WASHINGTON, D.C. – Twenty county elected officials and staff participated in a NACo-NADO White House Forum, “Building Blocks for Economic Development and Job Growth,” on Sept. 19. NACo partnered with the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for this event, which focused on the role of the public sector – especially counties and regional development organization – in making strategic investments to support private sector job creation and economic opportunity. [Agenda below]

The goal of the forum was to bring together senior White House and federal agency officials with regional development organization leaders and county officials to highlight noteworthy practices across the country. NACo’s participants highlighted the federal programs that are critical to their local efforts such as CDBG, transportation funding, USDA Rural Development programs, workforce training programs and Economic Development Administration programs. County officials also highlighted the importance of administrative actions that can be taken to simplify application procedures, ease burdensome reporting requirements, streamline environmental review for projects and ease an array of regulations.

NACo and NADO participants split into tables with federal officials to provide in depth feedback on specific topics such as federal investment in transportation infrastructure, successful local initiatives to target economic development opportunities, public-private partnerships to support infrastructure-led economic development, and connecting local communities and regions to global markets. One major revelation for federal officials during these listening sessions was the wide array of key sectors that local governments help bring together in order to expand economic opportunity. Forum participants emphasized their roles as leaders within regional development organizations, universities, community colleges, chambers of commerce, transportation planning boards, rail initiatives, broadband consortiums, export initiatives and a host of other efforts designed to bolster our nation’s economy.

Administration officials who participated included Greg Nelson, Chief of Staff, White House National Economic Council; David Agnew, deputy assistant to the president and White House director of Intergovernmental Affairs; Polly Trottenberg, assistant secretary for transportation policy, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT); Beth Osborne, deputy assistant secretary for transportation policy (DOT); Christopher Bertram, assistant secretary for transportation policy (DOT); Angela Beldon Martinez, senior advisor and director of external affairs, U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration; Valerie Piper, deputy assistant secretary for economic development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; Judy Canales, acting deputy under secretary for rural development, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Steve Olson, director of SelectUSA and senior advisor to the secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce; and Joanna Turner and Bryna Helfer, (DOT).
The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation’s 3,068 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public’s understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit www.naco.org.
AGENDA

2:30 p.m. Welcome and Introductions

- David Agnew, Deputy Assistant to the President and White House Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
- Polly Trottenberg, Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy, U.S. Department of Transportation

2:45 p.m. Economic Overview

- White House National Economic Council

3:00 p.m. Investing in the Future: Federal Investment in Infrastructure

- Moderator: Beth Osborne, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy, U.S. Department of Transportation
- Christopher Bertram, Assistant Secretary for Budget and Programs and Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Transportation
- Angela Belden Martinez, Senior Advisor and Director of External Affairs U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration
- Valerie Piper, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Judy Canales, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Steve Olson, Director of SelectUSA and Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce
3:30 p.m.  Local Panel: Local Initiatives Targeting Economic Development

- **Moderator: Joanna Turner,** Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Department of Transportation
- **Randy Kelley,** Executive Director, Three Rivers Planning and Development District (MS)
- **Kelly Deutmeyer,** Executive Director, East Central Intergovernmental Association (IA)
- **Joe Bryan,** Commissioner, Wake County (NC)
- **Linda Langston,** Supervisor, Linn County (IA)
- **Peter McLaughlin,** Commissioner, Hennepin County (MN)

4:00 p.m.  Small Group Discussion Sessions

- Lessons learned from public-private partnerships to support infrastructure-led economic development
- Building resilient regions and the role of public infrastructure and public investments
- Connecting local communities and regions with global markets
- The built environment and the impact on retaining and attracting workforce talent

5:00 p.m.  Share: Large Group Reflections

- **Listening Panel:** White House, U.S. Department of Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

5:15 p.m.  Moving Forward

- **David Agnew,** Deputy Assistant to the President and White House Director of Intergovernmental Affairs

5:30 p.m.  Adjourn