

NARTS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2022 AT 10:30 AM; *DRAFT*

ENTITY	MEMBER	PRESENT	PROXY
AVOCA	ROBERT WHITEHORN		
BELLA VISTA	DOUG TAPP	X	
BENTON COUNTY	JUDGE BARRY MOEHRING JOSH BEAM JAY FRASIER (TRACY BACKS)	X	
BENTONVILLE	DENNIS BIRGE DAN WEESE	X	
CAVE SPRINGS	MAYOR RANDALL NOBLETT	X	
CENTERTON	MAYOR BILL EDWARDS LORENE BURNS	X	
ELKINS	MAYOR BRUCE LEDFORD		
ELM SPRINGS	MAYOR HAROLD DOUTHIT		
FARMINGTON	MELISSA McCARVILLE		
FAYETTEVILLE	JONATHAN CURTH PAUL LIBERTINI CHRIS BROWN	X X	
GENTRY	MAYOR KEVIN JOHNSTON	X	
GRAVETTE	KURT MADDOX (MALLORY WEAVER)		
GREENLAND	MAYOR BILL GROOM		
HIGHFILL	MAYOR MICHELLE RIEFF	X	
JOHNSON	MAYOR CHRIS KEENEY		
LITTLE FLOCK	MAYOR JEFF VAN SICKLER	X	
LOWELL	MAYOR CHRIS MOORE RICK STONE	X	
PEA RIDGE	MAYOR JACKIE CRABTREE (NATHAN SEE)	X	
PINEVILLE	MAYOR GREG SWEETEN		
PRAIRIE GROVE	MAYOR SONNY HUDSON		
ROGERS	LANCE JOBE JOHN MCCURDY		
SILOAM SPRINGS	BEN RHOADS (VICE CHAIR) JUSTIN BLAND	X	
SPRINGDALE	PATSY CHRISTIE (CHAIR) RYAN CARR	X X	
TONTITOWN	MAYOR GENE MCCARTNEY		
WASHINGTON CO.	BRIAN LESTER JEFF CROWDER		
WEST FORK	MAYOR HEITH CAUDLE		
WINSLOW	ANN MALKIE		
NWARPC	JEFF HAWKINS	X	
BEAVER H2O DISTRICT	CODY HUDSON		
OZARK REG. TRANSIT	JOEL GARDNER		
RAZORBACK TRANSIT	GARY K. SMITH (ADAM WADDELL)	X	
U OF A	SCOTT TURLEY (JAY HUNNEYCUTT)	X	
McDONALD COUNTY	BILL LANT		
MoDOT	FRANK MILLER LLANS TAYLOR	X	
NWA NATIONAL AIRPORT	AARON BURKES		
ARDOT PLANNING AND DISTRICT 9	CHRIS DILLAHA (SUNNY FARMAHAN) STACEY BURGE	X	DAVID BUSHEY

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NWARPC STAFF: Tim Conklin; Nicole Gibbs; Elizabeth Bowen; Cristina Scarlat.

OTHERS: Britni O'Connor (MoDOT); Brenda Peacock and Marcus Williams (Benton County); Jocelynn Crowther (Laneshift); Greg Weeks (Jacobs); Ron Wood (NWADG); and Lydia Ulrich (Fayetteville).

NOTE: THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY DUE TO CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.

(1) CALL TO ORDER

The in-person and virtual NWARPC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting was called to order by Chair, Patsy Christie at 10:30 a.m.

(2) ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Tim Conklin named the virtual and in-person attendees. Nicole Gibbs recorded member names and tallied votes. A quorum was reached.

