



Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission

Council of Governments and Metropolitan Planning Organization for NWA

WELCOME!

Please sign in



Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission

Council of Governments and Metropolitan Planning Organization for NWA

WE WORK WITH PLANNING PARTNERS



City Leaders – Stakeholders –
Residents

TO LEAD COMMUNITY PLANNING



Transportation Choice – Environmental
Innovation – Responsible Growth

FOR A SAFE, CONNECTED & RESILIENT REGION.

VISION AND SHARED GOALS



CONVENING AND COLLABORATION



FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION



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our website to learn more!**



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nwarpc.org





Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission

Council of Governments and Metropolitan Planning Organization for NWA

City Population Projections

| Cities | Population Estimate July 1, 2024 | 2030 | 2040 | 2050 | Average Annual Growth Rate | Overall Growth Rate |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Avoca | 501 | 566 | 693 | 849 | 2.05% | 69% |
| Bella Vista | 33,274 | 35,552 | 39,701 | 44,335 | 1.11% | 33% |
| Bentonville | 61,791 | 74,989 | 103,543 | 142,969 | 3.28% | 131% |
| Cave Springs | 6,304 | 7,821 | 11,205 | 16,052 | 3.66% | 155% |
| Centerton | 25,745 | 29,905 | 38,386 | 49,272 | 2.53% | 91% |
| Decatur | 1,723 | 2,072 | 2,819 | 3,835 | 3.13% | 123% |
| Elkins | 4,025 | 4,581 | 5,684 | 7,052 | 2.18% | 75% |
| Elm Springs | 2,872 | 3,348 | 4,322 | 5,581 | 2.59% | 94% |
| Farmington | 10,473 | 11,931 | 14,825 | 18,421 | 2.20% | 76% |
| Fayetteville | 103,134 | 113,022 | 131,654 | 153,358 | 1.54% | 49% |
| Garfield | 622 | 666 | 747 | 837 | 1.15% | 35% |
| Gateway | 452 | 561 | 805 | 1,155 | 3.67% | 156% |
| Gentry | 4,672 | 5,595 | 7,557 | 10,208 | 3.05% | 118% |
| Goshen | 2,383 | 2,726 | 3,411 | 4,269 | 2.27% | 79% |
| Gravette | 3,826 | 5,093 | 8,204 | 13,215 | 4.88% | 245% |
| Greenland | 1,240 | 1,713 | 2,935 | 5,028 | 5.53% | 306% |
| Highfill | 2,793 | 3,970 | 7,132 | 12,813 | 6.03% | 359% |
| Johnson | 3,705 | 4,244 | 5,321 | 6,672 | 2.29% | 80% |
| Lincoln | 2,371 | 2,854 | 3,888 | 5,295 | 3.14% | 123% |
| Little Flock | 3,040 | 3,492 | 4,399 | 5,542 | 2.34% | 82% |
| Lowell | 11,568 | 14,209 | 20,018 | 28,201 | 3.49% | 144% |
| Pea Ridge | 10,190 | 11,907 | 15,437 | 20,013 | 2.63% | 96% |
| Prairie Grove | 8,589 | 9,862 | 12,415 | 15,631 | 2.33% | 82% |
| Rogers | 75,639 | 85,807 | 105,880 | 130,650 | 2.12% | 73% |
| Siloam Springs | 20,075 | 22,410 | 26,921 | 32,341 | 1.85% | 61% |
| Springdale | 89,368 | 101,859 | 126,678 | 157,543 | 2.20% | 76% |
| Springtown | 89 | 110 | 155 | 220 | 3.54% | 147% |
| Sulphur Springs | 475 | 589 | 841 | 1,202 | 3.64% | 153% |
| Tontitown | 7,941 | 8,972 | 10,996 | 13,476 | 2.05% | 70% |
| West Fork | 2,356 | 2,902 | 4,106 | 5,810 | 3.53% | 147% |
| Winslow | 364 | 390 | 436 | 488 | 1.14% | 34% |
| Total | 501,600 | 573,718 | 721,116 | 912,332 | 2.33% | 82% |



FORWARD



Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice

Growing Support for Diverse Options in NWA

The 2024 Regional Transportation Survey reveals growing public support for diverse transportation options, including public transit, biking, and pedestrian infrastructure. Conducted every five years, it highlights shifting priorities amid Northwest Arkansas' rapid population growth and transportation challenges.

Traffic Congestion Still a Major Concern, but Less Than in Past



88% of respondents recognize increased traffic congestion between 2019 and 2024, compared to 94% in 2019 reporting an increase from the previous five years.



Public Transit Support on the Rise

Better routes, frequent service, and real-time updates are key to increasing usage.



71% believe it is "very important" for local governments* to fund and support public transportation



+10% since 2019



85% supported an expansion of public transportation in Benton and Washington counties



+7% since 2019



The Need for Transportation Choice

Public interest in alternatives like public transit, biking, and walking is growing. While maintaining and building new streets and highways remained the highest funding priority in 2024, bus services and bike/walking facilities received higher funding priority compared to previous years, reflecting stronger support for diverse transportation options.



Transportation Challenges

Residents want safer, more accessible infrastructure that addresses congestion issues and the lack of non-auto infrastructure.

Many of the issues identified in 2019 remain prevalent in 2024:

- Congestion in Rogers, Bentonville, Fayetteville, Springdale, and Lowell
- Lack of public transportation
- Large truck traffic



+17% since 2019



Concerns about unsafe pedestrian facilities and lacking connections among sidewalks and bike trails have risen by 17% since 2019, with 58% identifying gaps to safe and connected infrastructure as a current or emerging issue.



Key Takeaways

- 1 Community Support for Transportation Choice:**  There is growing public support for ongoing investments in diverse transportation options to accommodate the needs of a rapidly expanding community.
- 2 Balanced Approach:**  A balanced strategy that serves all types of roadway users—commuters, freight, visitors, and residents—is crucial for responsible growth and accessibility and maintaining the region's quality of life, emphasizing the need to align transportation decisions with other regional priorities.

Visit the project webpage to learn more!

nwarpc.org/transportation/mtp/



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Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice

nwarpc.org/transportation/mtp/



What is a regional transportation plan?

Required by the federal government and updated every 5 years, this plan provides a policy framework for the region's transportation system over the next 25yrs.

This includes:

- Major Streets and Highways
- Active Transportation
- Public Transportation
- Freight and Aviation

The **Forward2050 Plan** is:

- Aspirational, collaborative, comprehensive, and regional.
- Respectful of and integrates with local plans.
- Focused on protecting and enhancing the quality of life in Northwest Arkansas.

Goals



G1: Implement a **safe, efficient, and reliable** transportation system.



G2: Advance plans and policies that enable **transportation choice**, respect the **natural and human environment**, and enhance **quality of life**.



