

**NARTS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2025, AT 10:30 AM; *DRAFT***

ENTITY	MEMBER	PRESENT	PROXY
AVOCA	ROBERT WHITEHORN		
BELLA VISTA	MEGAN WORKMAN TAYLOR ROBERTSON CHRIS BRACKETT	X X X	Chris Brackett
BENTON COUNTY	JUDGE BARRY MOEHRING JOSH BEAM JAY FRASIER	X	
BENTONVILLE	JARROD BRIGHTWELL DAN WEESE	X X	
CAVE SPRINGS	MAYOR RANDALL NOBLETT	X	David Keck
CENTERTON	MAYOR BILL EDWARDS LORENE BURNS	X X	
DECATUR	MAYOR BOB THARP		
ELKINS	MAYOR TROY REED		
ELM SPRINGS	MATT CASEY	X	
FARMINGTON	MELISSA McCARVILLE		
FAYETTEVILLE	JONATHAN CURTH CHRIS BROWN PAUL LIBERTINI	X X	
GENTRY	MAYOR KEVIN JOHNSTON	X	
GRAVETTE	KURT MADDOX		
GREENLAND	MAYOR JIM RENFROW		
HIGHFILL	JEREMY JOHNSON		
JOHNSON	MAYOR CHRIS KEENEY		
LITTLE FLOCK	MAYOR JEFF VAN SICKLER	X	Nicole Gibbs
LOWELL	KAREN DAVIS		Chris Moore
PEA RIDGE	MAYOR NATHAN SEE	X	Keegan Stanton
PINEVILLE	MAYOR GREG SWEETEN		
PRAIRIE GROVE	MAYOR DAVID FAULK	X	
ROGERS	JOHN MCCURDY QUINTON HARRIS LANCE JOBE	X X	
SILAM SPRINGS	BEN RHOADS ( <b>VICE CHAIR</b> ) KEVIN MOORE	X	
SPRINGDALE	PATSY CHRISTIE ( <b>CHAIR</b> ) RYAN CARR	X	
TONTITOWN	MAYOR ANGELA RUSSELL	X	Brad Spurlock
WASHINGTON CO.	BRIAN LESTER SAM ATA JEFF CROWDER	X	Bridget Russell
WEST FORK	MAYOR HEITH CAUDLE		
WINSLOW	ANN MALKIE		
NWARPC	TIM CONKLIN	X	
BEAVER H2O DISTRICT	CODY HUDSON		
OZARK REG. TRANSIT	JOEL GARDNER		
RAZORBACK TRANSIT	ADAM WADDELL (GARY K. SMITH)	X	
U OF A	SCOTT TURLEY (JAY HUNEYCUTT)	X	
McDONALD COUNTY	COMM. BRYAN HALL		
MoDOT	FRANK MILLER (MARVIN MORRIS)	X	Jacob Wimsatt
NWA NATIONAL AIRPORT	AARON BURKES	X	
ARDOT PLANNING AND DISTRICT 9	ANTHONY HUNTER SUNNY FARMAHAN ROBERT MOORE	X X	Marcus Rainwater

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**NWARPC STAFF:** Tim Conklin; Nicole Gibbs; Tim Reavis; Luke Aitken; Cristina Scarlat.

**OTHERS:** Tyler Overstreet (Bentonville), Rob Smith (NWA Council), Jon Moran (Hornor & Shifrin), Truett Smith (FHWA), Eric Fusilier (Olsson), Amy Darpinian, Ryan Castor (Burns & McDonnell), Chris Hyatt (Bella Vista), Doug Thompson (NWADG), Greg Simmons (Freese & Nichols), Stephen Sichmeller, Julia Ryan (HDR), Jennifer Turner (Rogers), Kristie Perry (Bella Vista Active Transportation Advisory Board), Zeke Hall (MoDOT), Brandi Holt (Huntsville), Clint Morgan, Anna Stamps (CEI), Nathan Gray (ARDOT), Landon Miller (Michael Baker, Intl.).

***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 in-person and virtual NWARPC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Ben Rhoads at 10:30 a.m. Committee Chair Patsy Christie was absent, having recently retired from her position with the City of Springdale.

**(2) ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**

Members attending the meeting in-person named themselves present and Tim Conklin named the virtual attendees. Luke Aitken recorded member names and tallied votes. A quorum was reached.