(3) APPROVAL OF JANUARY 20, 2022 TAC MEETING MINUTES

Chair Patsy Christie asked the Committee whether there were any additions or corrections to the January meeting minutes and requested a motion to approve the January 20, 2022 TAC Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: Mayor Jackie Crabtree made a motion to approve the January 20, 2022 TAC Meeting Minutes. Mayor Randall Noblett provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

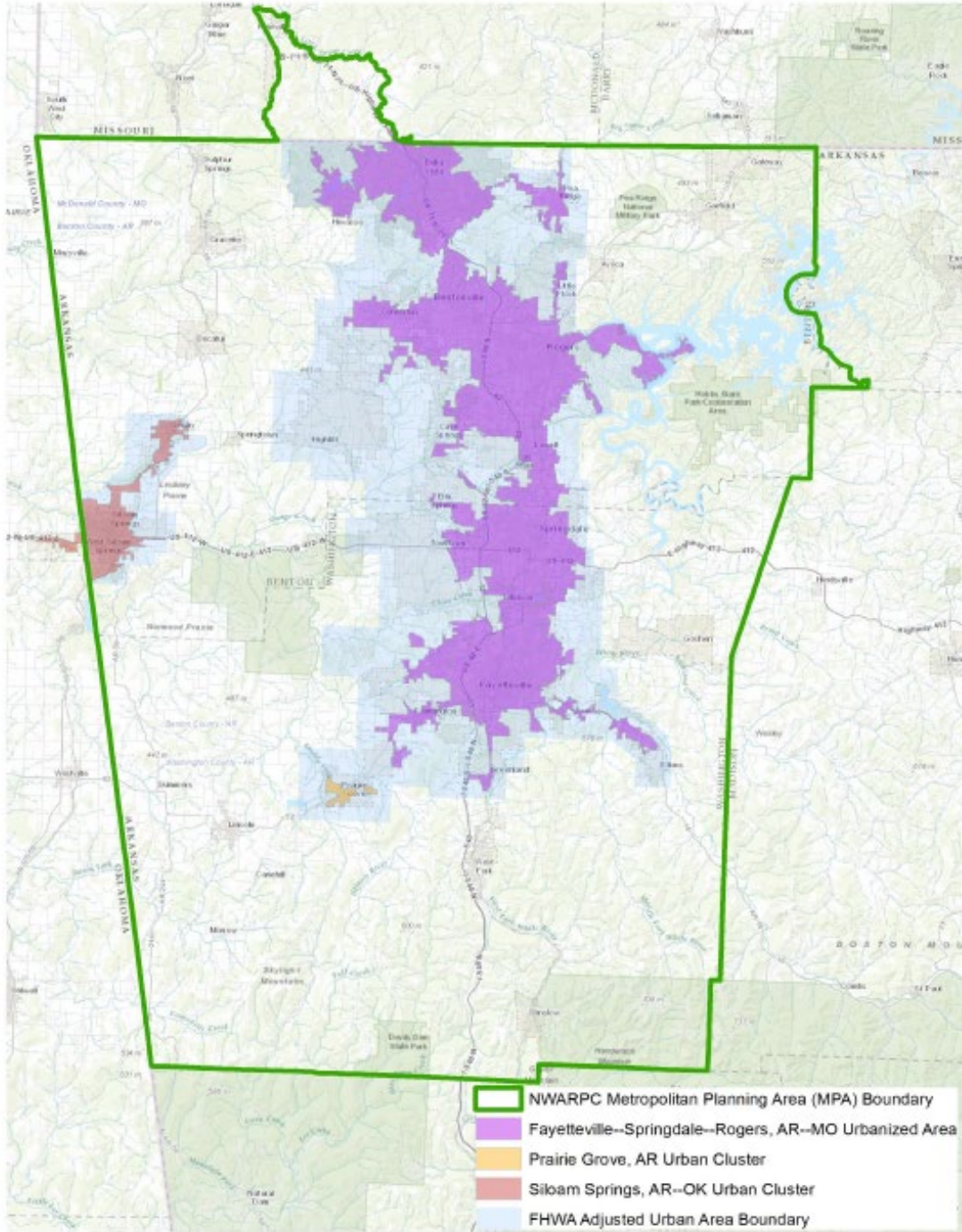
(4) DRAFT FFY 2023 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) – Review and Recommendation for 2-week Public Comment Period

Chair Patsy Christie introduced the item, with Tim Conklin explaining that each year we are required to put together a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), with the fiscal year being from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. He said this year we have incorporated the 2021 Federal Planning Emphasis Areas (PEA's) and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law changes into the UPWP. He said our Public Participation Plan, approved by our Board, requires a two-week public comment period for the UPWP and we intend to vote at the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting on April 21, 2022 and at the RPC/Policy Committee meeting on April 27, 2022.

