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NORTHWEST ARKANSAS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT



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May 2023

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Membership

AGENCY

- Avoca
- Bella Vista
- Benton County
- Bentonville
- Cave Springs
- Centerton
- Decatur
- Elkins
- Elm Springs
- Farmington
- Fayetteville
- Garfield
- Gateway
- Gentry
- Goshen
- Gravette
- Greenland
- Highfill
- Hindsville
- Huntsville
- Jane, Missouri
- Johnson
- Lincoln
- Little Flock
- Lowell
- McDonald County, Missouri
- Pea Ridge
- Pineville, Missouri
- 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
- National Airport Authority

REPRESENTATIVE

- Mayor Robert Whitehorn
- Mayor John Flynn
- Judge Barry Moehring - Chair**, Josh Beam, Jay Frasier
- Mayor Stephanie Orman, Shelli Kerr
- Mayor Randy Noblett
- Mayor Bill Edwards - Secretary**, Lorene Burns
- Mayor Bob Tharp
- Mayor Troy Reed
- Mayor Harold D. Douthit
- Mayor Ernie Penn - Vice-Chair**
- Mayor Lioneld Jordan, Chris Brown, Jonathan Curth
- Mayor Gary L. Blackburn
- Mayor Cheryl Tillman
- Mayor Kevin Johnston
- Mayor Russell Stroud
- Mayor Kurt Maddox
- Mayor Jim Renfrow
- Mayor Chris Holland
- Mayor Stephanie Casey*
- Mayor Travis Dotson*
- Chairperson Dustin Allgood
- Mayor Chris Keeney - Treasurer**
- Mayor Doug Hutchens
- Mayor Jeff Van Sickler
- Mayor Chris Moore
- County Commissioner Bryan Hall
- Mayor Nathan See
- Mayor Greg Sweeten
- Mayor David Faulk
- John McCurdy, Lance Jobe, and Shawn Grindstaff
- Mayor Judy Nation, Phillip Patterson
- Mayor Doug Sprouse, Patsy Christie, Jim Ulmer
- Mayor Terri Glenn
- Mayor Shane Weber
- Mayor Angela Russell
- Judge Patrick Deakins, Brian Lester
- Mayor S. Heith Caudle
- Mayor Randy Jarnagan
- Brad McCaleb
- Chad Adams (District 4)
- Dave Taylor and Britni O'Connor
- Lane Crider*
- Gary Smith
- Scott Turley*
- Aaron Burkes

* Non-voting on NARTS matters

Other Transportation Planning Partners:

- Ozark Regional Transit Authority - Joel Gardner
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Amy Heflin
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – Ronisha Hodge
- Arkansas Highway Commission – Phillip Taldo
- Human Service Agencies
- Arkansas Missouri Railroad

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Introduction



ABOUT US



The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission (NWARPC) was formed in 1966. In 1983, NWARPC was designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) under U.S. DOT regulations for transportation planning purposes. In 2022, NWARPC had 44 members with 37 jurisdictions in Benton and Washington Counties in Arkansas and 3 jurisdictions in Missouri. The MPO has four permanent committees: the Regional Planning Commission/Policy Committee (RPC/Policy Committee), the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Active Transportation Committee (ACT), and the Northwest Arkansas GIS Users Group.

In 2022, NWARPC continued to focus on implementing its long range transportation plan, the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (NWARPC 2045 MTP), developing the FFY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvements Program (TIP), updating its Congestion Management Plan (CMP), the Transportation Systems Maintenance and Operations (TSMO), updating its Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), starting the work on the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) and continued the update to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan.

NWARPC, as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is responsible for the coordination of transportation planning activities in Benton County, Washington County, and a portion of McDonald County, Missouri.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Throughout this 2022 Annual Report, it is apparent that the new federal transportation funding is already making an impact on the region – a region that has been growing at a steady and significant pace for the past 30 years. Critical regional projects – including Highway 112, the western portion of the Springdale Northern Bypass, and the Airport Access Road – are programmed over the next four years and millions of dollars in suballocated federal funding have been awarded throughout the region to improve our transportation network for all citizens.



With the regional focus on maintaining our place as one of the most attractive regions in Arkansas and the nation, where quality of life is highly regarded and a multi-modal approach to transportation is the objective, this report highlights the various initiatives the Commission has undertaken to advance equity, safe mobility, public and active transportation choices, and reduce impacts on our environment.

NWARPC leadership changes have occurred this past year, with Jeff Hawkins announcing his retirement and the Commission appointing Tim Conklin as his successor. We all thank Jeff for his dedicated leadership over the last 22 years and congratulate him again on his retirement.

As the newly elected Chairman of the Regional Planning Commission, I am looking forward to great things happening in the beautiful Northwest Arkansas, acknowledging that the Commission, along with the NWARPC staff have an important mission in planning for greater mobility and protecting our quality of life in our growing region.

Thank you,
Judge Barry Moehring

Transportation Projects & Plans



FFY 2023-2026 TIP

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Federal Fiscal Years 2023 through 2026 was developed by the Northwest Arkansas Transportation Study (NARTS) in response to 23 U.S.C. 134 – Metropolitan Transportation Planning, as continued by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The purpose of the TIP is to assist in coordinating the use of these funds for area-wide transportation improvements and to ensure that the projects that are the recipients of these federal funds are in conformance with the 2045 NWARPC Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2045 MTP) adopted on March 24, 2021.