G3: Foster **collaboration** and reinforce **economic competitiveness**.

Fall 2024 Winter 2024/2025 Spring 2025 Summer 2025 Fall 2025 Winter 2025/2026

Committee Engagement

Public Engagement

Committee Engagement

Draft Plan Public Engagement

Plan Adoption



Travel Demand Model Update + Goal Setting + Project Development

2050 Scenario Planning
3 Land Use + Transit Alternatives

Draft Forward2050 Plan

Components

- Existing Conditions and Future Demands
- Transportation Needs and Strategies
- Funding and Projects
- Impact Analysis
- Implementation and Monitoring

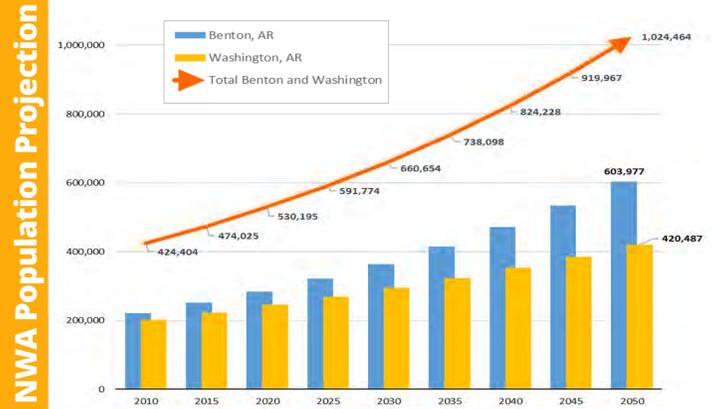


Where do people in Northwest Arkansas live and work today?

Population and Land Use

Over the past 30 years, Northwest Arkansas has grown by over **100,000 people per decade** and is projected to reach over **1 million residents by 2050**.

Recent Census Bureau data and other key reports reveal significant upward trends in Northwest Arkansas' population growth and economic development.



Source: Arkansas Economic Development Institute (AEDI) 2024

What the Data Shows

- **Benton County** is growing at a denser/faster rate than Washington County, with **Bentonville's** population density increasing more rapidly than other major cities in the region.
- **Smaller cities** are acquiring a larger share of the urban area.
- NWA is becoming **more diverse**.
- Over 75% of NWA residents use **personal vehicles** for travel.
- NWA **commute times** are slightly lower than the state average.

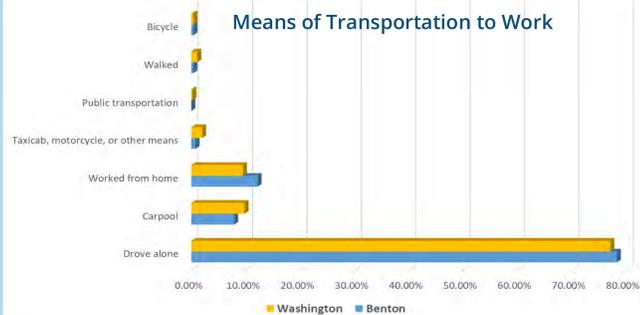
Demographics

Benton & Washington Counties

- **Total Population = 587,750**
(Census Bureau, July 1, 2024 Estimates)
- **Total Housing Units = 235,064**
(Census Bureau, July 1, 2023 Estimates)
- **Total Households = 203,134**
(Census Bureau, 2019-2023 Estimates)
- **Total Employers = 13,669**
(Census Bureau, 2022 Estimates)
- **Total Employment = 227,781**
(Census Bureau, 2022 Estimates)

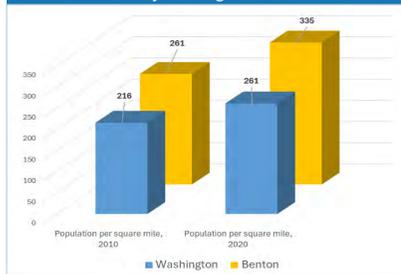
Commuting

Average Travel Time to Work:
Benton County: 21.4 minutes
Washington County: 22 minutes
Arkansas: 22.7 minutes

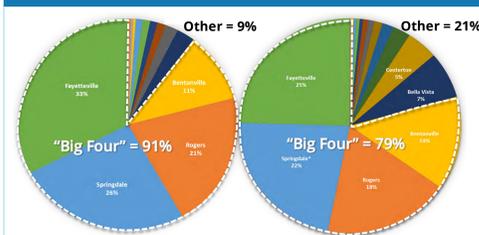


Source: 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate

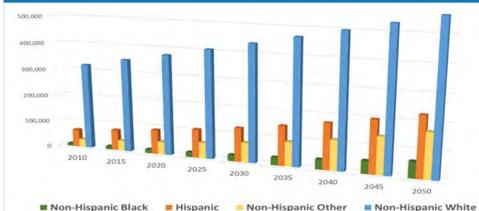
Population Per Square Mile - 2010 & 2020 County and "Big Four" Cities



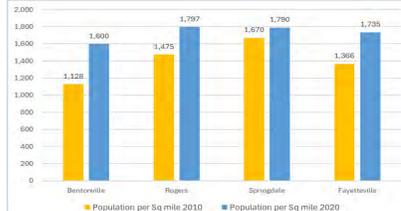
Urban Area (2000) Urban Area (2020)



