

# Annual Report



## Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission Annual Report 2014

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# Welcome

I am pleased to present the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission Annual Report.

Our organization continues to provide leadership and vision for issues of regional significance, and strives to serve as a model for the cooperative spirit that drives our region's advancement.

Increasingly, quality of life, infrastructure, and development issues are transcending individual political boundaries. As such, it is more important now than ever that local governments work together regionally to address the problems and meet the challenges confronting our rapidly growing region. Regional cooperation is key, and the involvement and participation of all is imperative.

The year ahead will be no different than years' past. Our staff will face the challenges posed by the demand for services, and our Commission will remain committed to the partnership that defines us as an organization. With continued hard work and diligence, and with the support of our members, we will be better prepared for the future.

Thank you for your participation in, and support of, Commission efforts and initiatives.

Jeff Hawkins  
Executive Director

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### NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission complies with all civil rights provisions of federal statues and related authorities that prohibit discrimination in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Therefore, the NWARPC does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, age, national origin, religion or disability, in the admission, access to and treatment in NWARPC's programs and activities, as well as the NWARPC's hiring or employment practices. Complaints of alleged discrimination and inquiries regarding the NWARPC's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to Celia Scott-Silkwood, AICP, Regional Planner – EEO/DBE (ADA/504/Title VI Coordinator), 1311 Clayton, Springdale, AR 72762, (479) 751-7125, (Voice/TTY 7-1-1 or 1-800-285-1131) or the following e-mail address: cscott-silkwood@nwarpc.org. This notice is available from the ADA/504/Title VI Coordinator in large print, on audiotape and in Braille.If information is needed in another language, contact Celia Scott-Silkwood. Si necesita informacion en otro idioma, comuniquese Celia Scott-Silkwood, cscott-silkwood@nwarpc.org.

# Our Organization



Downtown Rogers



Downtown Fayetteville

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the NWARPC provides the framework for joint cooperation and decision-making in the planning and prioritization of transportation system improvements. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), consisting principally of professionals associated with various aspects of transportation, is charged with developing the technical aspects of plans and reports, and makes recommendations to the NWARPC/Policy Committee. All planning is carried out through the 3C approach – Cooperative, Continuing, and Comprehensive – with planning partners AHTD, MoDOT, and other public transportation providers.

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission (NWARPC) was formed in 1966 through a cooperative agreement between Benton County, Washington County, and the cities of Bentonville, Fayetteville, Rogers, Siloam Springs, and Springdale. The enabling legislation, Arkansas Act 26 of 1955, states the purpose of such commissions, "...to make those studies and plans for the metropolitan area or region that will: (1) guide the unified development of the area; (2) eliminate planning duplication; (3) promote economy and efficiency in the coordinated development of the area; and (4) promote the general welfare and prosperity of its people."

In 1983, NWARPC was designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) under U.S. DOT regulations for transportation planning purposes. Transportation Management Area (TMA) status was recognized after 2010 Census data indicated the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO Urbanized Area (UZA) had grown from 172,585 in 2000 to 295,083 in 2010. With the new UZA boundary extending into Missouri, the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) for transportation planning now extends into McDonald County, Missouri. Today, NWARPC's membership includes 35 units of government in Benton, Washington, and Madison Counties, Arkansas; McDonald County and

Pineville, Missouri; Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD), Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), transit agencies, and Beaver Water District.

An up-to-date, multi-modal area-wide Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) with a 20-year horizon, and a continuing planning process is a U.S. DOT requirement for urbanized areas to qualify for federal funds.

NWARPC is the forum through which those requirements are met, and the products of the planning process serve as the basis for setting transportation priorities and making transportation investment decisions in the region.



Dickson Street in Fayetteville

## 2014 TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) MEETINGS

- January 16
- February 20
- March 20
- April 17
- May 22
- July 16
- August 21
- September 18
- October 16
- November 20

## 2014 NWARPC/POLICY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- February 26
- April 23
- May 28
- August 27
- September 24
- December 3



## CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS ATTENDED BY STAFF IN 2014

- January 9 – Staff attended the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Kickoff meeting.
- January 29 – Staff attended a FTA webinar presenting information on the Transit Award and Management System (TrAMS), FTA's next generation of TEAM.
- February 26 – Staff attended a public officials meeting held by AHTD to discuss the Hwy 16E planning study.
- March 11 – Staff attended the Blue Pathways Workshop in Fayetteville.
- March 20– Staff attended a public officials meeting held by AHTD to discuss interchange improvements at Hwy 62/I-49 and Hwy 16W/I-49 in Fayetteville.
- April 3 – Staff hosted the Toole Group and AHTD officials on a tour of the region and attended the statewide bicycle and pedestrian plan public input meeting that evening.
- June 12 – Staff attended a Sustainable Communities Summit held in Rogers and hosted by the Illinois River Watershed Partnership, featuring a speaker from EPA Region 6.
- June 24 – Staff hosted an open-house public input meeting as an opportunity for citizens to discuss the transportation planning process with Federal officials.
- June 24-26 – Staff and representatives from AHTD met with FTA and FHWA officials for the MPO's first Federal Certification Review as a TMA.
- July 8 – Staff attended a meeting in Little Rock of the state MPOs hosted by AHTD.
- July 9 -10 – Staff organized and attended the Pictometry Inc. training session for local jurisdictions held at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville
- July 10 – Staff attended the Arkansas Travel Demand Model Users Group Workshop held by AHTD in Little Rock.
- September 11 and 12 – Staff attended the Arkansas Chapter American Planning Association Annual Conference in Little Rock.
- October 23 – Staff attended the AHTD public hearing concerning the Bella Vista Bypass at the Bethel Baptist Church in Bentonville.

# Services and Support

## Northwest Arkansas Regional Mobility Authority

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Mobility Authority was established September 2008.