**(3) APPROVAL OF JANUARY 16, 2025 & FEBRUARY 20, 2025, MEETING MINUTES**

Acting Chair Ben Rhoads asked for any revisions to the January meeting minutes and one minor typographical error was noted. Staff said the error would be corrected prior to filing of the approved minutes. Hearing no other revisions to be made, Rhoads asked for a motion of approval of the TAC meeting minutes from January 16, 2025. The February 20th, 2025, meeting minutes were not yet complete, and their approval was deferred to the next meeting.

**MOTION: Chris Brackett made a motion to approve the TAC meeting minutes from January 16, 2025. Seconded by Adam Waddell. Motion carried unanimously.**

**(4) FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2026 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) DEVELOPMENT -  
Recommendation to send to Public Comment**

Acting Chair Ben Rhoads introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs provided background on the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) development, outlining the purpose of the document as a roadmap for the core projects the commission will undertake in the upcoming federal fiscal year, starting July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026. Gibbs explained that the UPWP is divided into categories, including administrative tasks, general development, long-range transportation planning, and short-range transportation planning. She stated the UPWP requires a recommendation from this body to send to public comment, which is being proposed for March 31, 2025 to April 14, 2025 to be followed by a formal approval by the RPC/Policy Committee on April 23, 2025.

Gibbs asked whether there were any questions. Hearing none, Acting Chair Rhoads requested a motion from the committee to recommend the UPWP for public comment.

**MOTION: Bridget Russell made a motion to recommend the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Public Comment. Seconded by Jonathan Curth. Motion carried unanimously.**

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**(5) PROJECT AND OTHER UPDATES**

**A. NWARPC Funding Programs (STBGP-A/TAP/CRP)**

Acting Chair Ben Rhoads introduced the item. Nicole Gibbs reported that NWARPC staff, project sponsors, and ARDOT are actively working toward the project obligation deadline of September 25, 2025. She emphasized the importance of project sponsors submitting quarterly progress reports to both ARDOT and NWARPC. Gibbs urged members to continue pushing ongoing projects forward towards obligation.

Gibbs also provided an overview of the FFY 2026 NWARPC Funding Programs application cycle timeline. She stressed the need for applications to include a signed resolution from the applicant's city council. She also reminded applicants if they are seeking additional funds for an existing federal aid project, to ensure they are applying within the parameters of their original signed resolution, and if not, to submit an updated resolution with their new application.

**FFY 2026 NWARPC Funding Programs Timeline:**

Call for Projects (Applications open)	Sunday, January 5, 2025
<b>Application Deadline (<i>Resolution Required</i>)</b>	<b>Thursday, April 3, 2025</b>
Project Sponsor Presentation to TAC Committee	Thursday, April 17, 2025
Selection Committee Site Visits/Scoring/Rec	April/May 2025 (TBD)
Selection Committee Recommendation to TAC	Thursday, May 15, 2025
TAC Recommendation to RPC/Policy	Wednesday, May 28, 2025

Gibbs presented the estimated funding availability as shown below:

**FFY 2026 NWARPC *Estimated* Federal Funding**

(based on FFY 2024 Apportionment + 100% Obligation Authority)

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP-A)	\$ 11,728,473
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	\$ 1,302,362
Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)	<u>\$ 1,402,666</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 14,433,501</b>

She asked for any questions on the presented information and process and none were heard.

**B. Forward2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transit Alternatives Study (TAS) and Travel Demand Model (TDM) Updates**

Tim Reavis provided an overview of current staff efforts to produce the Forward2050 Plan (2050 MTP). He stated that the MTP is required to be updated every five years, and that NWARPC is under contract with consultant WSP to assist staff in developing two key components of the MTP: an update to the Travel Demand Model (TDM) and a new Transit Alternatives Study (TAS). Reavis shared a project timeline graphic and emphasized that the Forward2050 MTP is targeted for completion and is slated to be adopted by the RPC/Policy Committee by March 2026. Reavis thanked RPC members for their help in sharing the project survey with record survey engagement seen so far. He said staff has scheduled two open house events to gather public input for the plan update, one at the Fayetteville Public Library on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, from 4-7PM and another at the Bentonville Public Library on Thursday, April 10, 2025 from 4-7PM. Reavis stated that informational material on the open house events will be shared on social media as well.

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Reavis also provided an overview of the three alternatives being studied as part of the TAS, including route options, designs, and implementation assumptions of the three alternatives and the estimated operations and maintenance costs being considered for each of the alternative options, Bus Rapid Transit, Commuter Rail, and Light Rail.