He said as a reminder, our Metropolitan Planning Area is the entire two-county region of Benton and Washington Counties, and contains a small portion of McDonald County up to Pineville, Missouri. He showed the following map and explained the area in purple represents the 2010 Urbanized Area, and explained that all of the FHWA and FTA federal funding programs are based on the population within the Urbanized Area.

NARTS FY 2023 UPWP - DRAFT

NARTS METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA (MPA)



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Conklin said the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) that was signed into law on November 15, 2021, which provides \$550 billion in infrastructure funding, also continues the Metropolitan Planning Program (MPP), through which NWARPC receives the majority of our funds to conduct transportation planning for the region. He explained some notable changes in the MPP, including a set aside for complete street planning activities; additional requirements for travel demand data and modeling support to inform project selection; and additional provisions for housing coordination in transportation planning activities. He also noted the updated 2021 FTA and FHWA Planning Emphasis Areas, which are directed to MPO's and State DOT's throughout the United States, as being:

- Tackling the Climate Crisis –Transition to a Clean Energy, Resilient Future
- Equity and Justice40
- Complete Streets
- Public Involvement
- Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET)/U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Coordination
- Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA) Coordination
- Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL)
- Data in Transportation Planning

Conklin highlighted the UPWP program elements and noted that money, plus match may be utilized to develop federal discretionary grant applications, including consultant services. He said overall, federal funding, including carry-over from previous fiscal years is around \$1.2 million for the work program. He said today's action is to recommend the draft FY 2023 UPWP go to public comment, to be considered by TAC and RPC/Policy Committee in April.

Chair Patsy Christie asked whether there were any questions and hearing none, requested a motion to recommend sending the Draft NWARPC FY 2023 UPWP to a 2-week public comment period.

MOTION: Mayor Randall Noblett made a motion to recommend sending the Draft NWARPC FY 2023 UPWP to a 2-week public comment period. Ryan Carr provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

(5) ORT ADOPTED 2021 TRANSIT ASSET MANAGEMENT (TAM) PLAN PERFORMANCE TARGETS – For Discussion

Chair Patsy Christie introduced the item saying this is for discussion only and does not require action from the Committee, and Tim Conklin explained that the item will go to the RPC/Policy Committee next week to consider the Ozark Regional Transit (ORT) adopted targets. He said this continues the FAST Act requirements for performance-based planning, with Transit Agencies being required to update their Transportation Asset Management (TAM) Plan, including State of Good Repair Performance Targets, by September of this year. He said ORT hired a consultant to update their 2018 plan, which was adopted by their Board in February 2022. He noted that each transit agency has to track the age and condition of their fleets and Razorback Transit will be putting together their TAM Plan and targets separately.

(6) PROJECTS AND OTHER UPDATES

A. FFY 2022 STBGP-A & TAP Update –Project Development

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Tim Conklin explained that we awarded \$8.6 million in August 2021, and you should have had your project initiation meeting with ARDOT by now, with your projects well underway. He said if you have not begun this process, to please call him. He asked Cities and consultants to please read and follow the ARDOT LPA Manual, paying close attention to the steps that require approval before moving on. He also reminded everyone of the new ARDOT requirement for quarterly reports.

B. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) (aka IIJA) Updates

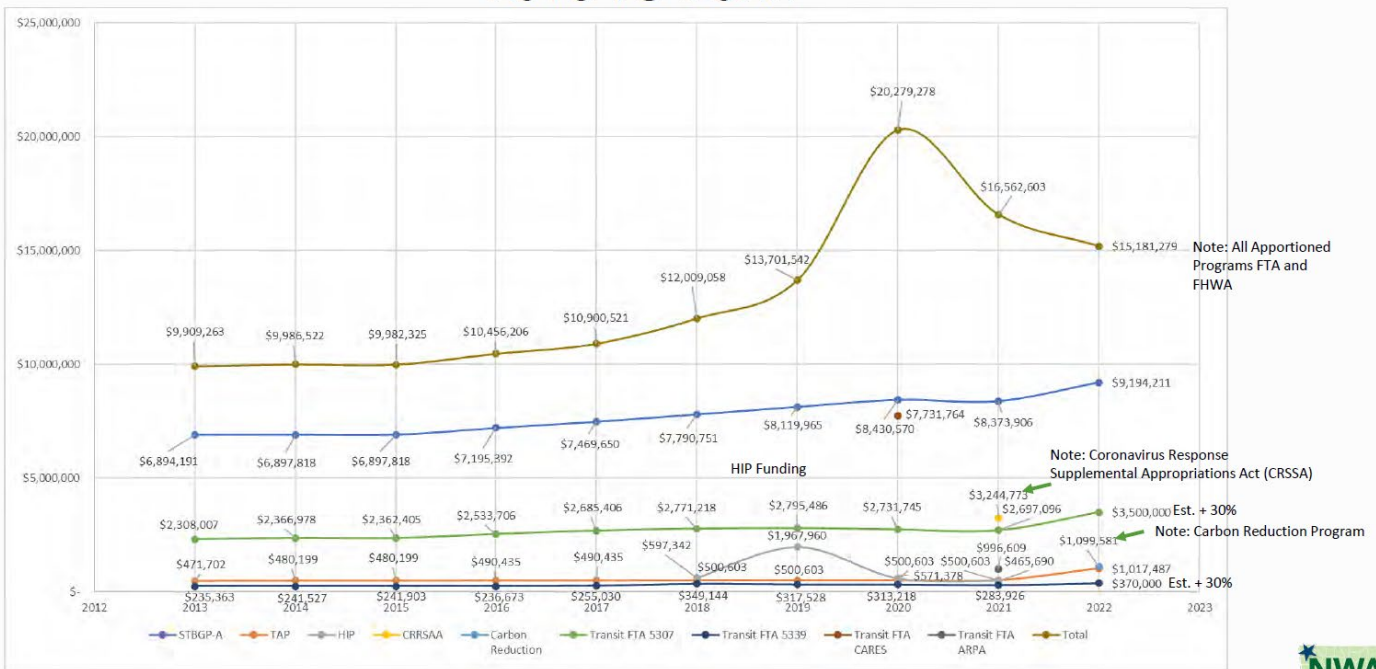
Tim Conklin explained that the apportionment notices were issued late last month and the full year 2022 funding was approved by Congress, so there is now funding through this fiscal year that ends on September 30, 2022. The Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers Urbanized Area have been apportioned the following programs:

- FY 2022 STBGP-A: \$9,194,211
- FY 2022 TAP: \$1,017,487
- FY 2022 Carbon Reduction Program: \$1,099,581

He noted that the published data is publicly accessible through FHWA. He said there are a wide range of eligible projects for the Carbon Reduction Program, however, Fact Sheets and guidance have not yet been published. He explained as a region, we will need to determine how to utilize those funds, but we do have an adopted regional Bike-Ped Plan and funds can certainly go towards implementing the backlog of bike-ped projects.

Conklin showed a chart showing the history of apportioned funding for our area and said back in 2013 we received around \$9.9 million, going up to as much as \$20 million in 2020 when we received \$7.7 million in additional transit money through the CARES Act. He said he believes we will land around \$15 million in 2022, including all FTA and FHWA apportionments. He noted that FTA apportionment tables have not yet been published, but those have been estimated at 30% increase.