Act 389 of 2007, as amended, allows a region to establish a Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) to help address transportation needs throughout the region. The 2035 Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Plan, adopted on April 7, 2011 is the region's metropolitan transportation plan, and all projects the Northwest Arkansas RMA chooses to support must be listed in the 2035 Plan. NWARPC is functioning as the staff for the Northwest Arkansas RMA and the meetings of the Northwest Arkansas RMA Board of Directors are held at the NWARPC office. All meetings are open to the public and provide a time for public comment.

The Northwest Arkansas RMA Board of Directors met on July 1, 2014. Items presented and discussed included a presentation by Lorie Tudor, Assistant Chief Engineer-Planning, AHTD, entitled Status of Transportation Projects in Northwest Arkansas.

Ms. Tudor reminded the group that AHTD now has a website devoted to live traffic conditions, construction zones, alternate routes, weather radar, and live traffic cameras (coming soon). The address is <http://www.IDRIVEARKANSAS.com>.



### 2014 Northwest Arkansas RMA Board of Directors:

- Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse, Springdale
- Vice Chair Judge Bob Clinard, Benton County
- Sec/Treasurer Mayor Sonny Hudson, Prairie Grove
- Judge Marilyn Edwards, Washington County
- Mayor Frank Anderson, Bella Vista
- Mayor Bob McCaslin, Bentonville
- Mayor Bill Edwards, Centerton
- Mayor Ernie Penn, Farmington
- Mayor Lioneld Jordan, Fayetteville
- Mayor Kevin Johnston, Gentry
- Mayor Rob Hulse, Lincoln
- Mayor Eldon Long, Lowell
- Mayor Jackie Crabtree, Pea Ridge
- Mayor Greg Hines, Rogers
- Mayor John Turner, Siloam Springs

## Stormwater Management

Over the past decade, the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission has partnered with the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service (UACES) to assist communities, counties and the University of Arkansas in Washington and Benton Counties to meet EPA's Phase II stormwater regulations.

In urbanized areas, stormwater picks up pollutants and flows, untreated, through Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), into local creeks, streams and lakes. To prevent harmful pollutants from being washed or dumped into a storm drain system, the USEPA requires that jurisdictions obtain permits to properly manage and discharge stormwater.

On August 1, 2014 the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality issued the third consecutive five-year MS4 Stormwater General Permit which mandates that each of 21 regulated jurisdictions in Northwest Arkansas develop and implement their own stormwater management program to reduce the contamination of stormwater runoff and prohibit illicit discharges.

## Northwest Arkansas MS4/Stormwater Compliance Group

A key role of the NWARPC is coordinating regular meetings of the MS4/Stormwater Compliance Group. Composed of local MS4 representatives, NWARPC staff and the University of Arkansas County Extension Service agents (UACES), the group meets monthly to discuss permit compliance challenges, local stormwater education program needs and accomplishments, and regional coordination of stormwater protection efforts.

In 2014, meetings also featured guest speakers including Robyn Reed and Rob Moore (Boston Mountain Solid Waste District) who explained "BMSWD's Community E-Waste Recycling Events", Bob Morgan (Beaver Water District) explained "Toxic Algae Blooms in Drinking Water Supplies", and Ray Avery (Beaver Water District) who presented a program on the "2014 Charleston, WV Chemical Spill".

## Regional Stormwater Education Program

The NWARPC and the individual MS4 jurisdictions sign a new Memorandum of Understanding each year in order to receive programming from the UACES for the Northwest Arkansas Regional Stormwater Education Program.

A Stormwater Education Steering Committee meets annually to guide and direct the UACES's regional urban stormwater education and involvement programs. UACES programming is increasing public awareness and understanding of stormwater runoff, through the development and distribution of print and electronic educational materials, displays, mass media promotion, youth and adult education programs, and public engagement events including creek and lake clean-ups. The focus topic for 2014 was proper management of hazardous home and garden products including safe handling and disposal options. Additional activities included:

- The UpStream Art project - <http://nwaupstreamart.com/>
- "Regional and Adapted Plants for Stormwater Design" (5th Blue Pathways workshop)
- NWA Construction Stormwater Workshop & Site Tours

UACES staff provides Quarterly Reports and Annual Reports for the MS4s and conducts annual municipal employee trainings.



Participants in the 2014 Blue Pathways Workshop develop native plant landscape designs for stormwater management.

# Services and Support



UpStream Art

The MS4/Stormwater Compliance Group continues to be a model for other MS4s in Arkansas. NWARPC continues the work of assisting the NWA MS4s, as well as others, in the development of their stormwater management programs and meeting the EPA Phase II requirements.

### Northwest Arkansas MS4s:

- Bella Vista
- Benton County
- Bentonville
- Bethel Heights
- Cave Springs
- Centerton
- Elkins
- Elm Springs
- Farmington
- Fayetteville
- Greenland
- Johnson
- Little Flock
- Lowell
- Pea Ridge
- Prairie Grove
- Rogers
- Springdale
- Tontitown
- University of Arkansas
- Washington County



## Northwest Arkansas Heritage Trail Plan

The Heritage Trail Plan involves a regional network of existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities within Northwest Arkansas primarily utilizing the roadways associated with the historic Butterfield Overland Mail route, the Trail of Tears, and Civil War routes in Benton and Washington Counties.

The Heritage Trail Plan will connect Northwest Arkansas citizens and visitors to the area's rich heritage, recreational and cultural assets, a healthier lifestyle, and to each other. The entire network can be seen, at a minimum, as a bicycle route with improvements along the route providing safety for

bicyclists. Within the more populated areas, the improvements will also accommodate safe pedestrian travel.