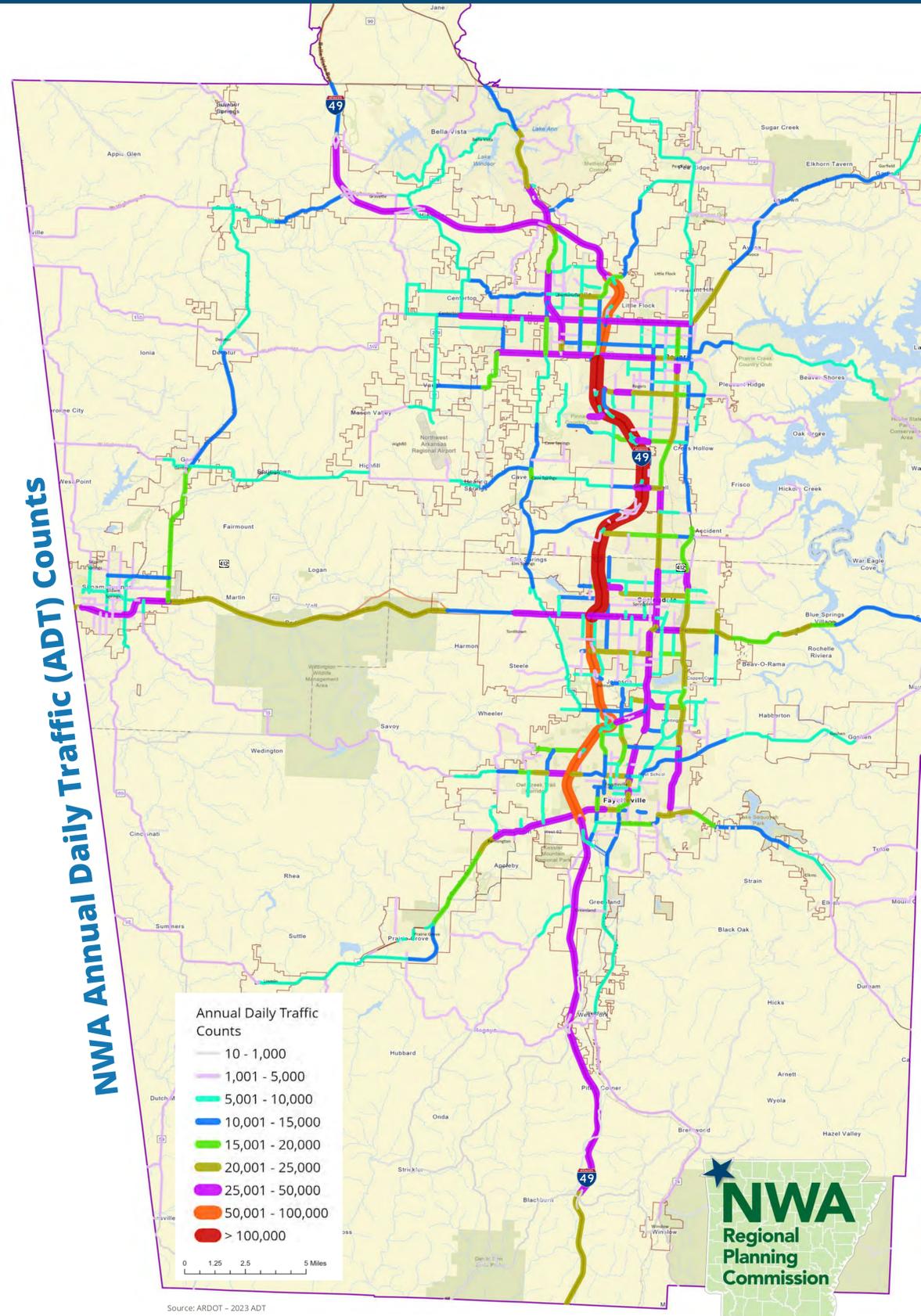
Cohort Population Projections Benton and Washington Counties



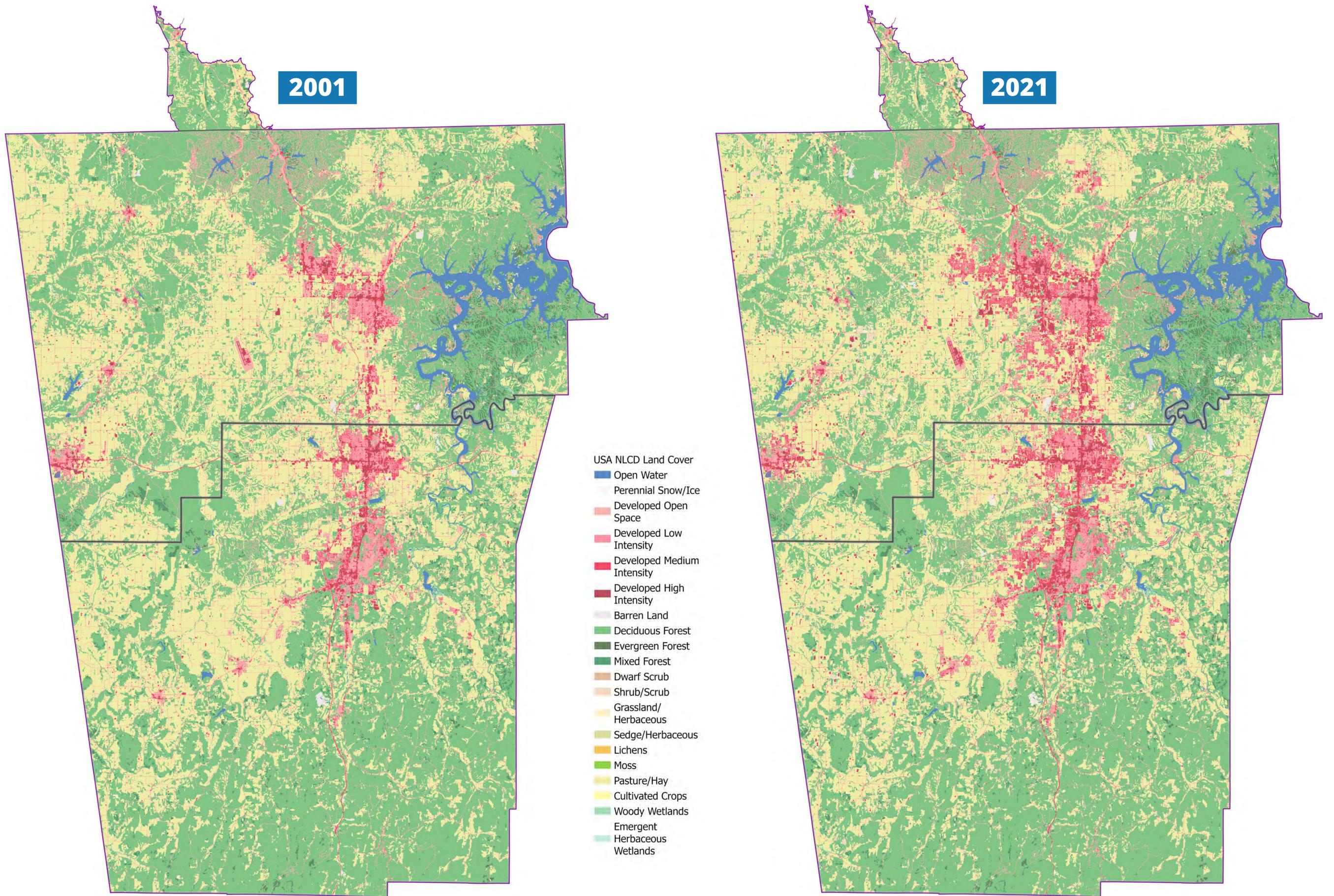
Source: AEDI 2024



Source: Decennial Census 2010 & 2020



NWA Land Cover – 2001 and 2021 National Land Cover Database (NLCD)



Where will 1 million people live and work in 2050?

Future Growth and Development Scenarios

Three growth scenarios are being developed to explore the relationship between land use, growth patterns, and transportation infrastructure. These scenarios help assess future growth, guide regional and local planning, and identify the necessary infrastructure and policies to support an efficient, sustainable transportation system in Northwest Arkansas.

