

RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2024, AT 1:30 PM; *DRAFT*

ENTITY	MEMBER	ATTENDING	PROXY
AVOCA	MAYOR ROBERT WHITEHORN		
BELLA VISTA	MAYOR JOHN FLYNN	X	
BENTON COUNTY	JUDGE BARRY MOEHRING (CHAIR) JOSH BEAM JAY FRASIER/DEAN KLINGMON	X X	
BENTONVILLE	MAYOR STEPHANIE ORMAN SHELLI KERR	X	
CAVE SPRINGS	MAYOR RANDALL NOBLETT		
CENTERTON	MAYOR BILL EDWARDS (SECRETARY) LORENE BURNS		
DECATUR	MAYOR BOB THARP		
ELKINS	MAYOR TROY REED		
ELM SPRINGS	MAYOR HAROLD DOUTHIT		
FARMINGTON	MAYOR ERNIE PENN (VICE CHAIR)	X	Melissa McCarville
FAYETTEVILLE	MAYOR LIONELD JORDAN CHRIS BROWN JONATHAN CURTH	X X	
GARFIELD	MAYOR GARY L BLACKBURN	X	
GATEWAY	MAYOR CHERYL TILLMAN		
GENTRY	MAYOR KEVIN JOHNSTON		
GOSHEN	MAYOR RUSSELL STROUD		
GRAVETTE	MAYOR KURT MADDOX	X	Ami Murray
GREENLAND	MAYOR JIM RENFROW		
HIGHFILL	CASSIE ELLIOT	X	Tim Conklin
HINDSVILLE	MAYOR STEPHANIE CASEY		
HUNTSVILLE	MAYOR TRAVIS DOTSON		
JOHNSON	MAYOR CHRIS KEENEY (TREASURER)	X	
LINCOLN	MAYOR DOUG HUTCHENS		
LITTLE FLOCK	MAYOR JEFF VAN SICKLER	X	
LOWELL	MAYOR CHRIS MOORE		
PEA RIDGE	MAYOR NATHAN SEE		
PRAIRIE GROVE	MAYOR DAVID FAULK	X	
ROGERS	LANCE JOBE JOHN McCURDY QUINTON HARRIS	X X	
SILOAM SPRINGS	MAYOR JUDY NATION ALLAN GILBERT	X	Maegan Thomas
SPRINGDALE	MAYOR DOUG SPROUSE PATSY CHRISTIE JIM ULMER	X X X	
SPRINGTOWN	MAYOR TERRI GLENN		
SULPHUR SPRINGS	MAYOR SHANE WEBER		
TONTITOWN	MAYOR ANGELA RUSSELL	X	Mark Latham
WASHINGTON CO.	JUDGE PATRICK DEAKINS BRIAN LESTER SAM ATA	X	Bridget Russell
WEST FORK	MAYOR HEITH CAUDLE		
WINSLOW	ANN MALKIE		
ARDOT PLANNING + DISTRICTS	BRAD McCALEB JASON HUGHEY (DISTRICT 4)	X X	Sunny Farmahan Bashar Qedan
BEAVER H2O DISTRICT	LANE CRIDER		
MCDONALD COUNTY	COMMISSIONER BRIAN HALL		
MoDOT	DAVE TAYLOR (BRITNI O'CONNOR)		
NAT. AIRPORT AUTH.	AARON BURKES	X	
PINEVILLE, MO	MAYOR GREG SWEETEN		
RAZORBACK TRANSIT	GARY K. SMITH (ADAM WADDELL)	X	
U OF A	SCOTT TURLEY (JAY HUNEYCUTT)		
OZARK REG. TRANSIT	JOEL GARDNER (NON-VOTING)		
ARDOT TRANSIT	GREG NATION (NON-VOTING)		
HWY COMMISSION	PHILLIP TALDO (NON-VOTING)		

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NWARPC STAFF: Tim Conklin; Nicole Gibbs; Tim Reavis; and Cristina Scarlat

OTHERS: Doug Thompson (NWADG) and Phillip Patterson (ARML)

NOTE: THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY; VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION CONTINUES TO BE OFFERED AS NWARPC REMAINS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

(1) CALL TO ORDER

The hybrid, in-person and virtual NWARPC/Policy Committee meeting was called to order by Chair, Judge Barry Moehring at 1:31 p.m.

