



Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission (NWARPC)

Comprehensive Services

Aerial Imagery Acquisition and Quality Assurance

Annexation Assistance

Base Maps (City, County and Region)

Census Data Coordination Comprehensive Plans and Revisions

Environmental Studies Coordination

Flood Insurance Maps

GIS Assistance and Coordination

Grant Writing and Administration

Land Use Planning

Master Street Plans

Online Mapping

Public Information

Redistricting Assistance

Regional Data Development

Regional Transportation Plans

Subdivision Regulations

Survey Data Acquisition and Quality Assurance

Trail Plans

Transit Analysis/Studies

Workshops and Training

Zoning Ordinances



Welcome to NWARPC

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About NWARPC

NWARPC was formed in 1966 through a cooperative agreement signed by Benton County, Washington County, Bentonville, Fayetteville, Rogers, Siloam Springs, and Springdale. Northwest Arkansas is a general term that refers to the northwest corner of Arkansas.

Act 26 of 1955 states as its purpose, "... to make those studies and plans for the metropolitan area or region that will guide the unified development of the area, that will eliminate planning duplication and promote economy and efficiency in the coordinated development of the area and the general welfare and prosperity of its people."

NWARPC serves as the region's **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** as well as being the regional planning organization. NWARPC's membership includes all local governments in Benton and Washington Counties as well as Huntsville and Hindsville in Madison County, the Beaver Water District and the NWA Regional Airport (XNA).

The region was designated as a **Transportation Management Area (TMA)** in 2012. The TMA includes Benton and Washington Counties and a portion of McDonald County, Missouri.

The Northwest Arkansas region has experienced a continuous population growth since the 1990s. From 1990 to 2000, Northwest Arkansas was the sixth fastest growing metropolitan area in the nation. In 2010 the Census Bureau recorded the population for Benton and Washington Counties to be 424,404, an increase of 113,283 from the Census 2000 population. In 2017, the American Community Survey estimated the population of Benton and Washington Counties to be 498,296.

In 2000 the region's urbanized area had a population of 172,393 and 108.8 square miles with a population density of 1,586 persons per square mile. In 2010 the urbanized area was recorded by the Census Bureau as having a population of 295,083, with a total area of 187.73 miles and a population density of 1,572 persons per square mile. The region's largest cities in order of size are **Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers, Bentonville** and **Bella Vista**, all located in the urbanized area.

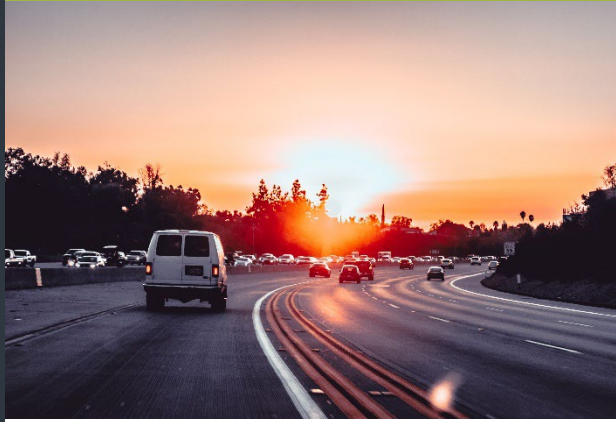
Envisioning the Future of Northwest Arkansas

During the past two decades, the population of Northwest Arkansas increased by approximately 100,000 people/decade. The projected population increase is also estimated at the same number in the next decade. This will call for a greater degree of coordination and cooperation in planning by the government entities of the area.

The population increase will create new challenges for transportation, development, water quality, waste management and the economy in general.

The people of Northwest Arkansas are clearly calling for more options for alternative transportation and choose to live in this region for its highly regarded opportunities for work, living conditions, recreation, schools, a clean and safe environment, water and the overall quality of life.

A primary function of NWARPC is to assist the governmental entities of the area to meet these expectations. With the continuing support of the governments of Northwest Arkansas, NWARPC will aid in the planning process necessary to maintain Northwest Arkansas as a haven for the quality of life that the Northwest Arkansas people enjoy.



Transportation Planning in Northwest Arkansas

Planning for a better transportation system in Northwest Arkansas is planning for a better future for its people and environment.

A primary planning activity of NWARPC is its role as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) while managing functions for a Transportation Management Area (TMA). Each governmental unit and transportation agency in Benton and Washington Counties can participate in transportation planning. The participants appoint people to represent their entity in the planning process. These appointments are usually made by the Mayor, County Judge or Chief Executive Official.

Federal legislation calls for a **Cooperative, Continuous, and Comprehensive (3C's)** approach to transportation planning.

Cooperative - Cooperation between federal, state and local levels of government and various agencies within each level.

Continuous - Need to periodically reevaluate and update transportation plans.

Comprehensive - Refers to an inclusive framework for making transportation investment decisions.

The MPO includes a **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** and the **Regional Planning Commission (RPC)/Policy Committee**.

The TAC develops the technical aspects of plans and reports and makes recommendations to the RPC/Policy Committee. The RPC/Policy Committee members make the MPO's final decisions.

The TAC and RPC/Policy Committee make up the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS). Three documents are the principal NARTS products:

(1) The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is produced each year and outlines annual work activities;

(2) The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is produced every four years and contains all funding commitments for state and federal transportation projects expected to be under way in the next four years.