The Heritage Trail also promotes interpretation of these important episodes of the region's history. These facilities are marked by unique signage and promoted with an informational brochure. As such, the Heritage Trail system can double as an auto tour guiding citizens and visitors to the region's attractions and points of interest. A National Park Service study is underway to consider the feasibility of designating the Butterfield Overland Mail route as a National Historic Trail.

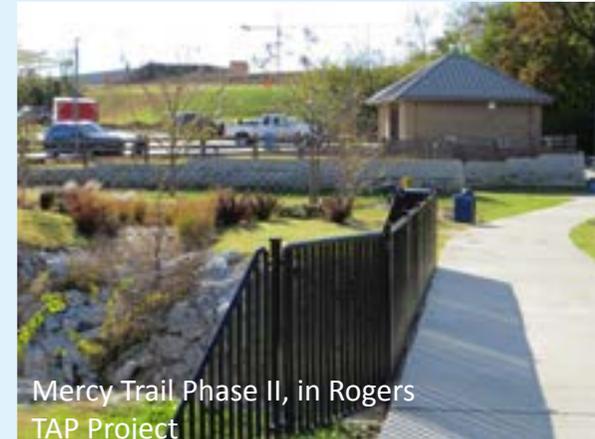


Heritage Trail Sign Dedication in Gentry - Mayor Kevin Johnston and Rick Parker to the right

## Surface Transportation Program - Attributable (STP-A) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2013 was the first year NWARPC became eligible for Surface Transportation Program – Attributable (STP-A) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds for projects selected by the NWARPC.

By the end of 2014, NWARPC completed the selection of projects for FFY 2015 and obligated over 14 million dollars in federal funds within this region for FFY 2013 and 2014.



Mercy Trail Phase II, in Rogers TAP Project

TAP Projects FFY 2013:		Project Name	Federal Funds Awarded	Status
Fayetteville		Town Branch Trail	\$358,502	Complete
Rogers		Mercy Phase II Trailhead	\$113,200	Complete
STP-A Projects FFY 2013:		Project Name	Federal Funds Awarded	Status
Fayetteville		Hwy 112 (Razorback Rd) - Hwy 180 (6th St) to Leroy Pond	\$1,080,000	Under Construction
Springdale		I-540/Don Tyson Parkway Interchange	\$3,382,275	Complete
Benton County		Fisher Ford Bridge	\$861,916	Complete
NWARPC		Cave Springs Area Karst Resource Conservation Study	\$500,000	On-going
Fayetteville		Ruppel Rd. - Wedington Drive to Starry Night	\$320,000	Under Design
Rogers		28th Place - Phase 1 Pleasant Grove to Greens/Blossom Way	\$250,000	Under Design
Rogers		28th Place - Phase 2 Whitaker Park to Bellview Road	\$400,000	Under Design
TAP Projects FFY 2014:		Project Name	Federal Funds Awarded	Status
Springdale		Lake Springdale Trailhead	\$200,000	Under Construction
Bentonville		Walton Blvd Trail	\$225,803	Under Construction
STP-A Projects FFY 2014:		Project Name	Federal Funds Awarded	Status
Benton County		Illinois River Fisher Ford Bridge Right-of-Way	\$10,520	Complete
Fayetteville		Maple Street Widening Traffic Signal at Maple and Razorback	\$2,400,000	Programmed
Fayetteville		Hwy 43/Old Wire Traffic Signal and Interchange Improvements	\$850,000	Programmed
Lowell		South Dixieland Road Extension	\$360,000	Under Design
Springdale		Elm Springs Road Interchange Improvements	\$1,480,000	Programmed
Springdale/Johnson		56th Street Extension (Don Tyson Blvd to Johnson Mill Blvd)	\$400,000	Programmed
Bentonville		US 71B and 12th Street/Tiger Blvd Intersection Improvements	\$112,000	Under Design
AHTD Project - Springdale/Bethel Heights		Hwy 265 - Bethel Heights/Springdale New Alignment	\$883,152	Programmed
TAP Projects FFY 2015		Project Name	Federal Funds Awarded	Status
Fayetteville		Gordon Long Park Trailhead Project	\$260,000	Programmed
Rogers		Razorback Greenway Trail New Hope Bridge	\$225,000	Programmed
STP-A Projects FFY 2015		Project Name	Federal Funds Awarded	Status
Bentonville		8th Street/I-49	\$3,428,000	Utilities and ROW
Fayetteville		Ruppel Road	\$320,000	Under Design
Fayetteville		Sain Street	\$320,000	Programmed
Farmington		Hwy 170	\$520,000	Programmed
Rogers		AR94/A&M /Easy Street Railroad Gates with Ped. Imps.	\$700,000	Programmed
Rogers		Highway 62 Intersection Safety Study	\$40,000	Programmed
Bella Vista		Mercy Way	\$256,000	Programmed
Rogers		Dixieland Road and A&M Railroad Gates with Ped. Imps.	\$420,000	Programmed
NWA Transit		Razorback Transit and ORT New Buses	\$696,000	Programmed



## Planning, Mapping and GIS Analysis

In 2014 NWARPC continued to provide assistance and guidance to its members in planning and development, in addition to problem solving on a wide range of other local/regional governmental issues. Moreover, NWARPC assisted other agencies, organizations, individuals, news outlets, school districts, banks, developers, churches, chambers of commerce, boards and commissions, and non-profits. Services provided to the communities and members:

- Provided general municipal administrative assistance.
- Assisted in establishing and implementing the planning process.
- Researched grant opportunities and prepared grant applications .
- Continued Mapping and GIS assistance to AHTD, GIS User Groups, and NWARPC members.
- Created Mapping and GIS products for NWARPC members.
- Assisted in Demographic, Transportation and Environmental research and studies.
- Assisted in planning and land-use development and regulation initiatives for the region.
- Updated planning documents, subdivision regulations, and zoning ordinances and maps.
- Updated master street plans, territorial jurisdictions, and comprehensive land-use plans.