Suburban Growth Scenario

Planned Growth Scenario

Urban Growth Scenario

Key Assumptions:

- The region's development will follow patterns seen over the past 30 years.
- Cities with policies to diversify housing options are either unsuccessful or unwilling to implement them.

Probable outcomes:

- Longer commutes due to increasing distance between where people live and work .
- Higher infrastructure maintenance costs.
- Loss of agricultural/working lands.

Key Assumptions:

- Cities will successfully follow their currently adopted long-range plans.
- Planned highway and arterial roadway infrastructure projects will be completed as scheduled.

Probable outcomes:

- Mixed use projects will support the region by providing housing, shopping, & employment within the existing urban area.
- Nodal transit-oriented development will support transit systems.

Key Assumptions:

- Growth is focused in the urban core with transit-supportive development patterns.
- The region implements and upholds policies to protect the natural landscape and working lands.

Probable outcomes:

- Viable transportation options outside of the personal vehicle.
- Less greenfield development results in rural environment remaining intact.



Rural Town

Rural

Suburban Residential

Suburban Commercial/Industrial

City Center Main Street

City Center Downtown



FORWARD



Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice

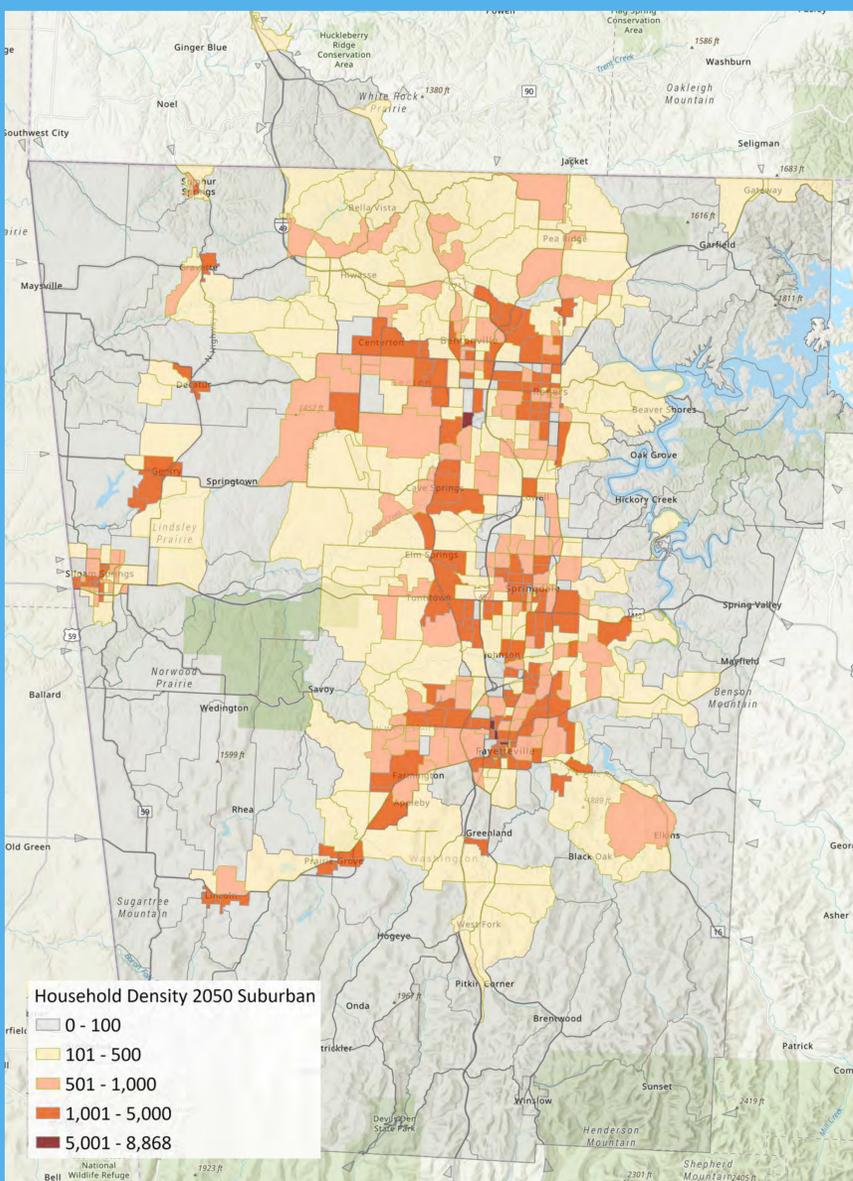


nwarpc.org/transportation/mtp/

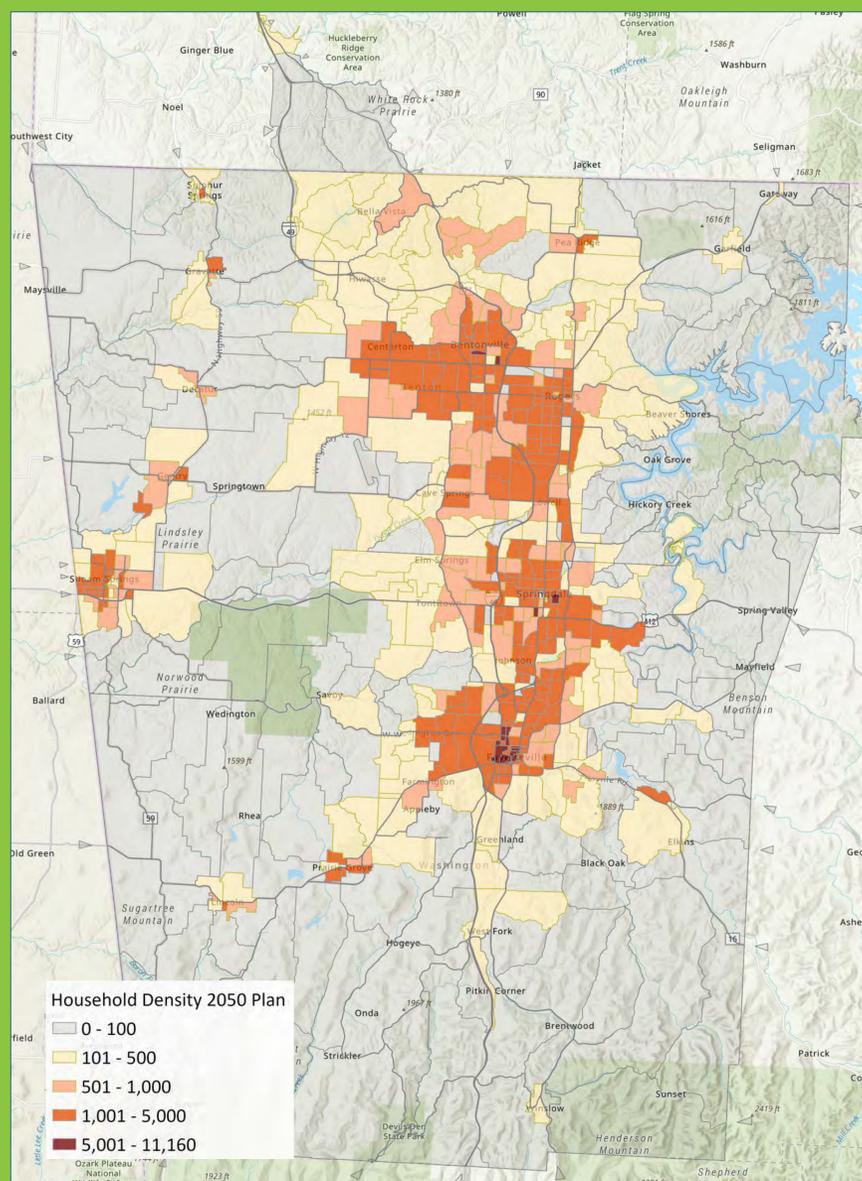
Future Growth and Development Scenarios

Comparing the three scenarios —**Planned Growth, Suburban Growth, and Urban Growth**—offers insight into how Northwest Arkansas might develop over time, helping evaluate alignment with local and regional plans and anticipate the infrastructure, policies, and strategies needed to support a growing population while sustaining an efficient, connected, and resilient transportation system.

