

**NARTS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 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)		
BENTONVILLE	DENNIS BIRGE DAN WEESE	X	
CAVE SPRINGS	MAYOR RANDALL NOBLETT	X	
CENTERTON	MAYOR BILL EDWARDS LORENE BURNS	X X	
ELKINS	MAYOR BRUCE LEDFORD		
ELM SPRINGS	MAYOR HAROLD DOUTHIT		
FARMINGTON	MELISSA McCARVILLE	X	
FAYETTEVILLE	JONATHAN CURTH PAUL LIBERTINI CHRIS BROWN	X X X	
GENTRY	MAYOR KEVIN JOHNSTON		
GRAVETTE	KURT MADDOX (MALLORY WEAVER)		
GREENLAND	MAYOR BILL GROOM		
HIGHFILL	MAYOR MICHELLE RIEFF		
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	X	
ROGERS	LANCE JOBE JOHN MCCURDY	X X	
SILAM SPRINGS	BEN RHOADS (VICE CHAIR) JUSTIN BLAND	X	
SPRINGDALE	PATSY CHRISTIE (CHAIR) RYAN CARR	X X	
TONTITOWN	MAYOR GENE MCCARTNEY	X	
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	X	
RAZORBACK TRANSIT	GARY K. SMITH (ADAM WADDELL)	X	
U OF A	SCOTT TURLEY (JAY HUNNEYCUTT)	X	
McDONALD COUNTY	BILL LANT		
MoDOT	FRANK MILLER MARVIN MORRIS	X X	
NWA NATIONAL AIRPORT	AARON BURKES	X	
ARDOT PLANNING AND DISTRICT 9	CHRIS DILLAHA (SUNNY FARMAHAN) STACEY BURGE	X	

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

OTHERS: Amy Heflin (FHWA), Britni O'Connor (MoDOT); Mike Peters (Springdale); Tim Reavis (Cave Springs); Anna Keogh, Anna Negrete (CEI); Ron Wood (NWADG); Natalie Rogers (Halff); Dawn Warrick (Freese & Nichols); and Mike Stengel (Michael Baker Intl)

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

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

(3) APPROVAL OF MARCH 17, 2022 TAC MEETING MINUTES

Chair Patsy Christie asked the Committee whether there were any additions or corrections to the meeting minutes and requested a motion to approve the March 17, 2022 TAC Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: Mayor Jackie Crabtree made a motion to approve the March 17, 2022 TAC Meeting Minutes. Melissa McCarville provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

(4) DRAFT FFY 2023 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) – Review and Recommendation to RPC/Policy Committee

Chair Patsy Christie introduced the item and Tim Conklin explained that each year we are required to develop a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for the NWARPC that outlines the work we will perform over the next twelve (12) months. We held a public comment period from April 6, 2022 to April 20, 2022 and intend to take it to the RPC/Policy Committee meeting on April 27, 2022. He said once again it outlines our planning activities in our Planning Area, which includes all of Benton and Washington Counties, and a portion of McDonald County.

Conklin said the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) continues the Metropolitan Planning Program (MPP) with joint oversight by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). He summarized notable changes in the MPP that have been included in this year's UPWP, including a 2.5% set aside of Planning funds to be used on Complete Streets, a policy for travel demand data and modeling, and housing coordination in transportation planning efforts. He said FHWA and FTA have updated their Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) and listed those as follows:

- 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

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Conklin said we organize our program into five (5) work areas. He said the Long-Range Transportation Planning element will include up to \$50,000 in STBGP-A funds, plus match, to be utilized for consultant assistance in developing analysis required for BIL discretionary grant applications; up to \$50,000 in Carbon Reduction funds may be utilized to address climate change provisions; and we are carrying forward \$100,000 in STBGP-A funds, plus \$25,000 state match will be utilized to partner with ARDOT to complete the NWA Regional TSMO/ITS plans. He said overall we are programming \$1.372 million in federal funding, matched by local and state funding.