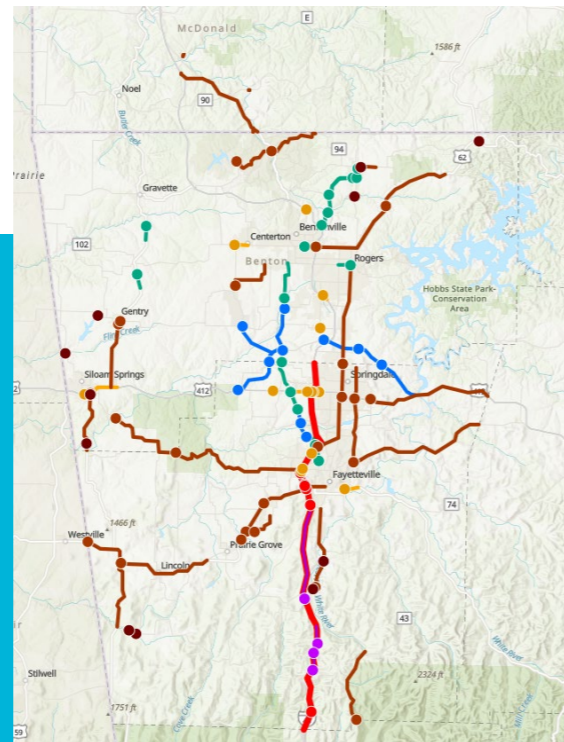
The TIP was adopted by the RPC/Policy Committee on December 7, 2022 by Resolution #2022-16. More information and an interactive map of the TIP projects are available on the [NWARPC website](#).

The FFY 2023-2026 TIP was developed through a performance-driven, outcome-based approach, as established under planning regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation. NWARPC coordinates with ARDOT and MODOT on the establishment of a performance-based approach to transportation planning. ARDOT and MODOT have each developed a Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) that includes a discussion of the anticipated effect of the STIP toward achieving identified performance targets.

NWARPC develops the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) TIP, in cooperation with the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) and Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT).

The TIP Includes:

- A list of projects and strategies including investments in pedestrian and bicycle transportation facilities, as well as roadways and transit
- A financial plan
- Descriptions of each project, including, but not limited to type of work, termini, length
- A “visual” component that helps the reader to better understand the nature of the project



TIP 2023-2026 Projects of Regional Significance:

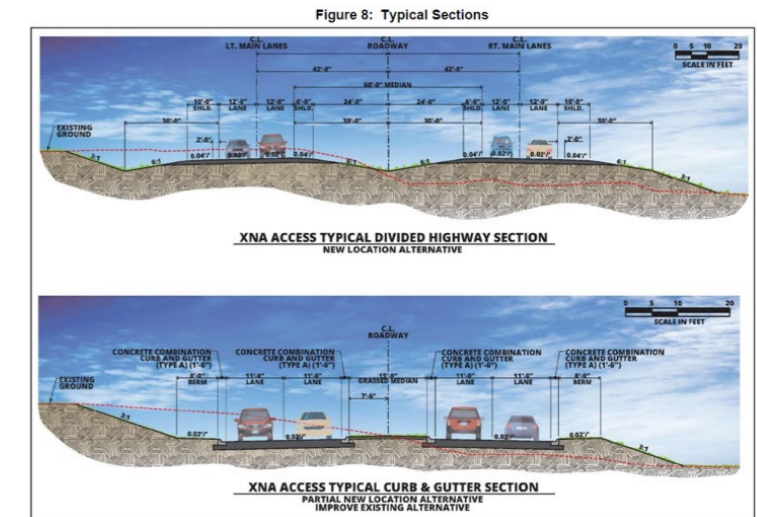
Hwy 612 - Bypass - Future 412 (Future Interstate)

Known as the Springdale Northern Bypass, Highway 612, or future US 412 is planned from existing Highway 412 west of Tontitown to existing Highway 412. It will connect communities across the area including Springdale, Tontitown, Elm Springs, Lowell, Sonora, and Cave Springs. This project is considered an essential east-west corridor improvement to the highway system in the region. There are three jobs programmed in the TIP for this project.



XNA Access Road

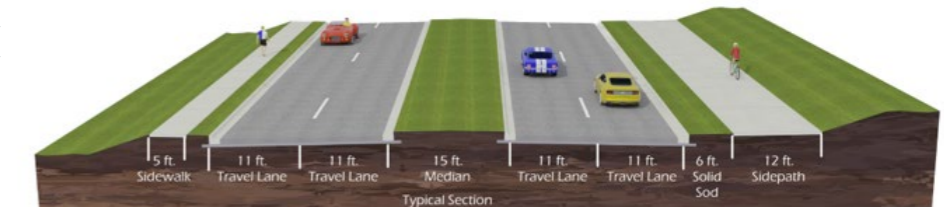
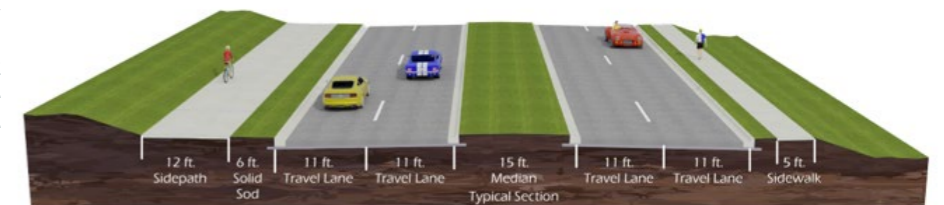
The Northwest Arkansas National Airport Access project is a critical part of the region's transportation network and will provide a four-lane, fully controlled access facility designed to provide a high-speed roadway connection for airline passengers, employees, and air freight cargo from the Northwest Arkansas National Airport to Highway 612 (Springdale Northern Bypass) and I-49.