- Assisted in municipal annexation analysis, creation, and descriptions.
- Updated the yearly U.S. Census Bureau boundary and annexation surveys (BAS).
- Implemented the U.S. Census Bureau's Geographically Updated Population Certification Program (GUPCP) for various members.
- Redistricted various municipal ward boundaries.
- Trained University of Arkansas Geoscience/Geomatics/Urban Planning Interns.
- Maintained the GIS system and Data for NWARPC members.

The 2014 Aerial Imagery Project for Benton and Washington counties was very successful. NWARPC hosted meetings to aid and facilitate the coordination in the annual acquisition of aerial imagery in Washington and Benton counties. In addition, NWARPC organized training for the counties and cities, as well as facilitated purchasing of online products to simplify and speed up data viewing and analysis for both imagery and vector data. NWARPC continues to utilize and upgrade its GIS and cartographic services to better serve its members and communities. NWARPC utilizes GIS for many projects, such as the Northwest Arkansas Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, Congestion Management Process and Functional Classification, as well as redistricting of political and municipal boundaries.

## Northwest Arkansas Travel Demand Model

In July 2014 NWARPC entered into a contract with Parsons Brinkerhoff consultants to improve and update the current travel demand model, and to develop a transit component to aid in transit modeling. The project is funded by the Federal Transit Administration and matched with local funds.

The improved model will update the 2010 base year with Census information and will forecast travel for the years 2020, 2030 and 2040. In addition, the transit component will forecast bus transit and will also allow for future modes of transportation, such as rail forecasting. The transportation forecasting area will also include the portion in Missouri that is now part of the Northwest Arkansas metropolitan planning area. The following tasks will be completed by October 2015:

- Research and understand the existing travel demand model structure and functionality (task completed in 2014).
- Upgrade the model from the 2005 base year to 2010 base year.
- Develop the mode choice model.
- Develop the following forecast years: 2020, 2030 and 2040.
- Incorporate a special generator that is easier to configure and update (task completed in 2014).
- Reconfigure the GISDK code to current industry standards.
- Provide on-site and remote staff training.
- Identify ways of utilizing the travel time results from the model to aid the local transit agencies in their route planning, evaluation and needs assessment.
- Create a blue-print for future model development and improvements.

### Travel Demand Modeling Applications include:

- Technical analysis
- Policy analysis
- Corridor planning
- Bypass studies
- Work zone detour impact analysis
- Lane definitions
- Interchange configurations
- Major development impacts
- Air quality analysis
- Traffic operations analysis
- "What if" scenarios design



## Transit Support and Coordination

Razorback Transit and Ozark Regional Transit, Inc., the two providers of publicly owned transportation service in the urbanized area, are the recipients for Section 5307 and Section 5339 funding. NWARPC is the FTA designated recipient for both transit agencies' funding.

### Ozark Regional Transit, Inc.

Ozark Regional Transit, Inc. (ORT) has added four new routes within Northwest Arkansas in 2014. One each in Rogers, Springdale and Fayetteville. The fourth route is a rural commuter route that connects the cities of West Fork, Greenland, Farmington, Prairie Grove and Lincoln to the City of Fayetteville. These new routes in 2014 would not have been added if it had not been for the support of the respective cities and county.

ORT and Razorback Transit worked together in 2014 to obtain FHWA funding through the STP-A program. With its share, ORT will be purchasing four new medium duty transit buses that are powered by compressed natural gas. This is the first time ORT has purchased an alternative fuel vehicle.

ORT was able to obtain additional financial support from the State of Arkansas through the Section 5311 program. With these additional capital funds, ORT has upgraded its vehicle wash bay and is in the process of upgrading its maintenance facility. The completion of these projects is expected to be in the second quarter of 2015.

Between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2014, ORT provided 274,441 fixed route trips and 28,380 paratransit trips for a record high total of 302,821 passenger trips. ORT operates 13 fixed routes with 14 buses and 10 paratransit routes in Northwest Arkansas.



### Razorback Transit

In its latest fiscal year (July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014), Razorback Transit provided 1,978,500 passenger trips on fixed route service. In addition to the fixed route numbers Razorback Transit provided 9,182 paratransit trips to the University of Arkansas and the City of Fayetteville.

Razorback Transit has a fleet of 25 buses and 6 paratransit vans. Razorback Transit currently operates 19 buses and 4 paratransit vans in peak service on 10 routes. Full transit service is provided from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday during the fall and spring University of Arkansas semesters.

Reduced service is provided with 5 buses on 5 routes from 6:00 PM to 10:30 PM Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters. Saturday service is provided from 7:00 AM to 10:30 PM with 5 buses on 5 routes during the fall and spring semesters, as well. Summer service is provided from mid-May to mid-August with 7 buses on 5 routes Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

Approximately 23% of the total fixed route ridership was generated by non-students in FY 2014.



## 2040 Northwest Arkansas Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update

In 2014 NWARPC began the process of updating the long-range transportation plan to the 2040 Northwest Arkansas Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). On September 18, 2014 NWARPC hosted a "kick-off" public forum to officially inform the TAC, RPC/Policy Committee, state and local agencies and the general public of the intent to begin a year-long update process. This process will continue throughout 2015 and will culminate with the adoption of the 2040 Northwest Arkansas MTP by the NWARPC/Policy Committee.

### The MTP process involves the following steps:

- Analyzing the current transportation conditions and initiatives.
- Identifying future needs and alternatives.
- Gathering and considering recommendations from the public.
- Compiling information, data, maps, graphics, etc.
- Developing the draft plan.
- Presenting the draft plan for public comment, and to the TAC.
- Presenting the final plan to the RPC/Policy Committee for adoption.