We are asking for a motion to recommend the draft FY 2023 UPWP that covers the period from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 to the RPC/Policy Committee. He asked if there were any questions. Christie asked for clarification on changes to the STBGP-A and Carbon Reduction money that goes toward Planning Commission support. Conklin explained that we are showing the usual \$200,000 of STBGP-A funds, plus an additional \$50,000 of Carbon Reduction funds. He further explained that \$50,000 of the \$200,000 of STBGP-A funds can go toward BIL application assistance. Christie said this is different than what we have had in the past because we did not have the Carbon Reduction funds, and we did not have the ability to use it for application support. Conklin agreed and said we will have a bigger discussion later on the agenda regarding how the Commission may use the Carbon Reduction funds. Christie asked for clarification on the funding if we do not come up with a plan for the funds in the short timeline that we have to obligate 2022 Carbon Funds. Conklin said the funds might be able to be carried forward but would make sure we obligate our federally funded projects within the designated timeline in order not to lose any federal funding.

Chair Patsy Christie asked whether there were any questions and hearing none, requested a motion to recommend approval of the Draft NWARPC FY 2023 UPWP to the Policy Committee.

MOTION: Mayor Sonny Hudson made a motion to recommend sending the Draft NWARPC FY 2023 UPWP to the RPC/Policy Committee for approval. Ryan Carr provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

(5) FFY 2022 PROGRAM OF PROJECTS (POP) & DRAFT 2022 CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS (CMP) – Recommendation for Two-week Public Comment Period

Chair Patsy Christie introduced the item, with Tim Conklin explaining that the FTA apportionment of transit funds have been published and the region will be receiving \$3.483 million in Section 5307 transit funds that will go to Ozark Regional Transit (ORT) and Razorback Transit, as well as \$100,000 that we use at Regional Planning Commission. He said our region will also receive \$272,444 in Section 5339 funds for capital. He said Section 5307 funds are used for operating and capital with 55% going to ORT and 45% going to Razorback Transit, and Section 5339 funds are split 50/50 between both transit agencies. He said this is a fairly significant increase from prior years under BIL. He said the Regional Planning Commission is the FTA designated recipient and the Policy Committee makes the decision on how to split the money between the transit agencies. Christie asked whether the split is the same as has been used in the past. Jeff Hawkins agreed and said this is for FFY 2022 funds, beginning last October 1, 2021 and most of these funds carry over for four years.

Conklin said we are asking for a recommendation for the FFY 2022 POP, along with the draft 2022 Congestion Management Process (CMP), which is being finalized, be sent to a two-week public comment period, which is a requirement of our Public Participation Plan (PPP) for our work

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products. Both projects will go to the Policy Committee for final action in May. Hawkins said since these items are derived from the TIP/STIP, which have already been approved, they will not need to come back to this Committee.

MOTION: Mayor Jackie Crabtree made a motion to send the FFY 2022 Program of Projects (POP) & Draft 2022 Congestion Management Process (CMP) to public comment period. Sonny Hudson provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

(6) FFY 2023 STBGP-A & TAP – Policy, Procedure, and Application Discussion

Chair Patsy Christie introduced the item, with Tim Conklin beginning by congratulating Bella Vista on their groundbreaking of the Mercy Way Bridge project, an STBGP-A project that will extend the Razorback Greenway into the City, making it the seventh to own and operate the Greenway. He said we are currently updating the application forms for NWARPC FFY 2023 STBGP-A and TAP funds. He said we will issue a call for projects after the RPC/Policy Committee meets next week with the deadline for applications being June 15, 2022, and we will follow the same process we used last year for project selection. He said the critical thing for jurisdictions to consider is that if you plan to apply for funding, you will have two or three (3) Council meetings to get your required resolutions approved.