NWARPC URBANIZED AREA FUNDING HISTORY 2013 TO 2022



Conklin said the state of Arkansas has also been apportioned just over \$8 million in Electric Vehicle Infrastructure formula funds (NEVI) in FY 2022. He said as a reminder, we have been coordinating a regional work group on EV Charging Infrastructure and asked members to let us know if you are interested in joining that working group. He highlighted the short time frames for the NEVI formula program process, including nominations for Alternative Fuel Corridor (AFC) being due May 13, 2022; State EV Infrastructure Deployment Plans due August 1, 2022; and FHWA approval of State Plans by September 30, 2022. He said the AFC designation is significant because the formula program and the discretionary Corridor Charging Grant Program are directed toward AFCs. He also noted a discretionary Community Charging Grant Program and said we currently have three (3) cities who have jumped into EV Infrastructure – Fayetteville, Rogers, and Siloam Springs – and said others may want to consider whether they will wish to provide public EV charging stations, or to install charging infrastructure for conversion of their fleets to electric.

Chair Christie asked whether this opportunity was sent specifically to the Mayors and Judges. Conklin agreed to do so, similarly to how STBGP-A and TAP notices are distributed. He said the presentations from the EV Meetings have been regularly sent to TAC and RPC/Policy Committee for their information as well. There was discussion about the unknown effects of the increase in electric vehicle usage on our current system of fuel taxes to fund infrastructure. Conklin also mentioned the other initiative being discussed relating to equipping new residential construction with charging infrastructure through incentives or regulation. He said it is estimated that 80-90% of charging happens at home, however there are considerations for charging at the workplace, and alleviating “range anxiety” for travel and tourism. He said the next quarterly work group meeting is tentatively planned for June and an EV public outreach event is being discussed for the Fall.

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Conklin showed the current Alternative Fuel Corridor Map published by USDOT and explained there is a 22-mile gap of US 412 from the Oklahoma State line to I-49 in Springdale, and in addition, the new segment of I-49/Bella Vista Bypass needs to be updated on the map. He said we have asked ARDOT and the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment to nominate the 22-mile portion of US 412 as an AFC, and additionally we have a resolution prepared for RPC/Policy Committee consideration next week to support the nomination.

Conklin said there is an emphasis on targeting federal funding toward historically disadvantaged communities and showed an image of the USDOT's Transportation Disadvantaged Census Tracts mapping tool and described the Justice40 initiative that targets 40% of certain federal investments to historically disadvantaged communities.

Conklin said the Missouri State Freight and Rail Plan is available for comment until May 31 and ARDOT is currently updating their State Plan. He said we understand they intend to have some kind of public engagement event in NWA in late spring or early summer, and said there is always interest in passenger rail in NWA.

Conklin said for the NWARPC FY 2023 STBGP-A and TAP process, we plan to do a call for projects in May or June and select and approve those projects in July or August.