### **C. Other Ongoing Project Updates**

#### **NWA Vision Zero Safety Action Plan, Phase 2 Update (USDOT-SS4A)**

Nicole Gibbs explained that the Commission is currently working with consultant Toole Design to carry out Phase 2 of the Safety Action Plan, including development and adoption of the Regional Complete Streets Design Guide which was adopted by the RPC last month. She said that Toole Design is also working with five of our member cities to develop their individual safety action plans for their communities with tailored recommendations for local implementation. She said the guide, as a supplement to the NWA Vision Zero Safety Action Plan, will serve as a resource for the region's communities as they work on promoting the safe systems approach and design of context-sensitive streets while their communities grow rapidly.

#### **EPA CPRG PLANNING/IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS - NWA Energy and Environment Innovation (EEI) Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP)**

Nicole Gibbs described the recent work by staff and consultants from Olsson Engineering to complete the work on this project funded by EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program. She said that the public comment period for the Comprehensive Action Plan document was finished on March 17<sup>th</sup> after almost two years of work, and that the final draft will be taken to the RPC/Policy Committee for approval later this month.

Tim Conklin stated that recipients of the CPRG Implementation Grant for the NWA Green Network Projects must complete various online trainings this month to maintain eligibility for program funding. He advised recipients to watch for forthcoming communications regarding these trainings.

#### **NWA Strategic Communications Plan**

Nicole Gibbs explained that staff are working with consultant mhp.si to implement the 12-month communications plan, such as new slide deck templates, logos, branded outreach materials, social media content and so forth. She said the consultant team is also helping staff develop a photo/video library to help increase awareness around the commission's work and advance the regional conversation around transportation infrastructure and transportation choice. Gibbs added that some of the tools developed through this plan will be available for use and distribution by NWARPC members and planning partners to support their own outreach efforts.

#### **Razorback Greenway Corridor Plan**

Tim Reavis recapped recent progress made by staff with the consultant team from FieldOperations on the Razorback Greenway Corridor Master Plan. He said the consultant team made an initial trip to NWA earlier in the month to meet with staff and conduct a site visit to portions of the Greenway from March 5-7, 2025. He said the first Advisory committee meeting for the planning effort, with leaders from seven cities present in a vision workshop format, will be held on April 3, 2025 here at the commission office, with invites going out soon. The consultant team, some NWARPC staff and Advisory Committee members will also be traveling to the Atlanta Beltline on April 24, 2025 to tour trail oriented developments (TrOD) there and meet with local planning leaders. Lastly, Reavis stated that NWARPC staff, along with some city staff and FieldOps consultant staff will all be tabling along the Greenway to conduct public engagement for the new Corridor Plan during the May 3, 2025

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Square2Square ride. He encouraged members and attendees to take the project survey and to stop by during the event.

**D. Other Grant Opportunity Updates**

Executive Director Tim Conklin shared a table, shown below of FY 2024 & 2025 Federal Discretionary Grants Awarded to the NWA Region, comparing those awards with versus without executed award agreements in place.

**FY 2024 & 2025 IDENTIFIED FEDERAL DISCRETIONARY AWARDS TO NWA (WITHOUT EXECUTED AGREEMENTS)**

Year	Program	Recipient	Project Name	Project Description	Award Amount
FY 2024	USDOT - RAISE 24	City of Siloam Springs	Bridging Heritage: Main Street Revitalization	This project will fund the planning, engineering design, and construction of Complete Streets improvements along E Main Street between Maxwell Street and Lincoln Street. The project includes the replacement of the Sager Creek Bridge, pavement resurfacing, bicycle lanes, ADA sidewalks, lighting, street trees, traffic management solutions, stormwater drainage, and utilities.	\$ 11,556,363
FY 2024	USDOT - SS4A Implementation	City of Springdale	Dean's Trail Phase IIIB	The trail segment (Phase IIIB) is the last section to complete Dean's Trail.	\$ 5,187,280
FY 2024	USDOT - CFI Program	Ozark Regional Transit	Expanding Access to Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging in Northwest Arkansas	EV charging infrastructure at up to 17 sites within the cities of Bentonville, Fayetteville, Rogers, and Springdale	\$ 14,924,800
FY 2025	USDOT - RAISE 25 Round 1	Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission	Highway 112: Complete Streets Connecting Communities	This project will construct complete streets improvements along approximately 17.5-miles of Arkansas State Highway 112 starting in the north at Arkansas Highway 12. The project will widen the roadway from 2-lanes to 4-lanes, construct approximately 27 roundabouts in lieu of stop-controlled intersections, access management solutions, add a raised center median, add a sidewalk along one side of the roadway, and a separated multi-use path on the other side.	\$ 25,000,000
<b>Total (without Executed Agreement)</b>					<b>\$ 56,668,443</b>