(2) ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

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

(3) APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 25, 2023 AND DECEMBER 6, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Judge Moehring introduced the item and asked whether there were any additions or corrections to the October 25, 2023 or the December 6, 2023, RPC/Policy Committee Meeting Minutes and hearing none, requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

MOTION: Mayor Doug Sprouse made a motion to approve the October 25, 2023 and December 6, 2023 RPC/Policy Committee Meeting Minutes as presented, seconded by Mayor Chris Keeney. Motion passed unanimously.

(4) DIRECTOR'S REPORT/CLEARINGHOUSE REPORT

Chair Judge Moehring introduced the item and Tim Conklin thanked ARDOT and gave updates on regionally significant projects moving forward in 2024. He said the long-awaited Highway 612 Bypass project, a seven-mile connection between US Route 412 to Highway 112, is estimated to be completed in early 2026. He also gave an update on the XNA Airport Access Road, a 3.6-mile roadway that will integrate connection to the new portion of Highway 612 and provide a regional route to the XNA Airport, with an estimated completion date of early 2027. He said a joint groundbreaking for these projects is expected in early 2024, and once more information becomes available it will be shared with this group. He said an I-49 Pavement Preservation project is moving forward to address cracks and potholes on the exiting concrete highway surface, south of Highway 62/MLK Boulevard to the Crawford County line south of the tunnel. The project is expected to be completed in 2025.

Conklin presented the Federal Aid Clearinghouse Report, summarizing four projects which were submitted to the state for consideration of federal funding. He thanked NWARPC staff for their work and noted the Commission is currently hiring for two open staff positions, a Regional Planner and an Associate Planner. He asked whether there were any questions and hearing none, concluded the Directors Report.

(5) NWARPC TITLE VI PROGRAM UPDATE

Chair Judge Moehring introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs explained that the federally required program outlines how the NWARPC accomplishes nondiscrimination in the delivery of its federally assisted services and programs. She stated that the plan must be updated once every three years, with this particular update being due February 1, 2024.

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A. RESOLUTION #2024-01 – Adopting the NWARPC Title VI Program

Moehring asked if there were any questions on this item and hearing none called for a motion to approve Resolution #2024-01 Adopting the NWARPC Title VI Program.

MOTION: Mark Latham made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-01 Adopting the NWARPC Title VI Program, seconded by Mayor Doug Sprouse. Motion passed unanimously.

(6) NARTS FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR (FFY) 2023-2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT #5 – FTA-5339 CHANGES

Chair Judge Moehring introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs explained that the federally required Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) occasionally needs to be modified. She stated this amendment was made at the request of Ozark Regional Transit (ORT) to modify their programmed Federal Transit Authority (FTA) Section 5339 funding amounts, to include portions of FTA-5339 funds from federal fiscal years (FFY) 2021, 2022, and 2023, being programmed for use in FFY 2024.

A. RESOLUTION #2024-02 – Amending the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) FFY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Moehring asked if there were any questions on this item and hearing none called for a motion to approve Resolution #2024-02 Amending the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) FFY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

MOTION: Mayor Chris Keeney made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-02 Amending the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) FFY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), seconded by Jim Ulmer. Motion passed unanimously.

(7) NARTS FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) AMENDMENT #2

Chair Judge Moehring introduced the item and Tim Reavis explained that the fiscal year (FY) 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) currently includes the task of updating the regional Travel Demand Model (TDM). He said the proposed amendment is to include dollar amounts and funding sources for this work. He said updates to the travel demand model and transit alternatives study will feed into the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update, which will be started this year. He stated that NWARPC staff has met with major cities in the region to determine the model scenarios which would best match their respective future land use plans. He stated he expects this to be a two-year project, utilizing \$400,000 in FTA 5307 funding, and local match of \$100,000. He said this funding was previously programmed and approved in the Program of Projects, from federal fiscal years (FFY) 2020-2023.

A. RESOLUTION #2024-03 – Amending the NARTS FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to Include Funding for the Travel Demand Model Update and Transit Alternatives Study as Part of the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update and Authorizing Procurement for the Project.

Chair Judge Moehring asked whether there were any questions and hearing none called for a motion to approve Resolution #2024-03 Amending the NARTS FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to Include Funding for the Travel Demand Model Update and Transit Alternatives Study as Part of the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update and Authorizing Procurement for the Project.