### Community Outreach Tools:

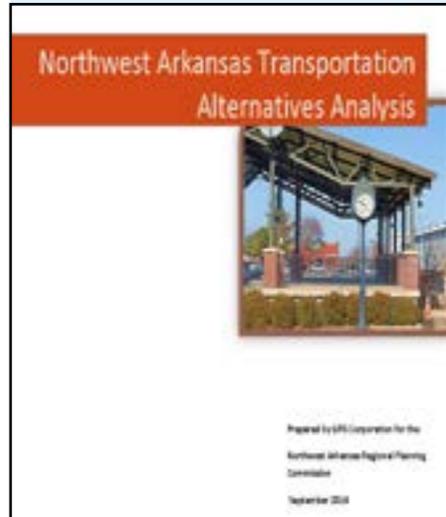
- Public input meetings
- Surveys (online and on-paper)
- Online input map
- Website links and other social media input
- News media
- One-on-one interviews

### Links for information and input:

<http://nwarpc.org/transportation/2040-mtp/>  
<http://nwarpc.org/contact-us/>  
<http://www.facebook.com/rpcnwa>  
<http://wikimapping.com/wikimap/Metropolitan-Transportation-Plan-2040-Update.html>



# Projects



## 2014 PROJECTS

Northwest Arkansas Transportation Alternatives Analysis

Cave Springs Area Karst Resource Conservation Study

The Congestion Management Process

Northwest Arkansas Razorback Regional Greenway

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Northwest Arkansas Open Space Master Plan

## Northwest Arkansas Transportation Alternatives Analysis

In 2014 NWARPC continued and finalized the work on the Transportation Alternatives Analysis study funded by a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The purpose of the project was to carry out a transportation alternatives analysis concentrating on three major alternatives: existing bus rapid transit, existing commuter rail and proposed light rail alternative.

The Transportation Alternatives Analysis is the first step in the Federal “New Starts” project development process. This analysis included the evaluation of costs, benefits, and impacts of a range of transportation alternatives designed to address mobility problems and other locally-identified objectives in a defined transportation corridor, and for determining which particular investment strategy should be advanced for more focused study and development.

The analysis is intended to help local and regional decision makers to identify and

select a “Locally Preferred Alternative” (LPA) that could be adopted into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

The Alternatives Analysis study team held three public input meetings, two stakeholder meetings and had media coverage and also social media participation throughout the duration of the project.

The URS Inc. consulting engineers developed models for determining projected ridership levels for each of the alternative modes. Besides ridership, the study also examined economic development potential at possible stations along the transit corridors.

More information can be found on the NWARPC website at <http://nwarpc.org/transportation/alternatives-analysis/>

The table below shows the estimated cost for each analyzed alternative:

Alternatives	Length (miles)	Cost per mile	Total cost
New Location – Light Rail	37.6	\$60,806,199	\$1,054,878,000
Existing Location – Commuter Rail	39.3	\$16,905,626	\$255,288,768
Existing Location – Bus Rapid Transit	39.9	\$2,450,125	\$38,000,000

## Ridership Findings:

The study consultant, using the Travel Demand Model, forecasted the following ridership levels for year 2035:

- New location Light Rail – 356 daily riders
- Commuter Rail – 1,368 daily riders
- Bus Rapid Transit – 378 daily riders

The final report points out that without a transit component in the NWARPC Travel Demand Model, the study was very limited and may have different results after transit modes are incorporated into the model. The Commuter Rail alternative showed the most potential in ridership as well as generating Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in downtown areas of Northwest Arkansas.

## Locally Preferred Option (LPA)

The report concludes that: “The selection of an LPA does not mean that this project is to be pursued above all other transit options, or other surface transportation options. It simply means that, of the projects proposed for this regional corridor, it is the one for which Federal funding assistance would be requested if NEPA and other funding requirements were met”.



## Study Findings:

- The region cannot presently demonstrate that any of the alternatives meets the FTA funding thresholds.
- A new location Light Rail and a new location for Bus Rapid Transit is not effective with respect to economic development goals and capital cost.
- The existing location for Bus Rapid Transit is not effective with respect to economic development goals.
- The Light Rail location on Arkansas & Missouri Railroad Right of Way is not feasible.
- The Commuter Rail on Arkansas & Missouri Railroad Right of Way has the best potential for staged development.

## Suggested Path Forward:

1. The Northwest Arkansas region should create and adopt an integrated land use and transportation plan that is based on promotion of mixed use development patterns.
2. Communities in NWA can become “transit ready” ahead of a system being built.
3. Keep the development focused in the Corridor.
4. Look for ways to add energy and developer interest in the communities and downtowns between Fayetteville and Bentonville.
5. In addition to the rail LPA along the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad, begin a stage development of high quality Bus Rapid Transit along US 71B.
6. The Northwest Arkansas region should focus on transit system building today.

## Cave Springs Area Karst Resource Conservation Study

Northwest Arkansas is an area of the state that has experienced unprecedented periods of growth over the last decade, most notably from 2003 to 2007. The location of the corporate headquarters of Wal-Mart, Tyson Foods, J.B. Hunt, and other companies in Northwest Arkansas has been the primary factor in this growth. The rapid population growth has strained the local infrastructure. As a result, many new transportation infrastructure projects have been proposed to keep pace with the residential and commercial development.

Some of the major proposed transportation projects include the Highway 412 Northern Bypass, Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport Connector Road, upgrade of Interstate 49 to six lanes between Fayetteville and Bentonville, an improved north-south travel corridor along Highway 112, an improved eastern north-south travel corridor along Highway 265, Bellview Road improvements, Highway 264 Improvements, the Razorback Regional Greenway Trail, and the Bella Vista Bypass.