Conklin said we are anticipate having close to \$10 million for STBGP-A and around \$1.4 million in TAP funds, and showed the following breakdown:

TAP CALL FOR PROJECTS – FFY 2023 ESTIMATE BASED ON FFY 2022

FFY 2022 TAP Awarded Aug 2021	\$ 626,000	
FFY 2022 TAP Actual	<u>\$1,017,487</u>	
FFY 2022 TAP Remaining	\$ 391,487	
FFY 2022 TAP Remaining	\$ 391,487	
FFY 2023 TAP Est. (based on FFY 2022)	<u>\$1,017,487</u>	
Total Available TAP FFY 2022 & 2023	<u>\$1,408,974</u>	
STBGP-A FFY Awarded Aug 2021	\$8,034,319	
FFY 2022 STBGP-A Actual	<u>\$8,994,211</u>	
FFY 2022 STBGP-A Remaining	\$ 959,892	
FFY 2022 STBGP-A Remaining	\$ 959,892	
FFY 2023 STBGP-A Est.	<u>\$8,994,211</u>	
Total Available STBGP-A FFY 2022 & 2023	<u>\$9,954,103</u>	

**Use of Carbon
Reduction Funding?
\$1,099,581 Per Year**



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Conklin said the Carbon Reduction program is brand new as of FY 2022 and the region is receiving \$1.099 million in funds and we will need to have a discussion on how to use those funds. Christie said we want to put a subcommittee together to look at the guidance and come up with a proposal to recommend to TAC, and TAC would make a recommendation to RPC/Policy Committee. She said she is willing to chair, with Chris Brown or delegate from Fayetteville, Lance Job from Rogers, and Melissa McCarville from Farmington volunteering to be on the subcommittee.

Conklin gave examples of eligible projects described in the BIL, and showed the following:

(c) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—

- Traffic monitoring, management, and control facility or program
- Public transportation
- Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities
- Advanced transportation and congestion management technologies
- Intelligent transportation systems capital improvements
- Street lighting and traffic
- Control devices with energy-efficient alternatives
- Congestion pricing, electronic toll collection, and travel demand management strategies and programs;
- Freight movement;
- Alternative fuel vehicles
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure or hydrogen, natural gas, or propane vehicle fueling infrastructure zero-emission construction equipment and vehicles
- Diesel engine retrofit
- Transportation emissions at port facilities

Christie said we have developed policies for how to handle STBGP-A and TAP funding, but we should think about how to plug in the new Carbon program. Amy Heflin said she received the guidance for the program this morning and she will share with NWARPC. Conklin thanked Heflin and said the Call for Projects will be shared with RPC/Policy Committee next week, is being published in the newspaper, and we mail the notice to Chief Elected Officials.

Conklin reiterated that the big take away is that if you plan to apply for funding, you will need a Resolution from your City Councils and if you need a sample resolution, we can get one to you. He said because this is a reimbursable program, you pay for the project up front with your own funds, and if you do not manage the project and follow the required steps for federal funding, you may not get your money back.

(7) PROJECTS AND OTHER UPDATES

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

Tim Conklin said speaking of managing projects, we need to obligate the FFY 2022 projects. He said it is important for us at Regional Planning to know whether you are going to make your deadline for these projects. He said those projects that are ready will absorb any funds that were not obligated to ensure we do not lose any federal funds for FY 2022, subject to the Board approval.

Chris Brown said in the past a spreadsheet had been shared with all existing projects and where they are in their phasing and anticipated timelines, so that we had a sense of the status of the overall

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program and where individual cities fit in overall, and requested that be shared again. Conklin agreed to send that information out. He said additional funding project request forms will be distributed, which will update us on what your existing project needs are, so we will have a much better understanding in mid-June where projects are at in their progress as well.