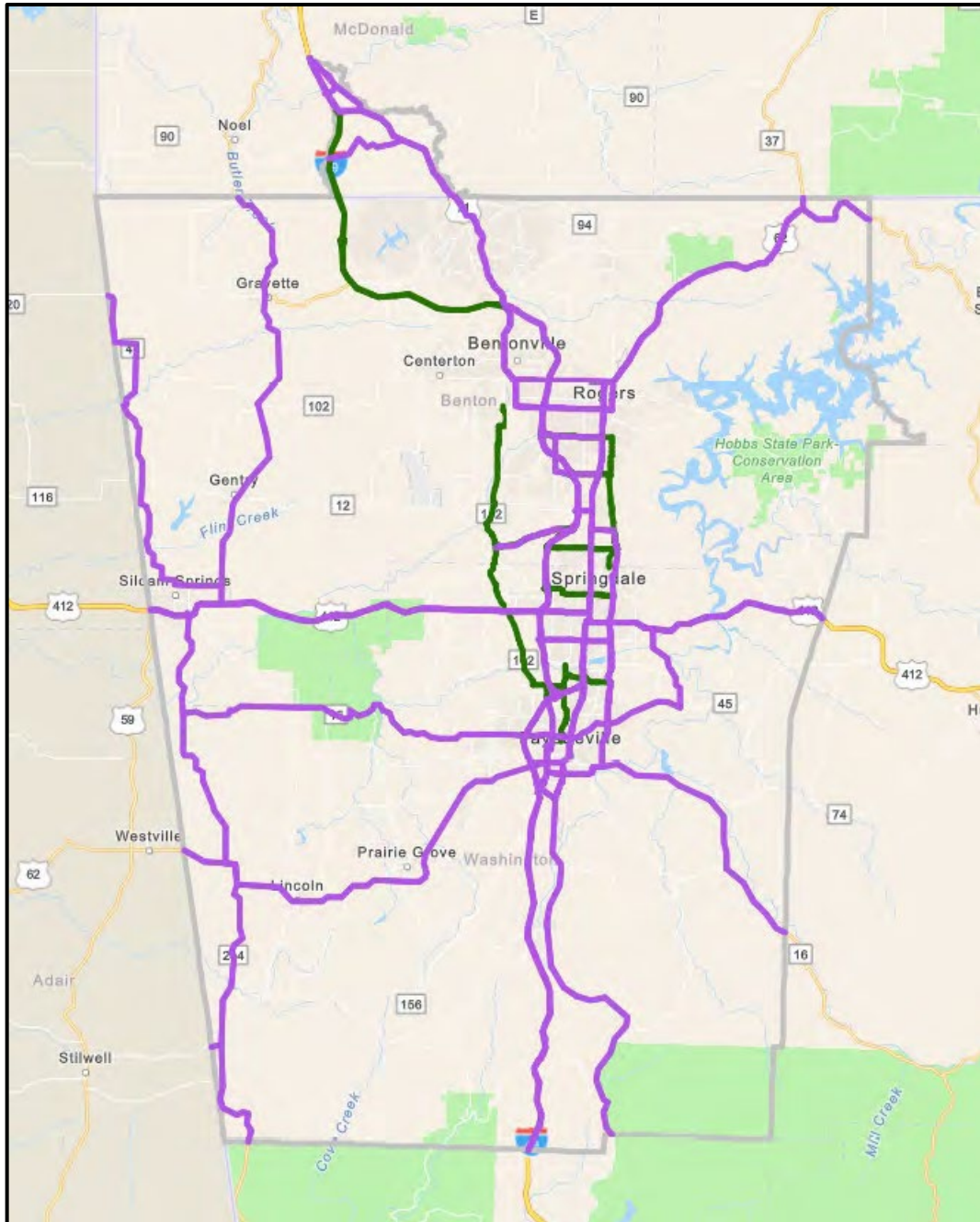
C. Congestion Management Process (CMP)

Elizabeth Bowen summarized and presented the following updates on the Congestion Management Process (CMP) project:

- Cambridge Systematics is Vendor
- Committee Update Meeting –Mar 15 1:00
- Review Congested Segments on Network
- Draft Toolbox of Strategies Document

Bowen showed and discussed the following CMP Network map, with items in purple being the current CMP network, and items in green being the future CMP network that the committee has requested to be added:

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Bowen said the formula we have adopted at NWARPC is the national formula for Level of Travel Time Reliability (LOTRR). She said based on the data, congested roadways are determined in our region and the Committee is looking at the data, anomalies, and discussing what other ways we can look at this data to consider congestion. She said the Committee has requested Cambridge Systematics to adjust the peak period criteria and run models for further discussion and decision. She said for instance, the national standard uses a 4-hour AM Peak Period of 6am-10am, whereas our local AM Peak is really about an hour and a half. She said this difference dilutes our congestion when you look at it on a mapping system.

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Bowen said Cambridge Systematic has prepared a draft CMP Strategies Plan Inventory and Toolbox, and was asked to add BIL complete streets, housing, and bicycle and pedestrian information. She said this report has been sent out and the next steps include gathering feedback on the Inventory Toolbox and Network Congestions, and will next look at Program and Implementation Strategies, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategies.