The existing development, the proposed transportation projects, and future development may affect local karst resources that support threatened and endangered species, as well as having potentially detrimental effects to groundwater and wildlife resources in general. As a result, a de-

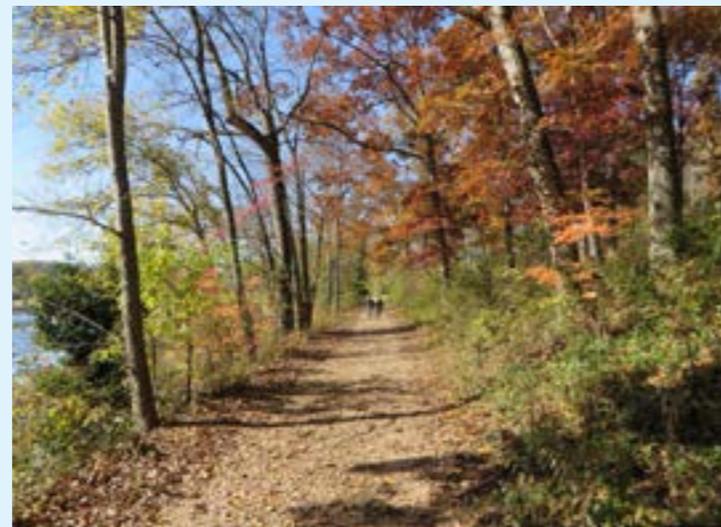
cision was made to conduct a study meant to investigate all the above mentioned conditions in relation to karst geomorphology in the area. The proposed scope of effort related to the Cave Springs Area Karst Resource Conservation study has three primary objectives.

The first objective is to seek out, consolidate and analyze existing water quality, species population data and development data in and around the study area, defined as the Cave Springs Recharge Area, to determine trends and needs for additional data.

The second objective is to work with the scientific community to determine appropriate actions necessary to ensure adequate protection of local karst recharge zones that support threatened and endangered species, and will build on previous efforts for karst conservation.

The third objective is to work with local, county and state officials/administrators and other relevant stakeholders to determine the best mechanism to ensure that conservation actions are used effectively in the appropriate areas. This objective may also need long term monitoring to determine the effectiveness of the actions in protecting the environmental quality and endangered species.

This first objective was substantially complete by the end of 2014. More information regarding the study including associated maps and project documents may be found at [www.cavespringskarststudy.com](http://www.cavespringskarststudy.com).



## The Congestion Management Process (CMP)

The CMP objectives are to develop procedures for evaluating the relative congestion of facilities, develop procedures to determine if congestion mitigation strategies should be implemented for a particular facility, and develop a procedure or procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of congestion mitigation strategies implemented.

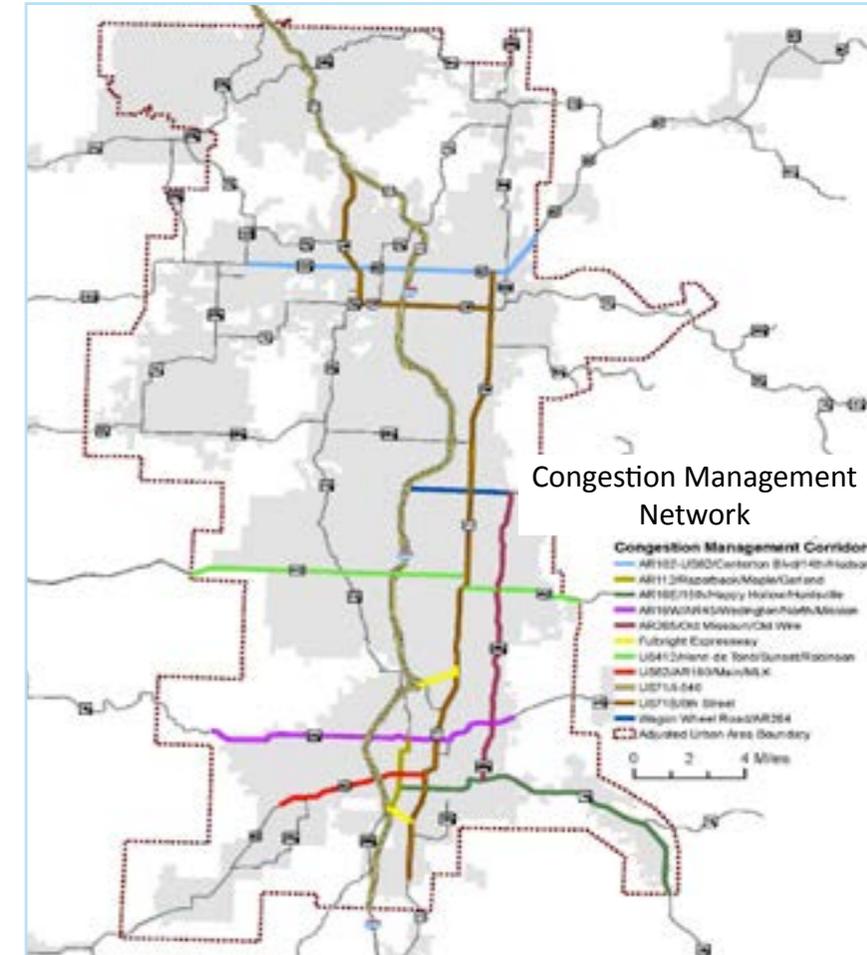
The CMP network is approximately 160 centerline miles made up of eleven facilities for data collection, analysis, and system performance and reliability. The proposed NWARPC CMP contains all of the identified roadways as shown on the October 2012 National Highway System Map plus several additional facilities. NWARPC utilized consultant services to acquire INRIX average travel time data to develop the NWARPC CMP methodology and associated documentation as part of the CMP.

The average travel speed is being used to compare the AM and PM peak period travel speeds to posted speed limit. The delay in speed, based on the data, will then be used to identify congested freeway and arterial segments within the region.