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

Tim Conklin gave an overview of the recent notices of funding availability within the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) programs and showed the following:

FUNDING AVAILABLE TO A RANGE OF RECIPIENTS		State	MPO	Local	Tribe	PA*	Territory	FLMA*
<i>FFY 2022 Funded</i>	Apportioned programs (formula)	✓						(For NWARPC: STBGP-A, TAP, Carbon Reduction)
<i>Guidance Issued 1-14-22</i>	Bridge Program (formula)	✓			✓			(Watch for: Off-system Bridges)
<i>Guidance Issued 2-10-22</i>	National Electric Vehicle Formula Program	✓		✓				(For NWA: US 412 Nomination Due <u>May 13!</u>)
<i>Anticipated May 2022</i>	Safe Streets and Roads for All program		✓	✓	✓			(Watch for: May 2022)
	PROTECT Grants (discretionary)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<i>Guidance Issued 2-10-22</i>	Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Congestion Relief Program	✓	✓	✓				
	Bridge Investment Program (discretionary)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Rural Surface Transportation Grants (Rural)	✓		✓	✓			
<i>Due May 23!</i>	INFRANationally Significant Multimodal Freight and Highways Projects grants program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Nat'l Infra. Project Assistance (Mega)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
<i>Due April 14!</i>	Local and Regional Project Assistance (RAISE)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	(For NWA: Fayetteville/Maple Street)

Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) - combined Mega/ INFRAN/ Rural

Note: This table does not include all BIL programs or eligible entities, and there are additional nuances not represented in this table. Additional programmatic information is provided in later slides. FHWA will administer most, but not all, programs listed.
* "PA" means a special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function; FLMA means Federal Land Management Agency



Source: FHWA Presentation "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL): Overview of Highway Provisions", 2021

Conklin said Regional Planning is doing a nomination for US 412 as an Alternative Fuel Corridor (AFC) and would like to thank the Governor's office for their support letter, along with Cities, Counties and Chambers who have provided letters. He said the Safe Streets and Roads for All program is a Vision-Zero program and there are webinars being offered to Cities, Counties, Transit Agencies, and MPO's. He said the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) that combines the RURAL, INFRAN, and MEGA programs into one application is due May 23, 2022. He said the deadline for the RAISE application has passed, but Fayetteville was the only RAISE grant application the region has submitted. He said some of these notices are very short timeframes from announcement to due date.

Conklin said USDOT has an interactive map for disadvantaged census tracts and said many of the programs look to target federal funding toward historically disadvantaged communities. He said Community Project Funding is now back for earmarks.

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Conklin summarized the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) formula process, saying Regional Planning will submit the AFC nomination for US 412 by May 13, 2022, and MODOT and ARDOT are doing their State Plans. He said the state of Arkansas has been apportioned just over \$8 million in Electric Vehicle Infrastructure formula funds (NEVI) in FY 2022.

Conklin described the funding history to the region over time from 2013 to 2022, noting the peak of 2020 with around \$20 million with the additional CARES Act funds and this year we are landing around \$15 million with all apportioned programs to the Urban Area. He described some discretionary grant successes in the region. He said the applications are complex, lengthy, and take time, and you are not guaranteed to get funding.

C. Congestion Management Process (CMP)

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

- Draft CMP to NWARPC April 25
- NWARPC reviews and comments by April 29
- CMP final report to NWARPC by May 3rd
- NWARPC begins public notice process May 5
 - Post to web
 - Two-week comment period May 6-May 20
- Cambridge Systematics present final Plan to TAC May 19
- Cambridge Systematics present final Plan to Policy May 25 for adoption
- Cambridge Systematics finalize model for future congestions
 - Issue no cost time extension to finish by end of June

Bowen said part of the contract is to provide a model that we can update for future congestion with the RITIS data. She said the committee has recommended additional segments be added into the CMP network, and discussed adjusting AM Peak to 7-9am, Mid-Day Peak 11-1, PM Peak 4-6 and Weekends 11-2.

Conklin said we understand that Covid-19 has impacted travel times and this data is based on 2019. We are not sure yet what the long-term effects will be with work-from-home trends, etc. He said this is a federally mandated process and we will be updating this plan in the future with new, post-Covid data sometime in 2024 or 2025, but the idea is to complete this plan, have this data set, and complete the work with Cambridge Systematics.