**FY 2024 & 2025 IDENTIFIED FEDERAL DISCRETIONARY AWARDS TO NWA (WITH EXECUTED AGREEMENTS)**

Year	Program	Recipient	Project Name	Project Description	Award Amount
FY 2024	EPA - CPRG Implementation	Lead Applicant: Metroplan (Central Arkansas); Coalition Members: Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission & City of Fort Smith	Energy and Environment Innovation for the Natural State	Note: \$99,999,999 is the total award - NWA to receive \$36,250,000 share; currently Metroplan (lead) is able to draw down funds and subawardee agreements being executed.	\$ 36,250,000
<b>Total (with Executed Agreement)</b>					<b>\$ 36,250,000</b>
<b>Total Identified Awarded to NWA (FY 2024 &amp; 2025)</b>					<b>\$ 92,918,443</b>

**(6) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES**

Acting Chair Ben Rhoads introduced the item. Luke Aitken reported that ARDOT has opened the application cycle for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP), both of which are competitive funding opportunities for local governments. Nicole Gibbs clarified that while both NWARPC and ARDOT offer TAP funding, the application deadlines differ: ARDOT's cycle closes on April 30, 2025, and NWARPC's closes earlier, on April 3, 2025. She encouraged applicants seeking NWARPC TAP funding to also consider applying for ARDOT funding.

**A. Active Transportation Committee**

Luke Aitken said the ACT Committee last met February 6, 2025; to discuss the complete streets design guide, the NWA Walk Bike plan update, and recent bike and pedestrian project developments in the region. He said the next meeting will be held virtually on April 3, 2025.

**B. NWA Open Space Coalition**

Luke Aitken said the group's last meeting was held on February 12, 2025, at the NWARPC office in Springdale. The group met to discuss past land preservation efforts in the region and discussed some goals for the group in 2025. He said the next meeting would be held in person, on April 9, 2025, at the Devil's Eyebrow Natural Area.

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### (7) PUBLIC COMMENT

Acting Chair Ben Rhoads asked for any public comments and none were heard. Nicole Gibbs said staff did not receive any public comments prior to the meeting.

### (8) OTHER BUSINESS

#### A. Officer Election for Chair CY 2025-2026 – Nominations

Acting Chair Ben Rhoads acknowledged and thanked Patsy Christie for her years of dedicated service to the region and to NWARPC. Tim Conklin noted that Christie served as Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for many years and expressed appreciation for her contributions to the region and the Regional Planning Commission. Conklin said Vice Chair Ben Rhoads was asked if he would be interested in serving as Chair, but he declined and expressed willingness to continue serving as Vice Chair. Conklin announced that John McCurdy, from the City of Rogers, has expressed interest in serving as Chair of the TAC for the next two years.

Ben Rhoads then opened the floor for nominations. Jonathan Curth nominated John McCurdy to serve as Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee.

**MOTION:** Jonathan Curth motioned to approve the TAC nomination of John McCurdy for Chair for calendar years 2025 and 2026. Seconded by Chris Brackett. Motion carried unanimously.

#### B. Future Meeting Dates:

Tim Conklin announced the following upcoming meeting and conference dates –

- **Smart Growth for Water Resources Conference** – Springdale, April 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>
- **NWA Vulnerable Road User Safety Summit** – Fayetteville, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8:00 AM – 5:00PM
- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, March 26, 2025 @ 1:30 PM
- **TAC Meeting** – Thursday, April 17, 2025 @ 10:30 AM

Tim Conklin highlighted the recent changes in state law regarding accessory dwelling units (ADU) and elimination of territorial jurisdiction. He mentioned that cities need to review their zoning ordinances to ensure compliance with the new and repealed laws. He encouraged the attendees to keep reviewing the current active bills in the Arkansas state House related to planning and zoning. Tim also informed the attendees about upcoming conferences and the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) National Conference which is to be held in Northwest Arkansas in 2026.

### (9) ADJOURNMENT

Acting Chair Ben Rhoads asked whether there was any other business to discuss and hearing none adjourned the meeting at 11:18 AM.