<http://nwarpc.org/transportation/cmp>



Traffic on North Street in Fayetteville



## Northwest Arkansas Razorback Regional Greenway

The Razorback Regional Greenway will connect six cities in the region: Bentonville, Rogers, Lowell, Springdale, Johnson and Fayetteville. The TIGER II funded trail project proceeded at a rapid pace in 2014 and was substantially complete by the end of the year. The Walton Family Foundation provided matching funds for the TIGER II Grant and contributed additional funds to complete the full length of the trail.

The Greenway will be a 37-mile, primarily off-road, shared use trail that will extend from the Lake Bella Vista Trail in northern Bentonville to the Town Branch Trail in southern Fayetteville.

The trail, including spurs, will link together dozens of popular community destinations including: six downtown areas, three major hospitals, 23 schools, the University of Arkansas, the NWA Community College, the corporate headquarters of

Wal-Mart, JB Hunt and Tyson Foods, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Shiloh Museum, shopping areas, historic sites, parks, playgrounds, arts and entertainment venues and residential communities.

Based on a geographical analysis utilizing 2010 Census Data, approximately 76,000 people live within one-half mile of the Greenway and approximately 80,000 people are employed within one-half mile of the Greenway.

A Grand Opening ceremony has been scheduled for the spring of 2015. More information about the Razorback Regional Greenway can be found at: [www.razorbackgreenway.com](http://www.razorbackgreenway.com)

In 2014 11.07 miles of the Greenway were built. The table below shows the built trail in miles for the past three years.

Year	Razorback Greenway (miles built)*	Trails and Cycle Tracks (non-Greenway) (miles built)	Trails and Cycle Tracks (non-Greenway) In Rogers	Trails and Cycle Tracks (non-Greenway) In Bentonville	Trails and Cycle Tracks (non-Greenway) In Springdale	Trails and Cycle Tracks (non-Greenway) In Fayetteville)
2012	0.73	1.5	1.5	1.84		2.55
2013	4.9	2.84	1.0	0.06	0.23	1.77
2014	11.07	2.79	2.5	-	-	1.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>7.13</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>5.93</b>

\*Includes Johnson Clear Creek in Fayetteville and Johnson, and extension to Walker Park



Razorback Greenway Ribbon Cutting in Johnson

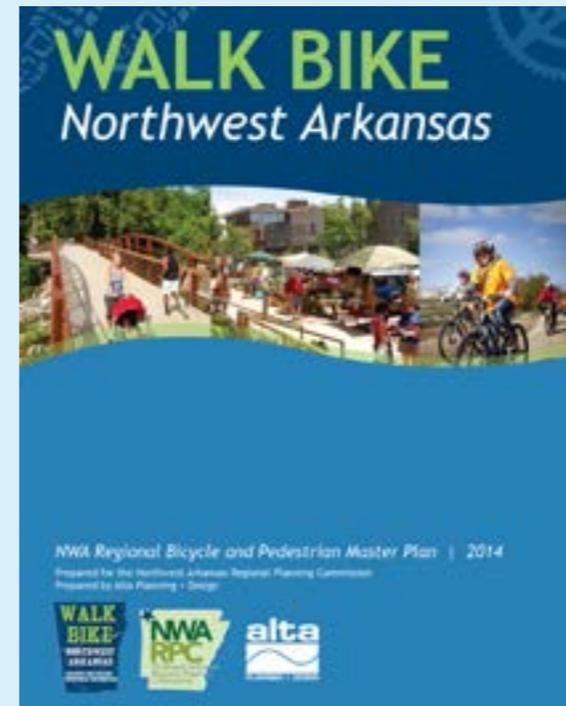


## The Northwest Arkansas Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

The process to develop the NWA Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan was initiated in August 2013, with funding provided by a grant from the Walton Family Foundation. The project resulted in a comprehensive Northwest Arkansas Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan approved by the NWARPC on December 3, 2014.

One of the major Plan goals is for each city with a population of over 1,000 to have an unique individual Master Trail Plan and for the area to work towards linking all these communities through a regional trail system.

Draft individual city plans were distributed in late 2014 for adoption by the 25 cities after additional local input. In early 2015 many cities will have adopted their individual plans and the Regional Master Plan will be utilized as the cornerstone of the bicycle and pedestrian component of the updated 2040 Northwest Arkansas Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

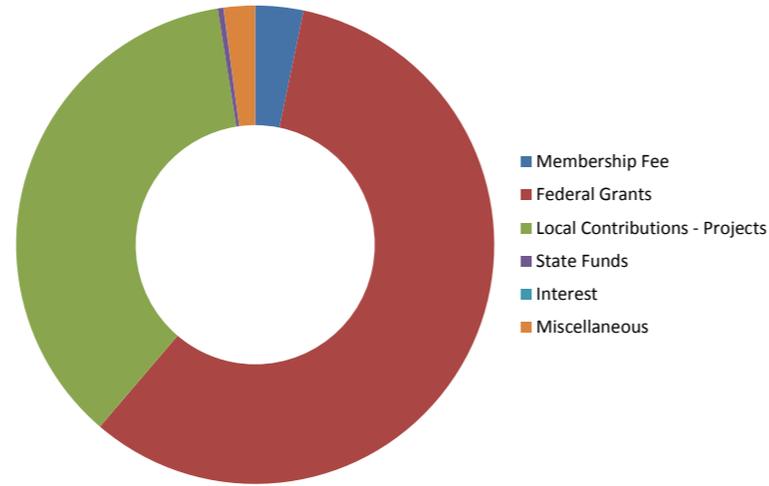


# Financial Statement

## Income

Below is a summary table of the NWARPC Revenue Income for the Fiscal Year 2014 (July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014).