ARDOT Typical Improvement Sections NORTHWEST ARKANSAS NATIONAL AIRPORT ACCESS ALTERNATIVES

Hwy 112 Improvements Projects

Highway 112 is the only continuous North-South route west of I-49, serving local and regional traffic between Fayetteville and Bentonville, making it crucial for regional mobility. Due to the continuing urban development in the area, much of the route is transitioning from a rural to an urban setting with almost the entire corridor now located within the city limits of eight cities. The project looks to address capacity and safety needs that will improve reliability, reduce congestion, reduce serious and fatal crashes and develop an urban arterial that addresses all modes of transportation. There are nine jobs programmed in the current TIP for this project.



ARDOT - Environmental GIS - Dudley - August 30, 2021

STBGP-A & TAP PROJECTS

As a Transportation Management Area (TMA), the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO urbanized area receives suballocated federal funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Surface Transportation Block Grant Program – Attributable (STBGP-A), Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). The annual programs are awarded by NWARPC on a competitive basis to its member jurisdictions and require a 20-percent local match by the grantee.

In August 2022, the NWARPC awarded over **\$9.9 million** in FY 2023 STBGP-A funding, and over **\$1.4 million** in FY 2023 TAP funding to a total of **14 projects** within the region.

Under the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the region's apportionment increased by nearly **\$4 million** in suballocated formula funding.



Sain Street Extension Ribbon-Cutting, Fayetteville (STBGP-A Project)

CRP (CARBON REDUCTION PROGRAM) PROJECTS

The Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) provides funding for road projects designed to reduce transportation carbon dioxide emissions. The new Carbon Reduction Program, created under the \$1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is expected to help states develop carbon reduction strategies and address climate change.

The Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) focus areas were approved by the RPC/Policy Committee in May 2022, and an application template was developed for the new regional funding program. Over **\$2.2 million** was awarded in FFY 2022 and 2023 CRP funding to the region.

Jurisdiction	Project	Funding Amount
Bella Vista	Mercy Way Bridge and Road Improvements and Razorback Greenway Extension	\$326,845
Benton County	Wagon Wheel Road Bridge Replacement	\$800,000
Centerton	Hwy 102 Sidepath (Hwy 279 S to Hwy 102B)	\$600,000
Fayetteville	College Avenue Complete Street (North St to Township St)	\$1,800,000
Fayetteville	Millsap Road & College Avenue Intersection Improvements, and N. Hemlock Avenue Construction	\$320,000
Lowell	US-71B/HWY264 Intersection Improvements	\$240,000
Lowell	Hwy 264/Bellview/Spring Creek Road Roundabout	\$560,000
Lowell	Monroe Avenue Extension from S. Oak Street to Hwy 265	\$439,258
Rogers	W. Pleasant Grove Road & 1 st Street (Hwy 265) Roundabout	\$168,000
Rogers	W. New Hope Road (Hwy 94) & S. 1 st Street (Hwy 265) Roundabout	\$200,000
Springdale	Don Tyson Parkway Extension	\$4,500,000
Bentonville	I-49 Razorback Greenway Relocation and Reconnection	\$500,000
Farmington	Creekside Park Trail	\$500,000
Gravette	Gravette Trail System Phase II	\$408,974
Total		\$11,363,077

STBGP and TAP Projects awarded in 2022 (FFY 2023 Funding)

Jurisdiction	Project	Funding Amount
Cave Springs	W. Wallis Road & Sands Road Sidewalk Extension	\$ 10,784
Centerton	McKissic Trail Phase 2	\$ 500,000
Fayetteville	LED Lighting and Video Detection of Major Intersections	\$ 400,000
Johnson	Razorback Greenway Lighting	\$ 339,300
Lowell	Traffic Signal Improvements	\$ 131,764
Springdale	Trail Plan and Design	\$ 100,000
Centerton	Fish Hatchery Road Trail Project	\$ 25,000
Decatur	Rooster Street to Hill Avenue Sidewalk Improvements	\$ 183,000
Rogers	Hwy 94/US-71B Sidewalks	\$ 290,653
Springdale	Dean's Trail Phase 3A	\$ 240,653
Total		\$2,221,154

CRP Projects awarded on December 7, 2022 and March 22, 2023 (FFY 2022 and FFY 2023 Funding)