(3) The NWA Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), updated every five years and provides a long range, comprehensive look at the region's transportation needs and implementation strategies while considering financial constraints.

In 2005 NWARPC developed the **Northwest Arkansas Travel Demand Model** regularly utilized for

and forecasting future scenarios. The model also includes a mode choice model meant to assist the transit agencies in their route scenarios and design for future years.

The Northwest Arkansas Open Space Plan was adopted in 2016 in order to develop a coordinated, voluntary program to protect and promote the region's most valued natural landscapes and open space.

The Northwest Arkansas Bicycle/ Pedestrian Master Plan was adopted in 2015 and is considered part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The purpose of this Plan is to build upon previous regional bicycle and pedestrian initiatives, including the 37-mile Razorback Regional Greenway, in setting a clear path for Northwest Arkansas to link its communities and regional destinations with a world-class transportation network.

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Razorback Greenway is an approximately 37-mile, primarily off-road, shared-use trail that extends from south Fayetteville to Bella Vista and connects dozens of popular destinations. The Greenway is one of the most popular attractions in Northwest Arkansas.



What is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)?

The Federal-Aid Act of 1973 required the formation of MPOs in any region in which the US Census Bureau designated an urbanized area of over 50,000 residents. An MPO is a transportation policy body made up of representatives from local governments and transportation agencies within the metropolitan planning areas (MPA).

MPOs were created to ensure that federal transportation funding for transportation projects and programs were based on a cooperative,

comprehensive planning process known as the **3C planning process**.

MPOs are designated by the Governor in agreement with units of general-purpose local government that together represent at least 75 percent of the affected population and must include the largest incorporated city, based on population as determined by the US Census Bureau.

The NWARPC MPO consists of local elected officials, officials of public agencies that administer or

operate major modes of transportation, and appropriate state transportation officials who together make up the RPC/Policy Committee.

MPOs with more than 200,000 people in the urbanized area are designated as **Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)**. TMAs are subject to additional federal requirements and receive suballocations of **Surface Transportation Block Grant Program – Attributable (STBGP-A) and Transportation Alternative Program (TAP)**.

NWARPC Membership

- Avoca
- Bella Vista
- Benton County
- Bentonville
- Bethel Heights
- Cave Springs
- Centerton
- Decatur
- Elkins
- Elm Springs
- Farmington
- Fayetteville
- Garfield
- Gateway
- Gentry
- Goshen
- Gravette
- Greenland
- Highfill
- Hindsville
- Huntsville
- Johnson
- Lincoln
- Little Flock
- Lowell
- McDonald County, MO
- Pea Ridge
- City of Pineville, MO
- Prairie Grove
- Rogers
- Siloam Springs
- Springdale
- Springtown
- Sulphur Springs
- Tontitown
- Washington County
- West Fork
- Winslow
- ArDOT – Planning
- ArDOT Districts
- MoDOT
- Beaver Water District
- Razorback Transit
- University of Arkansas
- NWA National Airport Authority

Non-Voting Transportation Planning Partners:

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Highway Commission
- Human Service Agencies
- Arkansas Missouri Railroad

STBGP-A and TAP Funding Programs

Q: What do the STBGP-A and TAP Funding Programs mean for Northwest Arkansas?

A: In 2012, the FTA and the FHWA designated the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO urbanized area as a Transportation Management Area (TMA). This TMA designation provides STBGP-A funds to the NWARPC based on the 2010 Census Urbanized Area population of 295,083. The Regional Planning Commission/Policy Committee (RPC/Policy Committee) selects projects through a competitive process for STBGP-A funding

The current policy has a focus on selecting projects of regional significance which is defined as an improvement to major routes such as north/south corridors and the east/west corridors and frontage roads that improve access, reduce crash rates, and/or relieve congestion to the north/south routes.

Additionally, the RPC/Policy Committee selects projects through a competitive process for TAP funding. TAP funds are awarded for the construction of trail or alternative transportation projects.





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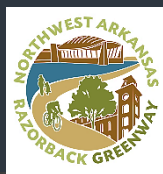
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NWARPC Regular Meetings

NWARPC holds regular meetings with the following committees and groups. The public is also encouraged to attend the meetings. For more information visit <http://nwarpc.org/events/>

- **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting.**
The TAC Committee meets monthly on the third Thursday at 10:30 am at the NWARPC office.
- **Regional Planning Commission Policy Committee Meeting.**
The RPC/Policy Committee meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 1:30 pm at the NWARPC office.
- **Northwest Arkansas MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group Meeting.**
The Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) Compliance Group meets every two months on the third Wednesday at 10:30 am at the NWARPC office.
- **Heritage Trail Plan Partners Meeting.**
The Heritage Trail Plan Partners meet monthly on the third Wednesday at 3:00 pm at the NWARPC office.
- **Northwest Arkansas GIS Users Group Meeting.**
The NWA GIS Users Group meets every two months on the second Tuesday at 10:30 am at the NWARPC office.
- **Northwest Arkansas Active Transportation (ACT) Group Meeting.**
The NWA Active Transportation (ACT) Group meets every two months on the third Thursday at 1:30 pm at the NWARPC office.
- **Northwest Arkansas Open Space Plan Meeting.**
The NWA Open Space Plan members meet monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 9:00 am at the NWARPC office.

January 2021

Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission

Planning – Management – Implementation – A Continuing Process

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