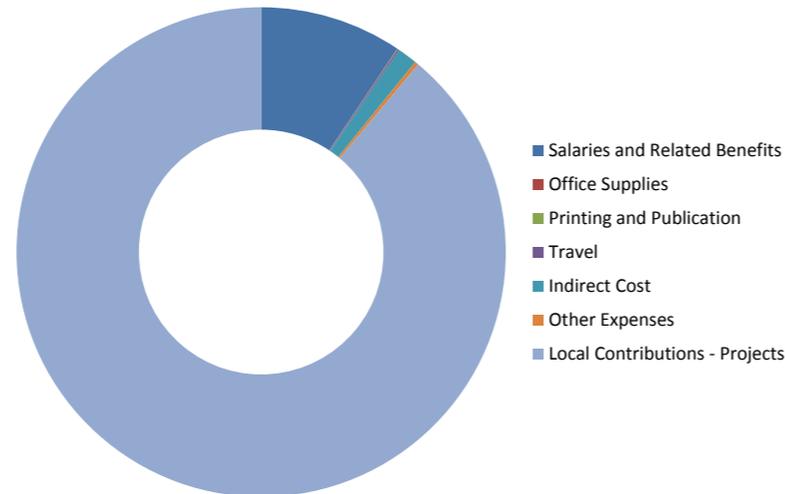
Category	Amount
Membership Fees	\$254,100
Federal Grants	\$4,535,027
Local Contributions/Projects	\$2,833,886
State Funds	\$30,000
Interest	\$1,274
Miscellaneous	\$164,882
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,819,169</b>



## Expenses

Below is a summary table of the NWARPC Expenses for the Fiscal Year 2014 (July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014).

Category	Amount
Salaries and Related Benefits	\$749,135
Office Supplies	\$1,308
Printing and Publication	\$1,987
Travel	\$8,476
Indirect Cost	\$103,779
Other Expenses	\$20,072
Projects	\$7,085,593
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,970,350</b>



# Membership

Current NWARPC Membership:

Agency	Representative
Avoca	Jordan W. Sullivan
Beaver Water District	Alan Fortenberry
Bella Vista	Peter Christie
Benton County	Bob Clinard, John Sudduth
Bentonville	Bob McCaslin, Shelli Kerr, Troy Galloway
Bethel Heights	Cynthia J. Black
Cave Springs	Travis Lee
Centerton	Bill Edwards
Decatur	Bob Tharp
Elkins	Bruce Ledford
Elm Springs	Harold D. Douthit
Farmington	Ernie Penn
Fayetteville	Lionel Jordan, Justin Tennant, Jeremy Pate
Garfield	Gary L. Blackburn
Gateway	Frank Hackler
Gentry	Kevin Johnston
Goshen	Joe Benson
Gravette	Kurt Maddox
Greenland	Bill Groom
Highfill	Cassie Elliott
Hindsville	X Dotson
Huntsville	Kevin Hatfield
Johnson	Chris Keeney
Lincoln	Rob Hulse
Little Flock	Buddy Blue
Lowell	Eldon Long
Pea Ridge	Jackie Crabtree
Prairie Grove	Sonny Hudson
Rogers	Greg Hines, Bob Crafton, Steve Glass
Siloam Springs	John Turner, Ben Rhoads
Springdale	Doug Sprouse, Patsy Christie, Jim Ulmer
Springtown	Preston Barrett
Sulphur Springs	Greg Barber
Tontitown	Paul Colvin, Jr.
Washington County	Marilyn Edwards, Juliet Richey, Dan Short, Shawn Short
West Fork	Charles Rossetti
Razorback Transit	Gary Smith
Ozark Regional Transit	ORT Board Chair
University of Arkansas	Mike Johnson
AHTD - Districts	Chad Adams
HTD - Planning	Jessie Jones
MODOT	Frank Miller
McDonald County, MO	Keith Lindquist
Pineville, MO	Greg Sweeten

## Commission Officers

Eldon Long - Chair  
Bill Groom - Vice-Chair  
Sonny Hudson - Treasurer  
Kevin Johnston - Secretary

## Clearinghouse Reviews

NWARPC is the federally designated regional clearinghouse for the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The MSA covers a four county area including Benton, Madison, and Washington Counties in Arkansas and McDonald County in Missouri.

The purpose of this designation, which is made pursuant to Executive Order 12372, is to insure that requests for federal funding are reviewed to determine compatibility with local and regional plans, and that such funding will not be used for duplicative purposes.

In 2014 72 grant applications for federal-aid totaling \$54,496,400 were cleared in order to insure that proposed uses were consistent with, and in furtherance of, the goals, objectives and planned development for the MSA.

## NWARPC Staff

**Saying Good-Bye to Paul Justus**

Paul and Charlie

Our colleague and friend, Paul Justus, retired in December 2014 and left Northwest Arkansas for new adventures on the West Coast. Paul has been a Regional Planner for NWARPC since 1999. During his time as a planner he was a great asset to NWARPC and the region and an avid supporter of alternative transportation and sustainability. He will be missed not only by us, but by a great number of people he met and befriended throughout the years. We really appreciated Paul's willingness to help anybody who needed help at any time, his research oriented approach to any problem, as well as his interest in new ideas and approaches to innovation in transportation. We will definitely also miss his sense of humor. We wish him the best of luck in his new endeavors and hope he enjoys retirement for many years to come.

**In Memory of Mayor Long**

Former Johnson Mayor Richard Long passed away September 2, 2014 at his home. He served as mayor of Johnson from 1995 to December 2006. The Mayor was an ardent supporter of the NWARPC, serving on the Commission and Executive Committee from April 1996 to December 2006. We at NWARPC respected the Mayor for his wry sense of humor and ability to motivate. May you rest in peace, Mayor Long.



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