STBGP-A, TAP & CRP PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



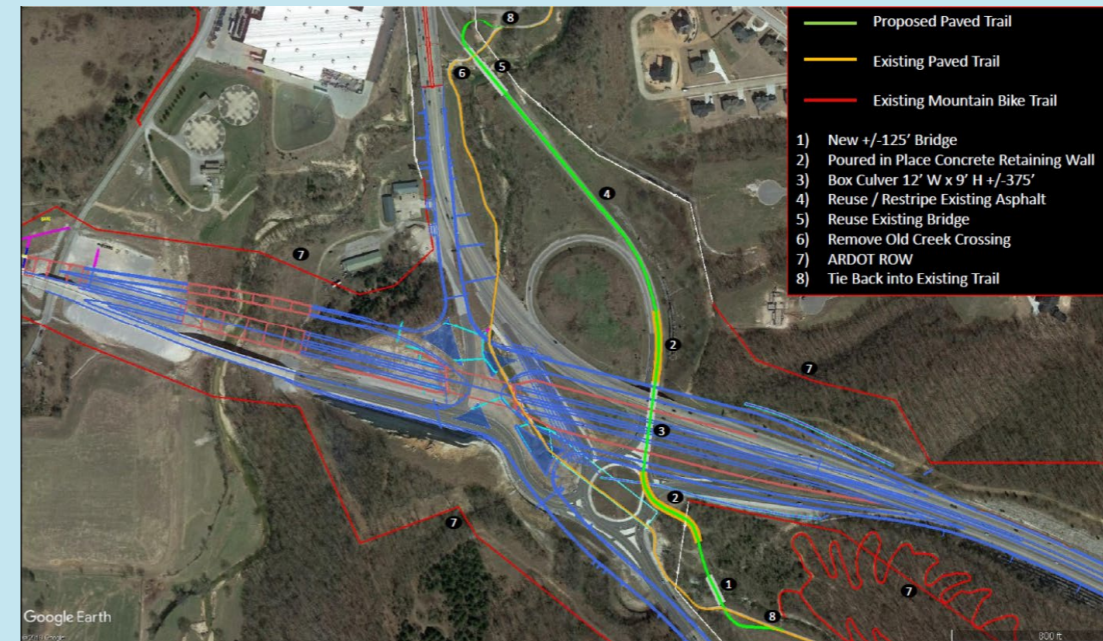
Mercy Way Bridge and Road Improvements and Razorback Greenway Extension

Bella Vista was awarded \$326,845 toward completing an existing project for bridge and corridor improvements through the STBGP-A & TAP programs. The project expands the Mercy Way bridge over Little Sugar Creek to four (4) lanes for traffic and extends the Razorback Greenway into the City of Bella Vista. The project includes a 16-foot, two-way, shared-use paved trail with a barrier wall between the roadway on the northside, and a 6-foot sidewalk on the southside over Little Sugar Creek. Off-bridge road improvements include a 10-foot trail on the northside and a 6-foot sidewalk on the southside.



Wagon Wheel Road Bridge Replacement

Benton County was awarded \$800,000 toward completing an existing project for a two-lane bridge on Wagon Wheel Road over Spring Creek. The project replaces the former single-lane bridge and has been designed to accommodate required stormwater flows.



I-49 Razorback Greenway Relocation and Reconnection (Existing TAP Project)

Bentonville was awarded \$500,000 toward the reconnection of a northern portion of the Razorback Greenway where it is currently interrupted due to the construction of the I-49 Bella Vista Bypass. The project will serve to reconnect Bentonville to Bella Vista and will be approximately 900 feet in length, consisting of two primary segments, one north and one south of the I-49 Bypass Bicycle and Pedestrian Tunnel.

The Razorback Greenway, a 40-mile continuous greenway trail system stretching from Fayetteville, AR to Bella Vista, AR, draws tens of thousands of users from around the region and country annually. This portion of the Greenway had previously recorded over 10,000 users monthly prior to the construction of the I-49 Bypass.



Creekside Park Trail (New Project)

Farmington was awarded \$500,000 toward the construction of 3,670 linear-feet of Creekside Trail a trail section that will connect Farmington trails to Fayetteville and the regional trail network.

The project will consist of a 10-foot shared use trail that begins in the heart of the city at Creekside Park, and terminates at the Farmington/Fayetteville city limits along Alberta Street. Along with regional connectivity, this project will provide the citizens of Farmington the first piece of the planned 6-mile trail loop around the city. The overall loop will connect over 2000 residences to Creekside Park, multiple schools, the public library, Kessler Mountain, and Centennial Park.

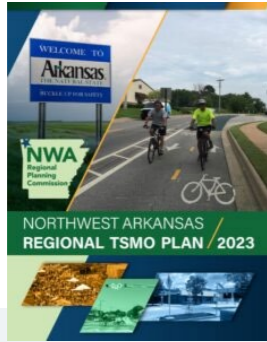


US71B/S. 8th Street Sidewalks (Existing Project)

Rogers was awarded \$290,653 toward a project to install 3,500 linear feet of sidewalk and 2,500 linear feet of curb and gutter on the east side of US71B/S. 8th Street from W. New Hope Road to W. Poplar Street. The corridor is one of Rogers' most heavily trafficked roadways being one of four north-south corridors traversing the extents of the City and serves an under-represented population relying on walking as their main mode of transportation.

This project proposes to infill sidewalk gaps and reconstruct portions of sidewalk currently lacking ADA requirements. Access management is also a key safety component to this project, which proposes to remove, combine, or reduce driveway widths to shorten crossing distances for pedestrians and reduce conflict points between pedestrians and motor vehicles for a safer user experience. This project reduces carbon emissions by improving existing conditions for walking as an alternative mode of transportation. By connecting sidewalk gaps along a major commercial corridor, pedestrian access to local businesses, employment centers, hotels, grocery markets, and schools is increased and dependency on automobile use is reduced.

TRANSPORTATION PLANS



TSMO

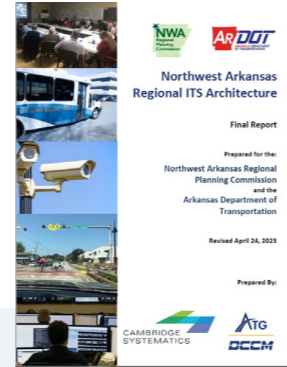
Transportation Systems Management and Operations

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission (NWARPC) is developing a regional approach to Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO). TSMO encompasses a range of operational strategies and applications that can optimize the performance of Northwest Arkansas's existing infrastructure and benefit travelers in the region.