MOTION: Mayor Doug Sprouse made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-03 Amending the

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NARTS FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to Include Funding for the Travel Demand Model Update and Transit Alternatives Study as Part of the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update and Authorizing Procurement for the Project, seconded by Sunny Farmahan. Motion passed unanimously.

(8) CPRG IMPLEMENTATION GRANT – NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI) TO APPLY

Chair Judge Moehring introduced the item and Tim Conklin explained Arkansas received an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) planning grant for carbon reduction planning, and suballocated a portion to NWARPC. He said NWARPC collaborated with consultant Olsson to submit a regional Energy & Environment Innovation (EEI) Priority Action Plan (PAP) supplement to the state by the December 1, 2023 deadline. He said NWARPC members have requested the facilitation of a larger coalition to apply for an EPA CPRG Implementation Grant. He noted this is a very competitive national program with \$4.6 billion in competitive funding available this year (deadline April 1, 2024).

Conklin invited cities to join the coalition if they have appropriate projects that could reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and are ready to be implemented. He stated the NWARPC is using board-adopted plans for project selection, including the NWA Open Space Plan, for its discussion regarding riparian corridors and emphasis on the benefits of environmental conservation and restoration; and the NWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, for its focus on active transportation infrastructure. He said there is also a proposal by the NWA Trailblazers to set up an e-bike incentive program with priority for low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDAC), showing potential for reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) regionally.

Conklin said a working group has been developing a list of priority projects in the region and emphasized that the development of NWA “Green Networks” can address transportation and carbon removal together within urban environments, by building out our greenways within riparian corridors. He also mentioned these projects could be paired with e-bike incentives and land conservation to produce economic, environmental, and public health co-benefits. He said these regional efforts could address an emerging issue of regional ground level ozone approaching thresholds for air quality requirements, especially as NWA is planning for a population of one million by 2050.

Conklin stated that the EPA requested non-mandatory Notice of Intent (NOI) to apply letters from potential applicants. He said there is ongoing dialogue with Metroplan (Little Rock MPO) around the potential to build a multi-metro coalition for wider CPRG application. He said in addition, the state may apply and/or individual communities may apply as well.

Chair Judge Moehring asked if there were any questions and hearing none called for a motion to support NWARPC submitting an informal Notice of Intent (NOI) to Apply for an EPA CPRG Implementation Grant.

MOTION: Mayor Chris Keeney made a motion to support NWARPC submitting an informal Notice of Intent (NOI) to Apply for an EPA CPRG Implementation Grant, seconded by Mayor Doug Sprouse. Motion passed unanimously.

(9) PROJECT AND OTHER UPDATES

A. FY 2025 STBGP-A/TAP/CRP Funding Programs – Call For Projects

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Nicole Gibbs provided an overview of upcoming federal funding application deadlines. She said the FFY 2025 NWARPC Funding Programs Call for Projects was sent out January 8, 2024. She said this year's timeline moved up, with the deadline being April 4, 2024, to accommodate the obligation of funds that must occur in the fall. She noted changes to the sample resolution available to member agencies. She said an estimated \$15 million worth of funding potential is available this funding cycle across the three funding programs.

B. FY 2024 STBGP-A/TAP/CRP Funding Programs – Project Development

Nicole Gibbs summarized FFY 2024 Project Development and thanked ARDOT for their quick turnaround this year with Memorandum of Agreements (MOA).

C. NWA Safety Action Plan Update (SS4A)

Tim Conklin congratulated the City of Fayetteville on their recently awarded \$25 million Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Implementation Grant, explaining it was the second highest award in the nation, behind New York City. He highlighted recent actions around and the NWA Safety Action Plan/NWA Vision Zero Plan, adopted by the Board on June 28, 2023. He said seven cities have individually adopted vision zero targets. He said this phase will include the creation of community specific Comprehensive Safety Action Plans (CSAP) using city-level High Injury Network (HIN) analyses for Bentonville, Centerton, Fayetteville, Rogers, and Springdale. He said Toole Design will create webinars on systemic safety in NWA to be presented and published as a community resource and two quick-build safety projects will be developed in the region. He said Toole Design will create two more webinars on systemic safety in NWA to be presented and published as a community resource. He outlined another main deliverable of phase 2, the Regional Complete Streets Design Guide and said this guide will show street design criteria for the region based on street type and context. He said the guide will produce best practices, processes, and guidance for implementation and maintenance in the region.

