

# National Association of Regional Councils



## 2006 NARC Policy Brief

*NARC policies are developed yearly from consultations with and information provided by the association's working groups, committees and its membership. The policies provide a context for NARC's national agenda on significant national and legislative issues. Each policy brief includes a rationale for NARC's position on topics relevant and important to America's regional councils and metropolitan planning organizations, metro and rural, large and small.*

## National Transportation Policy

### **Issue:** National Transportation Policy

**Background:** A serious debate is needed on the future of the country's transportation system. A written transportation policy should be drafted—one that guides the establishment of programs and spending bills several decades into the future. Such a visioning has not taken place since the 1950s, with the establishment of the Interstate Highway System.

The transportation network cannot achieve true integration without setting system-wide goals. Currently, the nation's transportation policy is focused on administering each individual mode for each fiscal year. Further, within each mode, programs "stove-pipe" funds into rigidly-defined programs. Because of this stove-piping and inflexibility, we are under-funding certain areas and the system as a whole.

Funding that is applied toward systemic goals will be more efficient than money that is only eligible for use by a single mode. Transportation funding should be allocated based upon stated goals of the National Transportation Policy, instead of supporting modal administrations. By introducing flexibility into funding, issues that transcend modes—like goods movement and safety—can receive the focus they deserve. If modes are successfully integrated, people and goods will move across the system with increasing ease and at lower costs to the user.

### **Policy Recommendations:**

- NARC will advocate for a consolidated national transportation policy that supports the movement of people and goods across all modes.
- NARC will educate policy-makers on the importance of regional decision-making on transportation infrastructure investments.

*For additional information, contact Fred Abousleman, Director of Transportation, National Association of Regional Councils, 1666 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20009; 202/986-1032, ext. 216; fax: 202/986-1038; e-mail: fred@narc.org.*