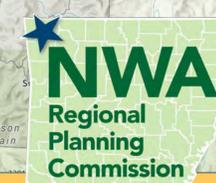
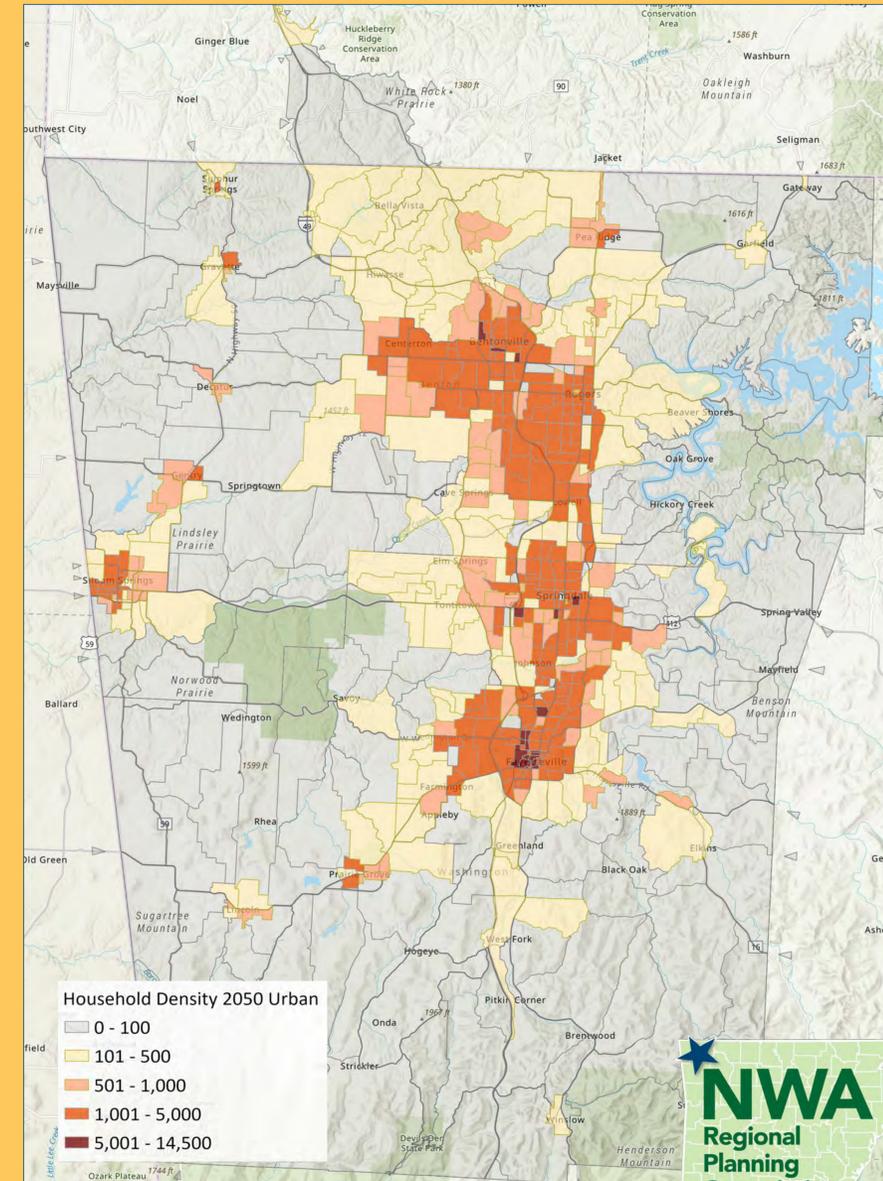
Suburban Growth Scenario



Planned Growth Scenario



Urban Growth Scenario



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Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice



nwarpc.org/transportation/vision-zero-plan/



NWA Regional VISION ZERO

NWA Comprehensive Safety Action Plan

Adopted in June 2023, and rooted in the Safe System Approach, the NWA Vision Zero plan outlines targeted strategies and actions that will reduce and eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes across Northwest Arkansas.

What is Vision Zero? Vision Zero is a traffic safety philosophy that believes nothing is more important than a human life on our roadways. It presents a new way of thinking about how we design our roads, educate travelers, and share responsibility to create safer environments for all.



ANTICIPATE HUMAN ERROR

SEPARATE USERS IN SPACE

SEPARATE USERS IN TIME

INCREASE ATTENTIVENESS & AWARENESS

ACCOMMODATE HUMAN INJURY TOLERANCES

REDUCE SPEEDS

REDUCE IMPACT FORCES

Complete Streets are a crucial component of achieving **Vision Zero** goals!

Proactive Systemic Safety Countermeasures

- Install pedestrian-scale lighting along the HIN, especially at trail crossings and along arterials
- Reduce distances between crossings along arterials with long distances between signalized intersections
- Daylight intersections (remove obstacles that impair sight lines) in town centers and in high-volume pedestrian areas
- Implement leading pedestrian intervals at signalized intersections, specifically on applicable HIN corridors
- Implement no right turns on red on the HIN or high-volume pedestrian routes
- Adjust signal timing and signage for speed limit on arterials

Between 2017 and 2021 **1,369 people** were killed or seriously injured in crashes in NWA, averaging more than five people every week.