TSMO is "an integrated set of strategies to optimize the performance of existing infrastructure through the implementation of multimodal and intermodal, cross-jurisdictional systems, services, and projects designed to preserve capacity and improve security, safety, and reliability of the transportation system." It examines improvements from an integrated systems perspective, looking beyond a single strategy, project, or corridor.

The Northwest Arkansas Regional TSMO Implementation Plan provides a roadmap for deployment of strategies, action items, policies, and practices to support successful systems management and operations in the region. Implementing these TSMO strategies will lead to increased safety, reduced congestion, and improved system performance. Successful implementation will require ongoing interagency coordination for planning, funding, and operating the improvements.

The Northwest Arkansas Regional TSMO Plan was completed in April 2023. More information can be found at this link:
<https://www.nwarpc.org/tsmo/>



ITS

Intelligent Transportation Systems

Development of a regional Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) architecture is one of the most important steps in planning for and implementing ITS in a region. ITS architectures provide a framework for implementing ITS projects, encouraging interoperability and resource sharing among agencies, identifying applicable standards to apply to projects, and allowing for cohesive long-range planning among regional stakeholders.

To guide the development of the Regional ITS Architecture, the study team developed statements regarding vision, mission, goals, and objectives for the ITS program. These statements were used to identify the high-priority strategies and action items that will be advanced to address mobility and other needs in Northwest Arkansas and meet the strategic goals and objectives for ITS defined in the ITS Architecture Strategic Planning Workshop.

The ITS Plan is anticipated was completed in March 2023. More information can be found on the NWARPC website, at this link:
<https://www.nwarpc.org/its/>

TRANSPORTATION PLANS



CMP

Congestion Management Plan

The Congestion Management Process (CMP) is a systematic approach, collaboratively developed and implemented throughout a metropolitan region, that provides for the safe and effective management and operation of new and existing transportation facilities using demand reduction and operational management strategies. The CMP is required to be developed and implemented as an integral part of the metropolitan planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) – urbanized areas with a population over 200,000, or any area where designation as a TMA has been requested.

The CMP represents the state-of-the-practice in addressing congestion and should be considered in metropolitan areas that are facing current and future congestion challenges. A wide variety of potential strategies are available to mitigate congestion in NWARPC, many of which already have been implemented or studied through regional plans, modal plans, and other studies. The potential strategies are presented in a congestion management "toolbox" that is based on best practices throughout the United States. The plan also identifies additional strategies that NWARPC should consider. Some of these are statewide strategies (e.g., travel demand management), while others are focused on congested corridors.

The 2022 CMP report was adopted by the RPC/Policy Committee on May 25, 2022 by Resolution #2022-08 and is available on the NWARPC website at <https://www.nwarpc.org/transportation/congestion-management-process/>



SS4A CSAP/Vision Zero

Safe Roads for All/ (SS4A) Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP)

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established the new Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program and NWARPC is currently working on a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP). The CSAP is funded through a STBG grant and through the award of a USDOT SS4A Action Plan grant.

The purpose of the CSAP is to support regional, local, and Tribal initiatives to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The Action Plan will consider safety strategies, equity and inclusion, public engagement, behavior change, culture change, complete streets, safe system approach, policy, transparency, design standards, implementation strategies, and will follow the Federal Highway Administration's Safe System Approach Guidelines.

The overall goal for the NWA Vision Zero (CSAP) is to be completed and adopted by NWARPC so that local governments can apply for SS4A implementation projects for the FY 2023 grant cycle..

More information is available on the NWARPC website at <https://www.nwarpc.org/transportation/vision-zero-plan/>



Public Transportation

OZARK REGIONAL TRANSIT (ORT) & RAZORBACK TRANSIT

ORT

Ozark Regional Transit (ORT) provides transportation service for the Northwest Arkansas region. The fixed-route bus service operates primarily within the cities of Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers and Bentonville. A total of **six routes** are provided, including **three local routes in Springdale**, **two local routes in Fayetteville**, and a **regional commuter route connecting all four cities along I-49**. ORT also provides ADA Complimentary services, as well as Non-ADA Demand Response to those that do not qualify for an ADA paratransit ride and live outside the 3/4- mile from any ORT fixed or commuter route. **On-Demand Transit (ODT)** is a new service available within the cities of Bentonville, Fayetteville, and Rogers. This service allows for an expanded service area and users to book an on-demand trip using a smartphone app. In 2022, ORT had a total ridership of **202,060** (including paratransit and on-demand routes), a notable increase from the 2021 ridership of 156,234. More information about ORT can be found at <https://www.ozark.org/>



NWARPC is the designated recipient for the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers AR-MO Urbanized Area and Formula Grants apportioned by FTA .

ORT Bus Stops Enhancements Plan

In 2021 ORT contracted the development of the Ozark Regional Transit Bus Stops Enhancements Plan. ORT recognized the need for a plan that is specifically focused on dramatically improving its existing bus stops and the provision of additional stop improvements in the future. The ORT Bus Stop Enhancements Plan seeks to expand access to transit throughout the region by defining and prioritizing the improvements needed. ORT and its partner jurisdictions recognized the need to develop a plan to improve bus stops throughout the region to provide a basic level of accessibility as well as creating a safe and comfortable atmosphere for riders. This plan was intended to develop a full understanding of existing conditions and to present a path towards implementing the plan's recommended improvements. The plan was completed in October 2022.



RAZORBACK TRANSIT

Razorback Transit provides fare-free fixed route bus and paratransit service to all University of Arkansas students, faculty, staff, and the general public in Fayetteville during all hours of operation. Razorback Transit buses have wheelchair lifts and are air-conditioned.