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

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 staff and the committee continue to meet with Cambridge Systematics on the projects, and there will be a combined Capability Maturity Model (CMM) assessment and Strategic Planning Workshop, which we are scheduling in May. She said ATS is a subcontractor of Cambridge Systematics, and they will begin holding stakeholder interviews along with a workshop in August.

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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 in June. She summarized and presented the following updates on the project:

- Corps of Engineers Funding Partnership –October 12, 2021, January 19, 2022 and April 2022 –IN PROCESS
- Negotiate/Award contract –IN PROCESS
- Apply for Funding: IN PROCESS
- Begin work on priority watersheds -TBD
- Complete project(s) –TBD

Bowen said we are meeting with the Corps of Engineers as a funding partner and looking at how they can update their model. She said Halff Associates was chosen through our contracting process and are beginning the negotiation process to look at refining a scope for the project based on funding availability. She summarized the following:

- Selected vendor is Halff Associates, Inc.
- Working with Halff and Corps on scope for Corps to do work with funding
- Working with ARND reducing scope to meet potential funding opportunities
- Requested a laundry list of data from cities to help with refining cost
- Meeting May 10, 2022 at 1:00-3:00 at NWARPC with:
 - Halff
 - ANRD
 - Corps
 - IRWP
 - NWARPC Committee/Commission Members

Bowen said the Arkansas Natural Resources Division (ANRD) and the Corps of Engineers are looking at a watershed management model scope versus a very detailed scope as was initially prepared, and will work with cities to determine how best to meet their needs with a refined scope based on available funding.

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

(8) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES

A. Active Transportation Committee (ACT)

Elizabeth Bowen said the committee and subcommittee met March 17, 2022. She said “Bike Friendly Community” (BFC) applications are due in May 2022. She said May is Bike Month, May 20 is Bike to Work Day, and ETHIC is encouraging participation in the National Bike Challenge. She said ARDOT TAP/RTP 2022 applications are due June 1, 2022 and NWARPC is revising our TAP application to be more similar to ARDOT’s application. She said we will be requesting the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) to consider applying again for a 2022 ARDOT TAP grant for five Highway 112 Heritage Springs Trail projects. Conklin said these funds would be matched by ARDOT who will be carrying out the project for Hwy 112.

Bowen said the subcommittee met on updating the Arkansas Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan,

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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:

NWA Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update

- Public Outreach Plan
- Local Plan Updates
- Catalyst Projects
- Regional Network
- Next Steps:
 - Outreach
 - Meet with Cities
 - Goals/Performance Measures
 - Complete Streets/Vision Zero
 - Photos for Plan

Bowen said they have developed online, in-person, and intercept surveys as part of the Public Outreach work. She said the intercept surveys have started and will continue through April and May, and the public survey is being distributed to better understand wants and needs in the region in relation to active transportation.

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

- (9) 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 read a comment from Randy Cook regarding the slow progress on the Springdale Bypass. She said no other comments have been received.

(10) OTHER BUSINESS

A. Future Meeting Dates:

Chair Patsy Christie went over the future meetings as follows:

- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, April 27, 2022 @ 1:30 PM
- **RMA Meeting** – Wednesday, April 27, 2022 @ 1:30 PM, *directly following RPC*
- **TAC Meeting** – Thursday, May 19, 2022 @ 10:30 AM

Conklin said the Getting Ready for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Program - Counties, Cities, Towns, Transit Agencies Webinar is scheduled Monday, May 2, 1:00-3:00 p.m. (EDT), with instructions available at this website: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A/webinars>. He said there are funding opportunities to develop and implement a plan.

Bowen said the NWA Council has been working on a housing initiative and is working with consultant, The CaseMade, who presented recommendations this morning on how to move forward with housing goals in the region. She said if you would like a recording of that, contact nate@nwacouncil.org or email Bowen.

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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 11:29am.