Averaging **44 fatalities a year** / **5 KSI crashes a week** over 5 years

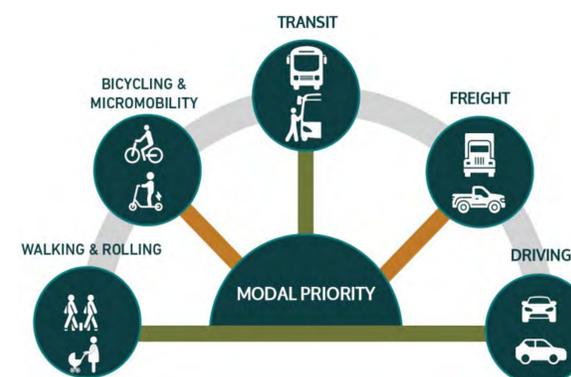
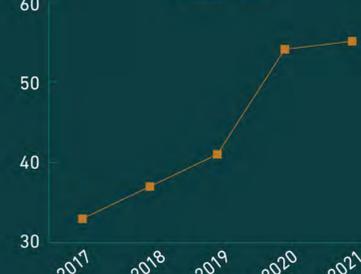
Total Crashes



Fatalities & Severe Injuries



Fatalities



What Are Complete Streets? An approach to planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining streets that enables safe access for all people who need to use them, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

The NWA Regional Complete Streets Design Guide enables local jurisdictions to implement a balanced approach for designing streets that accommodate all modes of transportation. It includes a modal priority framework that considers street type, land use context, travel patterns, and the street's role in the local and regional network.

FORWARD



2050

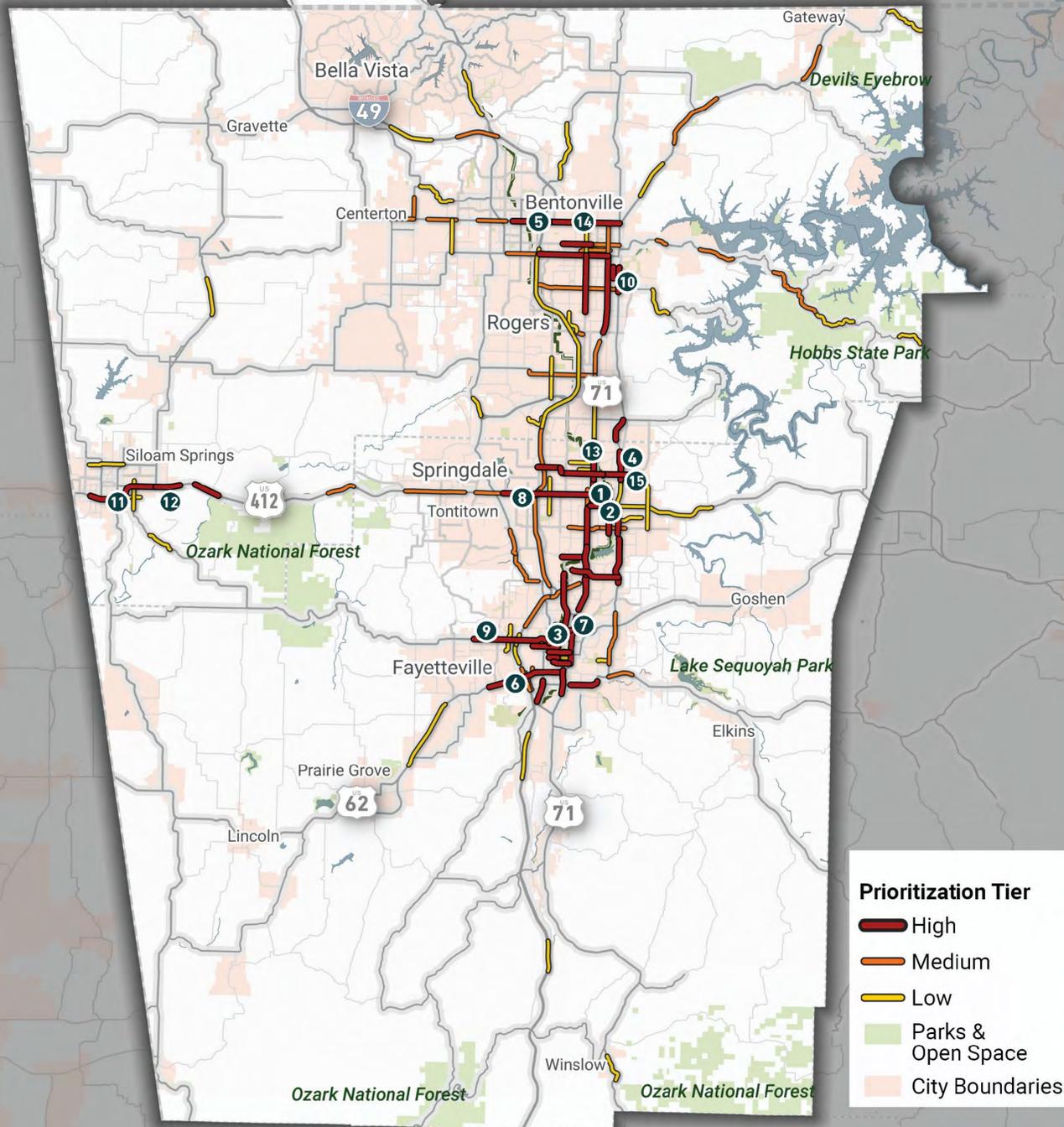
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NWA Regional VISION ZERO

High Injury Network Project Corridors

Northwest Arkansas



Prioritization Tier

- █ High
- █ Medium
- █ Low
- █ Parks & Open Space
- █ City Boundaries

Highest Priority Projects

The following map shows prioritized HIN project corridors for the region. The Top 15 highest scoring projects are listed below.

- 1 West Robinson Avenue (US 412)**
Turner Street to South Thompson Street (Springdale)
- 2 South Thompson Street (US 71B)**
West Lakeview Drive to West Emma Avenue (Springdale)
- 3 North Garland Avenue**
Norht of West Berry Street to South of West Lawson Street (Fayetteville)
- 4 North Old Missouri Road (Hwy 265)**
East Emma Avenue to South of East Randall Wobbe Lane (Springdale)
- 5 Southeast 14th Street (Hwy 102)**
Water Tower Road/Bekaert Drive to West of Phyllis Street (Bentonville)
- 6 West Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard**
West Ozark Trail to South School Avenue (Fayetteville)
- 7 North College Avenue (US 71B)**
South of East Township Street to East Center Street (Fayetteville)
- 8 West Sunset Avenue (US 412)**
South Thompson Street to Westside Village Street (Springdale)
- 9 West Wedington Drive**
MP 16.40 to North Garland Avenue (Fayetteville)
- 10 South 5th Street**
West Olich Street to West Oak Street (Rogers)
- 11 US 412; AR 59**
AR 59 to West of AR 59 (Siloam Springs)
- 12 US 412**
AR 59 to MP 11.65 (Siloam Springs)
- 13 North Thompson Street (US 71B)**
West Emma Avenue to West County Line Road (Springdale)
- 14 West Hudson Road (US 62)**
Water Tower Road/Bekaert Drive to North 2nd Street (Rogers)
- 15 East Huntsville Avenue**
Mill Street to East Emma Avenue (Springdale)

Note: Maps based on Arkansas DOT ACAT data and Missouri DOT STARS data for all recorded crashes between 2017-2021.