Full transit service is provided Monday through Friday from **7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.** on class days throughout the Fall and Spring semesters (mid-August to mid- May) including final exam days. Reduced bus service is provided from **6:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.** Monday through Friday during the Fall and Spring semesters (mid-August to mid-May). Saturday service is provided **7:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.** during the same months.

Razorback Transit runs **9 fixed routes**, additional routes for special events and paratransit and on-demand services.

During the Fiscal Year 2022 (July 2021 to June 2022), the total ridership (including paratransit) was **1,072,425** (a considerable increase from FY 2021 of 404,629). Some of the fixed routes have on demand elements. More information about Razorback Transit can be found here <https://parking.uark.edu/transit-services/index.php>

Razorback Transit Management Plan (TAM)

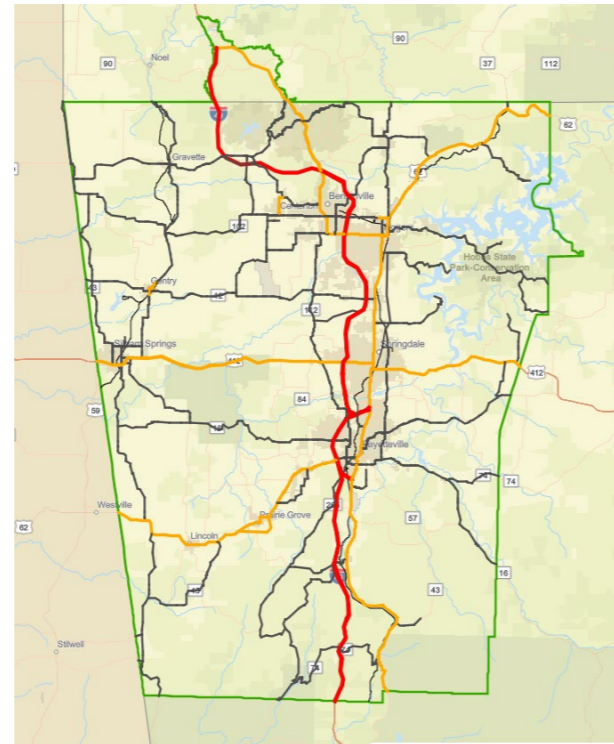
The TAM program enables transit agencies to implement strategic approaches to monitoring, maintaining, and replacing transit assets. FTA's TAM rule (49 CFR Part 625) requires transit agencies to develop a compliant TAM plan, set performance targets for capital assets, create data and narrative reports on performance measures, and coordinate with their planning partners at least every four years. The goal of the TAM plan is to guide the optimal prioritization of funding at transit properties in order to keep transit networks in a State of Good Repair (SGR), the condition in which a capital asset is able to operate at a full level of performance. The TAM plan provides an outline of how the Transit Agencies will assess, monitor, and report the physical condition of assets utilized in the operation of the public transportation system. NWARPC assisted Razorback Transit in the development of their 2022-2026 Transit Asset Management Plan and on October 26, 2022, passed Resolution #2022-15 approving the Razorback Transit 2022-2026 Transit Asset Management Plan State of Good Repair (SGR) Performance Targets.

GIS & Mapping



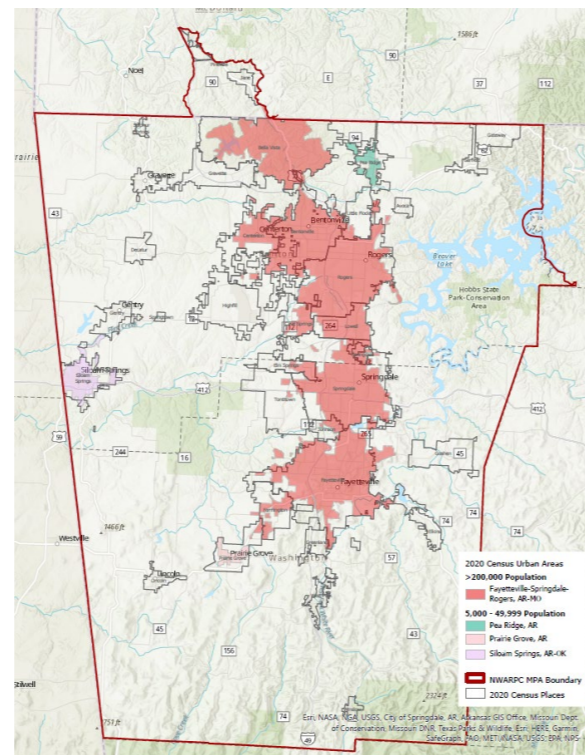
NWARPC continued to provide mapping and GIS support for its member jurisdictions through numerous projects. In 2022, NWARPC provided GIS services for City Zoning, Master Street Plans and Future Land Use Plans for 20 cities in Benton and Washington Counties. The NWA GIS Users Group led by staff met virtually five times in 2022.

Staff at NWARPC also provided GIS services for annexation preparation and planning related research. NWARPC continues to host and support interactive maps for 16 cities in the MPA region and a series of regional maps on transportation and socioeconomic and environmental data. NWARPC also continued its commitment to coordinating and distributing the annual aerial imagery for both Washington and Benton Counties. NWARPC staff coordinated the distribution of aerial imagery data via its [online interactive maps](#), as well as to each individual imagery project participant jurisdiction or organization.