Conklin thanked member organizations for attending meetings related to SS4A and working together to support the phase 2 SS4A efforts curated by Toole Design. He asked whether there were any other questions or comments and there were none.

D. ENHANCING EQUITABLE TRANSIT CONNECTIONS PROJECT UPDATE (AOPP)

Tim Reavis reported that FTA awarded NWARPC \$180,000 for engineering activities to be applied to area bus stop improvements, including shelters, benches, sidewalk gaps, bike parking etc. He said there is a complimentary one-to-one grant opportunity that cities can pursue to maximize the awarded FTA funding. He said the Razorback Transit Bus Stop Enhancement plan is coming soon, and shared that the procurement process is now underway, with the request for Letters of Intent (LOI) having been sent out in December. He said LOI responses will be getting scored next week, and the Request for Proposals (RFP) process will follow.

E. OTHER GRANT OPPORTUNITY UPDATES

Tim Conklin provided a reminder that RAISE grant applications are due February 28, 2024, strongly encouraging member agencies outside of urban areas to explore applying. He stated the funding awarded to agencies outside of urban areas could be 100% federal, with no match requirement.

Conklin updated members on the Highway 112 MPDG application, which was not awarded. He said the plan is to resubmit the project for a Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant in February since it was a highly scored application in the next round. He said

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ARDOT Transportation Alternatives Program TAP and Recreational Trails Program RTP grants will also be opening in the Spring. He noted the recently received Walton Family Foundation grant for Strategic Communications Plan development, stating this grant will be increasing the capacity of NWARPC to better communicate the work products produced and provide consistent messaging for mobility messaging as the region grows to one million in population by 2050. He said the LOI for this work has been advertised and we are now awaiting responses from qualified communications firms, which will be reviewed and selected by a local committee

(10) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES

In the interest of time, Tim Conklin briefly summarized the following:

- **Active Transportation Committee (ACT)**
Last Met: January 18, 2024, Subcommittee for NWA Bike Ped Plan also met.
Next Meeting Scheduled: February 15, 2024, at 1:30 PM
- **NWA Open Space Coalition**
Last Met: January 16, 2024 – Grady Spann is now the 2024 chairperson. New in the field meeting format will feature meetings on site of different preservation areas.
Next Meeting: March 13, 2024, at 2:30 PM – Lincoln Lake
- **MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group**
Last Met: December 20, 2023 @ 10:30 am – The group discussed Regional Stormwater Assessment survey response and Guidance for educational topics in 2024 including Automotive Maintenance and Household Hazardous Waste (HHW). The group also touched on changes to the NPDES MS4 Permitting process.
Next meeting scheduled: Tuesday, February 21, 2024, at 10:30am - virtual (every two months on the third Wednesday)
- **NWA GIS User Group**
Last Met: December 12, 2023 – Discussed Ariel Imagery Projects underway in the region to include statewide LiDAR projects to conclude in 2025.
Next meeting scheduled: Tuesday, February 21, 2024, at 10:30am, virtual

(11) PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Judge Moehring asked whether there were any comments. No comments were made or received prior to the meeting.

(12) OTHER BUSINESS

A. Future Meeting Dates:

- **TAC Meeting** – Thursday, February 15, 2024 @ 10:30 AM
- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, February 28, 2024 @ 1:30 PM

Chair Judge Moehring asked whether there was any other business and Tim Conklin said the US Census Bureau will need your responses soon on the national Boundary Annexation Survey (BAS). He said cities will need to use the “CheckMyCity” web application to verify their city limits boundaries by March 1, 2024. He said the Census Geographically Updated Population Certification Program can certify your city’s 2020 census population and housing counts based on boundary updates. He said cities with recent annexations of large areas should submit a request for this to the Census Bureau.

Conklin said there is an opportunity for input on the Arkansas State Rail Plan. He said this plan would guide any future investment in freight and passenger rail infrastructure and services. The purpose of the plan is to position Arkansas for success in future competitive railroad funding opportunities.

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Conklin reminded the group of the upcoming 2024 AR Planning Official Training Course, hosted by the Arkansas Chapter of the American Planning Association, saying this will be a 6-week course open to all interested parties and planning officials, staff, and elected officials as a focus, with courses held monthly from March to October.

(13) ADJOURN

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

PASSED AND APPROVED ON THIS 27th DAY OF MARCH 2024.

Mayor Ernie Penn, Vice Chair, NWARPC

ATTEST: _____