0 2.5 5 mi



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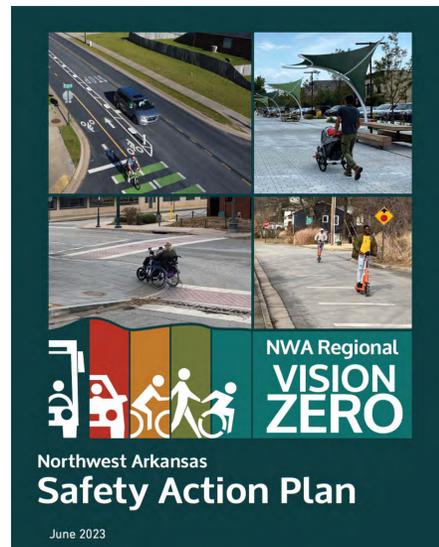


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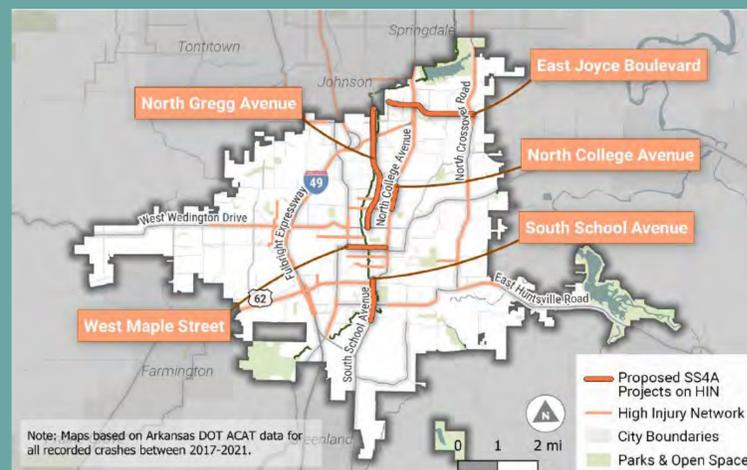
Planning & Policy *leads to* Funding & Project Implementation

In June 2023, the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission completed the **NWA Vision Zero Safety Action Plan**. Following the plan's recommendations, cities across the region set Vision Zero goals to eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes. With targets in place, cities have secured funding to implement projects that reduce crashes and improve safety.



Safe Streets and Roads for Fayetteville, Arkansas

Made eligible by the NWA Safety Action Plan, the City of Fayetteville received a **\$25 million SS4A Implementation Grant** for safety projects on five corridors identified on the High Injury Network (HIN). All projects focus on increasing driver attentiveness by improving the street environment.



U.S. DOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) 2023 Application Narrative

Dean's Trail Phase IIIB, Springdale, Arkansas

In 2024, the City of Springdale was awarded a **\$5.2 million SS4A Implementation Grant** to complete the final segment of Dean's Trail, connecting to the Razorback Greenway. This multi-use trail will provide a safe, dedicated route for pedestrians and cyclists, addressing a critical safety gap.



U.S. DOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) 2024 Application Narrative

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nwarpc.org/environment/

NWA Energy & Environment Innovation (EEI) Plan

BACKGROUND

- ✓ Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment (ADEE) received \$3M Planning Grant from EPA's Carbon Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG)
- ✓ Developing the **Arkansas Energy & Environment Innovation Plan** for carbon reduction/sequestration strategies
- ✓ **Planning Partners:** ADEE, Metroplan (Little Rock), NWARPC, and City of Fort Smith



Energy



Transportation



Industrial



Buildings



Agricultural



Waste & Recycling



Carbon Removal

NWA Open Space Plan (2016)

The Northwest Arkansas Open Space Plan was created to protect and promote the region's valued natural landscapes and open spaces, ensuring a high quality of life as the area grows.

Why? Natural lands and waters are integral to the region's identity and sense of place. As growth continues, vital natural areas are at risk of being replaced by urban development.

Prioritization. The plan provides a strategic blueprint for protecting key natural, cultural, historic, agricultural, and recreational resources based on public and stakeholder input.

OBJECTIVES

Rapid growth and evolving demands in NWA present both opportunities and challenges.

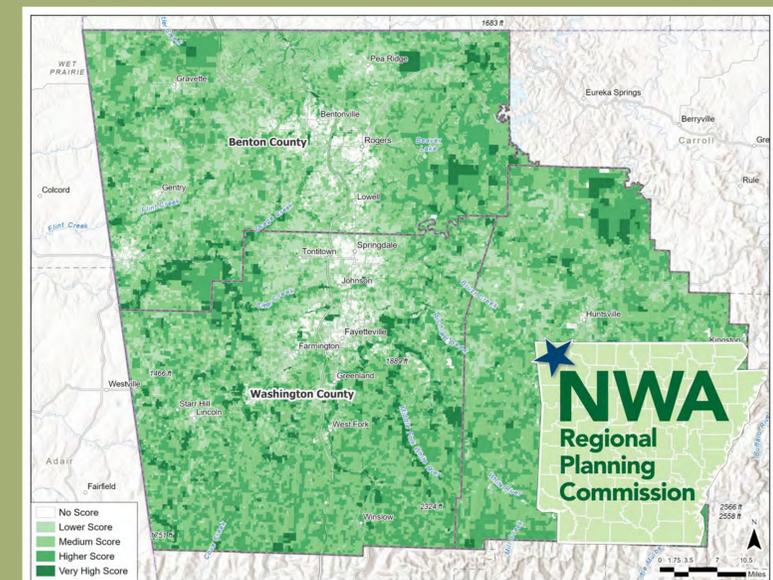
Collaborative, voluntary framework to:

- ✓ Align local efforts to maximize impact in various sectors.
- ✓ Offer strategies to address regional needs:
 - Protect natural assets
 - Create jobs and spur economic growth
 - Enhance quality of life
- ✓ Increase competitiveness for funding opportunities.

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS MAPPING TOOL

This platform helps policymakers, planners, and community members understand NWA's natural infrastructure in order to:

- Inform land-use planning decisions
- Evaluate environmental impacts
- Prioritize green infrastructure investments
- Engage community members.



