslick Regional Planning Commission Executive Director Chad Eggen and Planner Krishna Kunapareddy. (15 minutes)

2019 – 2021

NATIONAL RPO COUNCIL OF PEERS

The National RPO Council of Peers serves as the leadership of RPO America. The RPO Council provides advice, input, and ideas to the NADO Board of Directors and staff. Council members are appointed by the NADO president, with the advice and consent of the NADO board.

Jesse Turner, Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments

Sasha Grist, Western Arkansas Planning and Development District

Dan Landon, Nevada County Transportation Commission (CA)

Marybeth Soderstrom, Central Florida RPC

Dave Doran, Southeast Idaho COG

Gena McCullough, Bi-State Regional Commission (IL/IA) *RPO America Secretary*

Kelly Murray, Illinois Association of Regional Councils

Nick Creevy, River Hills Economic Development District and Regional Planning Commission (IN)

Craig Markley, Iowa DOT

Chris Whitaker, Region XII COG (IA)

Randall Embry, Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency (KY)

Steve Schnell, Northeast Michigan COG

Shawn Schloesser, Region Nine Development Commission (MN)

Krishna Kunapareddy, Boonslick Regional Planning Commission (MO)

Jason Ray, Southwest Missouri COG

Rose Bauguess, Southwestern Commission (NC)

Robert Hiatt, Upper Coastal Plain COG (NC) *RPO America Vice Chair*

Tom Bliss, Southeast Nebraska Development District

J. B. Mack, Southwest Region Planning Commission (NH)

Cerisse Grijalva, Southwest New Mexico COG

Kevin Buettner, Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association

Vicki Eggers, Northern Oklahoma Development Authority

Carol Bingham, South Western Oklahoma Development Authority

Susan Christensen, Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation

Amy Kessler, North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission

Carey Mullins, Pennsylvania DOT

Rick Green, Upper Savannah Council of Governments (SC) *RPO America Chair*

Eric Senger, Northeast COG (SD)

Chad Reese, Southeast Tennessee Development District

Shelton Merrell, Southwest Tennessee Development District

Chris Brown, Ark-Tex COG (TX)

Michael Parks, Brazos Valley COG (TX)

James Reed, Central Texas Council of Governments

Brian Carver, Bear River Association of Governments (UT)

Robert Allen, Mountainland Association of Governments (UT)

Bryan Hill, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (VA)

Chet Parsons, Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (VA)

Elijah Sharp, New River Valley Regional Commission (VA)

Sarah Wraight, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (VT)

Robert Stevens, Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (WA)

Tracy Brown, Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council (WV)

Sheldon Johnson, Northwest Regional Planning Commission (WI)

Upcoming Events



October 2020
NADO Annual Training Conference
Virtual Conference



March 14 – 17, 2021
NADO-DDAA Washington Conference
Arlington, Virginia



July 20 – 22, 2021
National Regional Transportation
Conference | Kansas City, Missouri