She asked whether there were questions. There was discussion on whether ARDOT's studies and plans are represented. Bowen said current studies, current TIP/STIP, and current MTP items are being used, but there was agreement that other studies should be listed as well.

D. Transportation Systems Maintenance and Operations (TSMO)/Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

Elizabeth Bowen summarized and presented updates on the Transportation Systems Maintenance and Operations (TSMO)/Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). She said our schedule is aligned with the State's Plan. She said Cambridge Systematic shared TSMO and ITS Peer Review documents along with a Best Practices Report for review. She showed and summarized the next steps for these projects as follows:

- Finalize Task 2 documents based on NWARPC review
- Develop TSMO/ITS Vision (1.4)
- Develop TSMO Strategic Framework (3.1)
- Develop ITS Architecture (4.1)

She said there will be a strategic planning workshop in April 2022 for Task 3.1 and 4.1 that will be a full day commitment for you or your staff.

She asked whether there were questions and there were none.

E. NWA Regional Assessment of Stormwater Management

Elizabeth Bowen said this is a project that the Illinois River Watershed Partnership (IRWP) brought to us last year. She summarized and presented the following updates on the project:

- Form Steering Committee –Aug 2021 **COMPLETE**
- Issued out Letter of Interest –Sep 2021 **COMPLETE**
- State Water/Wasterwater State Advisory Committee (WWAC) Application -Sep 2021 **COMPLETE**
- LOI Scoring –Oct 2021 **COMPLETE**
- Create Scope of Work –Oct 2021 **2nd DRAFT COMPLETE**
- Corps of Engineers Model Review –October 8, 2021 **COMPLETE**
- Corps of Engineers Funding Partnership –October 12, 2021, January 19, 2022 –**IN PROCESS**
- Send out RFP –Feb 2022 **COMPLETE**
- Negotiate/Award contract –**IN PROCESS**
- Apply for Funding - **IN PROCESS**
- Begin work on priority watersheds -TBD
- Complete project –TBD

ARF - Funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and Expended December 31, 2026

Bowen said the Commission requested that we look at all watersheds within the region. She said originally, we were looking at the Arkansas American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, which we now

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understand will not be available until June or July 2022. She said Arkansas Natural Resource Commission (ANRC) and the Corps of Engineers have stated that they both have funding available. She said we have continued the Request for Proposal process, with the Committee selecting HALFF as consultant and will begin the negotiating process. The Corps of Engineer has recently stated their national funds have increased from \$7 million to \$30 million.

Bowen asked whether there were any questions and there were none.

(7) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES

A. Active Transportation Committee (ACT)

Elizabeth Bowen said the Committee has been looking at a number of different projects throughout the region for both Missouri and Arkansas, and showed the following items:

- NWA Regional Bicycle And Pedestrian Master Plan
- Active Transportation Discussion Items
- City/County Organization Reports
- Razorback Greenway Alliance Update
- Funding –ARDOT TAP, NWARPC TAP, Etc
- Heritage Springs Trail
- Butterfield Stage Experience Trail
- FFY 2022 STBGP-A & TAP Update
- ARDOT Bike Ped
- MODOT Bike Ped

Bowen said one of the big projects is updating the Arkansas Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, including updates to community plans. She described the progress being made with various cities on their plans, along with progress the sub-committee has made, including:

JAN 20 SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING-PED

- Sidewalk Networks
- GIS Data and Standards
- Update Trails (NWATRAILS.ORG)
 - Under Construction
 - Detours
- Update Amenities Data
- Public Outreach Plan

FEB SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING-BIKE

- Complete Streets
- Local Network –Sidepaths, Trials, Sidewalks, Gravel Grinding, etc.
- Regional Network
- Catalyst Projects
- Programmed/Planned/Funded 3 Yrs

Bowen said they are developing online, in-person and intercept surveys as part of the Public Outreach work.