Urban Area Designation

In December 2022 the Census Bureau released the new urban area based on the new housing density criteria released after the 2020 Census. After the 2020 Census, an urban area includes a densely settled core of census blocks that meet minimum housing unit density and/or population density requirements. This includes adjacent territory containing non-residential urban land uses. To qualify as an urban area, the territory identified according to criteria must encompass at least 2,000 housing units or have a population of at least 5,000. The newly designated Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO urban area (198.27 Sq. Miles) has a population of 373,687. Other urban areas in the region include Pea Ridge (with 5,875 population), Prairie Grove (with 5,560 population) and Siloam Springs (with 16,601 population).



Stormwater Education



Seventeen Northwest Arkansas cities, Benton and Washington counties, and the University of Arkansas are partnering with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service and the NWA Regional Planning Commission (NWARPC) on a regional approach to stormwater management. The 18-year partnership creates the NWA Urban Stormwater Education Program and is responsible for the educational components that are required through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) jurisdictions.



In 2022, the Extension's stormwater program held **31 in-person or virtual events** and staffed displays that reached **3,901 MS4 residents** with the message of stormwater pollution prevention. **685 residents participated in 21 litter clean-ups**. The program reached an audience of 69,323 through mass media outlets such as radio, television, and newspaper. **Know the Flow NWA** social media accounts received **16,176 engagements** with area MS4 residents.

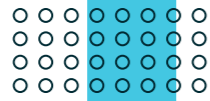
The goal of the program is to help jurisdictions stay in compliance of permit requirements which are set to maintain local water quality standards. In order to do this, the program, with NWARPC, conducts bi-monthly stormwater compliance meetings for MS4 representatives to ask questions of what others in the area are doing. The regional program provides shared knowledge and individualized audit support for each jurisdiction. Additional guidance is given to MS4s as unique situations arise to find resources that ensure they are staying compliant with federal and state stormwater regulations.

This regional program has received praise from the Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality which oversees the permit requirements as an innovative and cost-efficient way to help jurisdictions stay compliant. More information on the program can be found at <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/environment-nature/water/stormwater/>

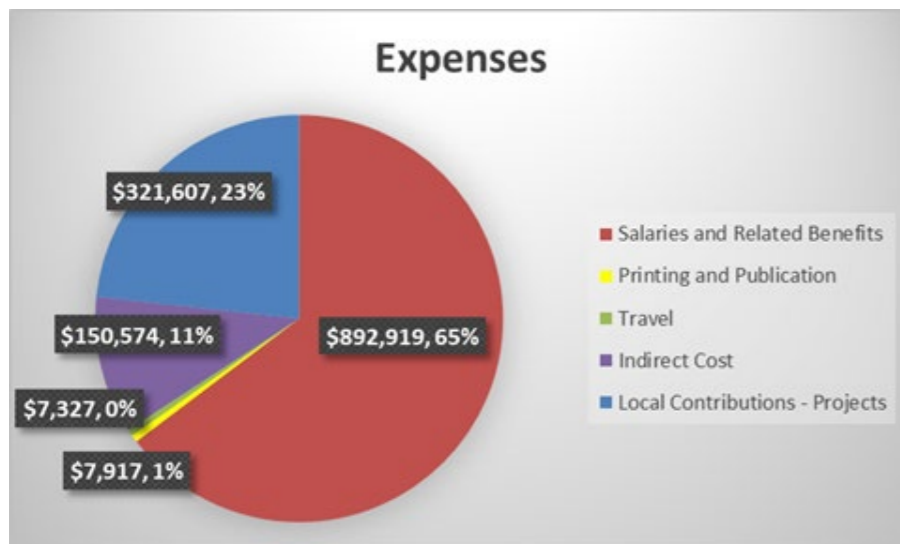
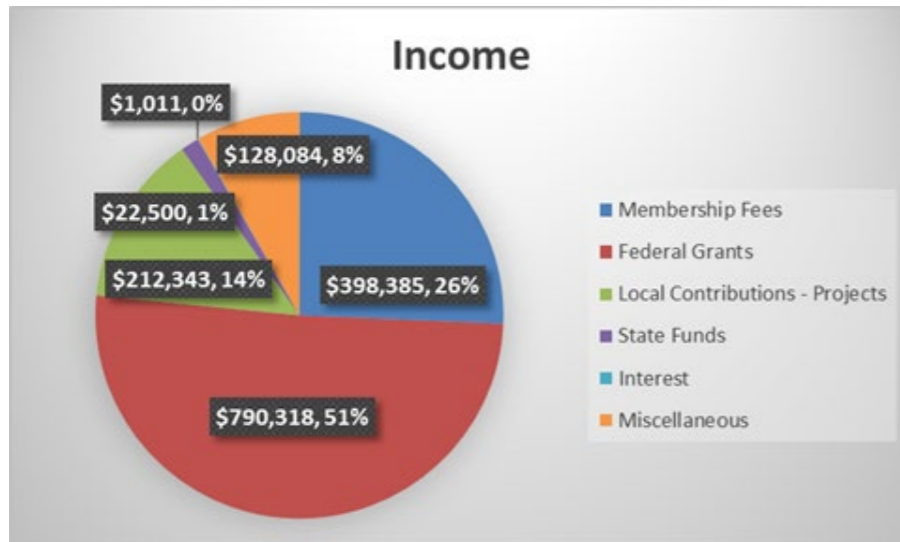
Available to all MS4 jurisdictions, the pre-construction educational program is developed by the Stormwater Education Program for contractors and includes post-test examinations eliminating the "I didn't know" response that is often used during site inspections. In 2022, there were an additional **305 construction industry personnel** trained on Stormwater Construction BMPs. As part of the permit requirements, **550 employees of MS4 cities**, counties and University of Arkansas were trained in stormwater pollution prevention and good housekeeping BMPs.

During 2022, the 5-yr NPDES MS4 permit educational emphasis was sediment and erosion control for the land development community. In response, a targeted media campaign was launched that included **110,865 reached through area billboards** and **189,524 reached through digital media advertisements**. 2,121 unique individuals clicked on those to find more information about sediment and erosion control.

Financial Report



In 2022 the NWARPC's annual income was \$1,552,641 and the total expenses totaled \$1,380,344.



Clearinghouse Report



NWARPC is the federally designated review agency and Clearinghouse for Washington and Benton County portion of the Fayetteville/Springdale/Rogers, Arkansas, Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The purpose of this designation, which is made pursuant to Executive Order #12372, is to ensure 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 2022, federal-aid grants with a total value of \$13 million were submitted and were cleared in order to ensure that proposed uses were consistent with, and in furtherance of the goals, objectives and planned development for the MSA.



NEW TRANSPORTATION ACT FUNDING

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Public Law 117-58, also known as the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law") into law.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is the largest long-term investment in our infrastructure and economy in our Nation's history. It provides \$550 billion over fiscal years 2022 through 2026 in new Federal investment in infrastructure, including in roads, bridges, and mass transit, water infrastructure, resilience, and broadband.

NWARPC took steps throughout 2022 to prepare the region to receive increased suballocated formula funding and apply for competitive discretionary grants.

Amendments to the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) were prepared to include new federal funding programs; a regional working group began to meet regularly to discuss Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure; NWARPC successfully applied for US 412 designation as an Alternative Fuel Corridor (AFC) with support from the Commission (NWARPC Resolution #2022-05) and planning partners; various plans and studies were strategically prioritized in order to support grant applications and lay the groundwork for successful project identification.

Regular updates were given to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and RPC/Policy Committee as new federal Guidance, Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs), and various tools and resources were announced throughout 2022. With the level of population growth in the region, and the increased access to federal aid, it is an exciting time for transportation planning in NWA.



ARVEST Baseball Park in Springdale, EV charging stations



Workman's Center in Lowell EV charging stations



In 2022, NWARPC facilitated a series of EV Workshops throughout the region. In July 2022, ARDOT in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment published the [Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan](https://www.ardot.gov/divisions/transportation-planning-policy/electric-vehicle-infrastructure/) which received high praise from FHWA. More information about the plan can be found at <https://www.ardot.gov/divisions/transportation-planning-policy/electric-vehicle-infrastructure/>

CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

Conferences and workshops attended by staff in 2022:

- 01** Southwest Transit Association Conference – February 2022, Austin, TX
- 02** Arkansas GIS Forum Spring Meeting – April 2022, Hot Springs
- 03** MidAmerica GIS Consortium (MAGIC) Conference – April 2022 – Branson, MO
- 04** Transportation Conference and Equipment Expo (TRC) – May 2022, Hot Springs, AR
- 05** National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Conference – September Boston, MA
- 06** Urban Land Institute (ULI) Workshop, October 2022, Fayetteville, AR
- 07** American Planning Association (APA) Arkansas Chapter Conference, October 2022, Conway, AR



Conference participants on a bike ride at the NACTO Conference in Boston, MA



Participants at the APA, Arkansas Chapter Conference in Conway, AR

RECOGNITION

Retirement - Jeff Hawkins



After more than two decades as Executive Director of the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, our own Jeff Hawkins announced his retirement in December 2022. Under Jeff’s leadership NWARPC has accomplished a long list of notable and strategic projects and has successfully served the region throughout the years. Jeff said: “I’m proud to say that today, every local government in the two-county area is a member, as is the airport authority and Beaver Water District. Everybody has a seat at the table, and everybody has a voice in regional affairs here at Regional Planning, especially when it comes to transportation matters.” Springdale’s Mayor Doug Sprouse praised Jeff by saying: “Jeff is recognized not only in Northwest Arkansas, but across the state and broader region as the ‘go to’ for everything from infrastructure funding to census counts. He has been instrumental during his years of leadership in helping cities and counties address and prepare for continued growth. I wish him the very best in retirement, but we’re going to miss him.” Staff at NWARPC will certainly miss his valuable expertise, guidance, and dedication, as well as his humour and storytelling talent. We all wish him a well-deserved, long, and wonderful retirement.

In Memoriam - Mayor Bill Groom



Greenland Mayor Bill Groom passed away unexpectedly just a few weeks after leaving office in January 2023. He served as mayor of Greenland for 12 years and spent two years on the city council. He also served on the Greenland School Board and was a great supporter of the Greenland Band, donating his time and his personal trailer for the kids to carry equipment to ball games. Mayor Groom served as Chair of the Regional Planning Commission in 2016 and 2017. He served the Commission with grace and dedication and our members will always remember and miss his leadership and good nature. His institutional knowledge and experience will be sorely missed, and he leaves behind a legacy of professionalism and great stewardship that will be remembered by many for years to come.

NWARPC Staff



Tim Conklin, AICP - Executive Director

Donna Lange - Office Manager

Nicole Gibbs, AICP - Regional Planner

Cristina Scarlat - GIS Coordinator/Travel Demand Modeler

Elizabeth Bowen - Project Manager

Stephanie Shaw - Transportation GIS Analyst

Tim Reavis, AICP - Regional Planner

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NWARPC Staff. From left: Tim Reavis, Elizabeth Bowen, Jeff Hawkins, Stephanie Shaw, Donna Lange, Cristina Scarlat, Nicole Gibbs and Tim Conklin