Bowen explained there are several communities who are “Bike Friendly Communities” (BFC) and the region overall has a silver ranking. She said to contact her if you are considering applying to become

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a BFC, and that applications are due in May 2022 and they require a lot of numbers and data.

Bowen briefly went over progress on finalizing the Butterfield Stage Experience Trail route as well as the work that various communities are undergoing to implement micromobility programs for bike share and scooter share.

Bowen summarized local projects that have received 2022 Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism Outdoor Recreation Grants. She also shared that the USDOT FY 2022 RAISE Grant is open until April 14, 2022 at www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants. She said ARDOT TAP/RTP 2022 applications are due June 1, 2022, and they have received a 40% increase in funding. She said NWARPC TAP Grant applications will open May or June and we have received 100% increase in funding. She also said NWARPC will be updating our TAP Grant Application to match ARDOT's to make it easier for members to apply for both. Bowen said we will be requesting the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) to consider applying again for a 2022 ARDOT TAP grant for all five Highway 112 Heritage Springs Trail projects.

Tim Conklin explained that NWARPC did request that ARDOT consider applying for a RAISE Grant for the Highway 112 project since they own and are constructing the project because it checks many boxes for the award, including complete streets, vision zero, access management, FHWA proven safety counter measures, and so on. He said ARDOT hired a consultant to consider and rank multiple projects, and are planning to apply for one RAISE Grant for Highway 5 in Saline County. He said we are still waiting for a response from ARDOT from our January 2021 letter asking for a cost difference calculation for the trail, and meanwhile, continue to seek out funding opportunities to cover the difference.

Bowen said ARDOT is reviewing the AHTD Bicycle Facility Accommodation Policy and is looking at the US Bike Routes for the State, including USBR 51. She said they have said that they plan to submit the application in the summer/fall of this year. She said ARDOT also has a newly revised statewide Bicycle Suitability Map which they have released for review and comments. She said MoDOT has included all of our active transportation requests in the TIP/STIP update and they have also allowed us to submit an unfunded needs list, which she summarized.

Bowen asked whether there were any comments or questions and there were none.

- (8) PUBLIC COMMENT** – *Any public comment received via email will be provided to TAC members prior to meeting, and will become part of the meeting record.*

Chair Patsy Christie asked if any comments had been received prior to the meeting.

Nicole Gibbs stated we received a letter of support from the NWA Council for the US 412 Alternative Fuel Corridor Nomination, which will be presented to the Policy Committee next week in consideration of their resolution. She said no other comments have been received.

Chair Christie asked whether there were any others present with comments and there were none.

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(9) OTHER BUSINESS

A. Future Meeting Dates:

Chair Patsy Christie went over the future meetings as follows:

- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, March 23, 2022 @ 1:30 PM
- **TAC Meeting** – Thursday, April 21, 2022 @ 10:30 AM
- **EV Working Group Meeting** – Next meeting tentatively scheduled for June

B. Funding Opportunities:

Tim Conklin went over the current funding opportunities as follows:

- **ARDOT 2022 TAP & RTP Application Cycle, Open until June 1, 2022 at 4:00pm** | ardot.gov/tap | Virtual Seminars Scheduled March 17 and April 6, 2022
- **FTA FY 2022 Low or No Emission and Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Programs, Open until May 31, 2022** | <https://www.transit.dot.gov/notices-funding/low-or-no-emission-and-grants-buses-and-bus-facilities-competitive-programs-fy2022>
- **USDOT FY 2022 RAISE Grant Program, Open until April 14, 2022** | <https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants>

Conklin said he understands that Fayetteville and the University of Arkansas are applying for a RAISE grant to connect the Razorback Greenway along Maple Street up to the campus. He said he is not aware of any other communities applying for a grant, but if you want to share whether you are applying for one, let us know.

Chair Patsy Christie asked if there was any other business; hearing none she thanked everyone for their participation.

10. ADJOURN

The meeting was ended at 11:28am.