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Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice

NWA GREEN NETWORK

Enabled by EEl planning, the **Arkansas Tri-Region Coalition**, including Metroplan, NWARPC, and the City of Fort Smith, secured **\$99.99 million** for the **“Energy & Environment Innovation for the Natural State”** initiative. This grant, supported by over 50 partner agencies, will fund projects across Central Arkansas, Northwest Arkansas, and the Arkansas River Valley, benefiting half of the state’s population.

In Northwest Arkansas, NWA Regional Planning Commission is leading **17 NWA Green Network projects across nine cities**, plus two regional programs: an E-bike Incentive Program and a Workforce Training Program, focused on **protecting and restoring natural cores and corridors** and improving access to **connected active transportation networks**.



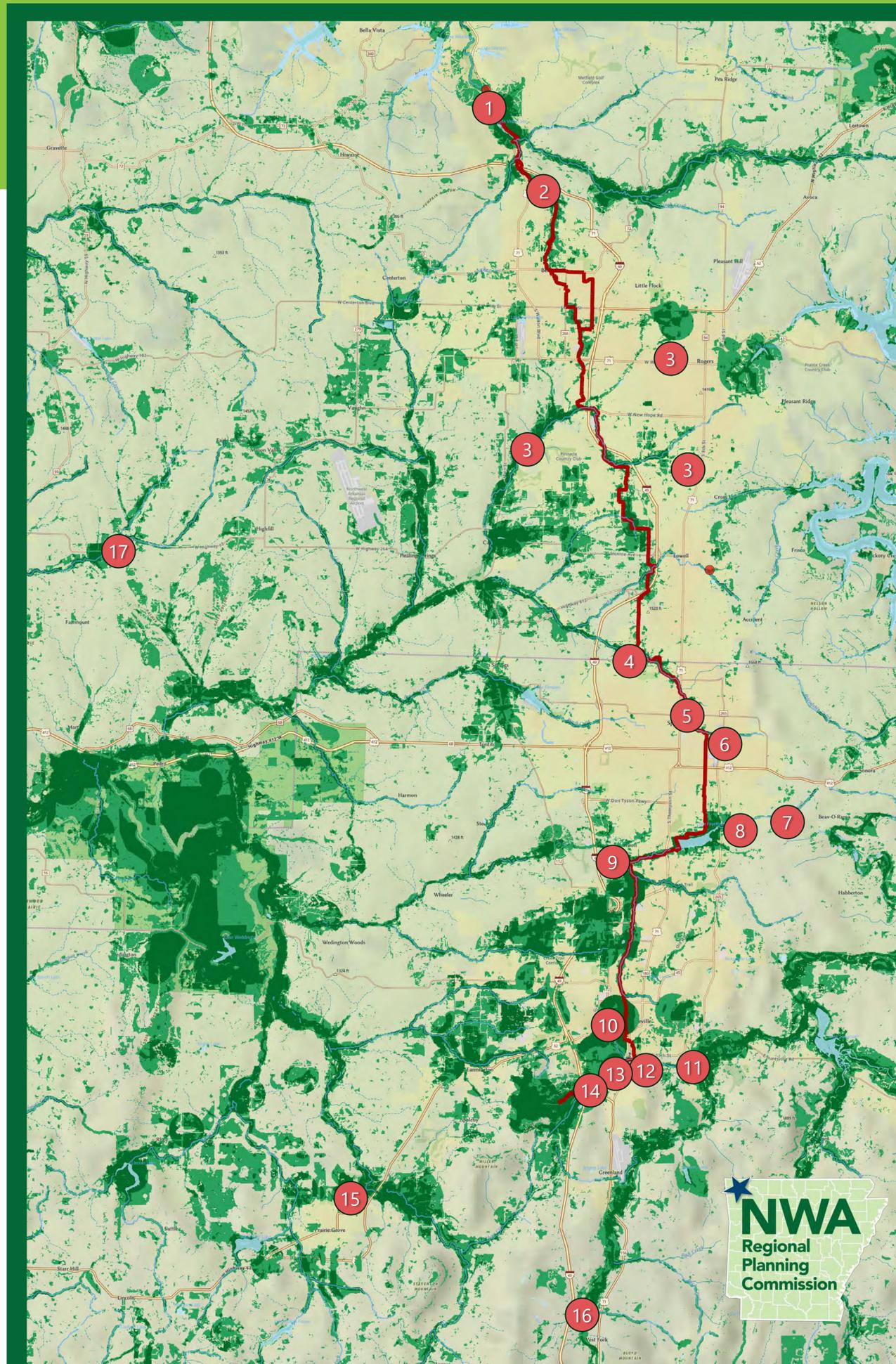
By 2030

the **NWA Green Network** will:

- Restore and preserve **2,158 acres** of high-quality natural open space
- Restore **35,728 feet** of degraded stream channel
- Permanently protect **916 acres** of restored green network lands
- Construct **2.5 miles** of trails connecting in or connecting to low-income areas
- Issue approximately **2,922 E-bike incentive vouchers**
- Implement a **workforce training** program to build capacity in the area

NWA Green Network Projects Legend

- 1 Razorback Greenway Corridor Stream and Riparian Restoration
- 2 Razorback Greenway and Town Branch Corridor Forest and Riparian Restoration
- 3 Osage/Blossom Way Creeks Stream and Wetland Restoration, Preservation, and Trail Construction
- 4 Spring Creek at Thunder Chicken Wetland, Stream, and Riparian Restoration and Preservation
- 5 Spring Creek at The Greenway Forest Stream and Riparian Restoration and Preservation
- 6 Spring Creek at Downtown Preservation
- 7 Willie George Park Wetland Restoration and Trail Construction
- 8 Lower Clear Creek Stream Restoration and Preservation
- 9 Johnson Park Riparian, Prairie, and Forest Restoration
- 10 University of Arkansas Oak Ridge Hillside Prairie and Forest Restoration and Trail Construction
- 11 River Commons Floodplain, Prairie, and Riparian Restoration, Preservation, and Trail Construction
- 12 Town Branch Corridor Stream and Riparian Restoration and Preservation
- 13 University of Arkansas Research and Tech Park Floodplain, Prairie, and Forest Restoration
- 14 University of Arkansas Oak Knoll Wetland, Prairie, Forest, Stream, and Riparian Restoration
- 15 Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park Wetland, Prairie, and Riparian Restoration
- 16 West Fork White River Wetland, Prairie, Stream, and Riparian Restoration and Preservation
- 17 Springtown Reforestation Projects





A BLUE-GREEN NETWORK

URBANIZATION'S IMPACT TO CREEKS

Between 2005 to 2023, Northwest Arkansas saw a **17.82% increase in impervious surfaces**. As pavement replaces natural ground, stormwater has fewer places to soak in—**groundwater recharge in urban areas can drop by 50–70%**. The resulting runoff puts heavy pressure on creeks, driving erosion, degrading habitat, and carrying pollutants downstream.

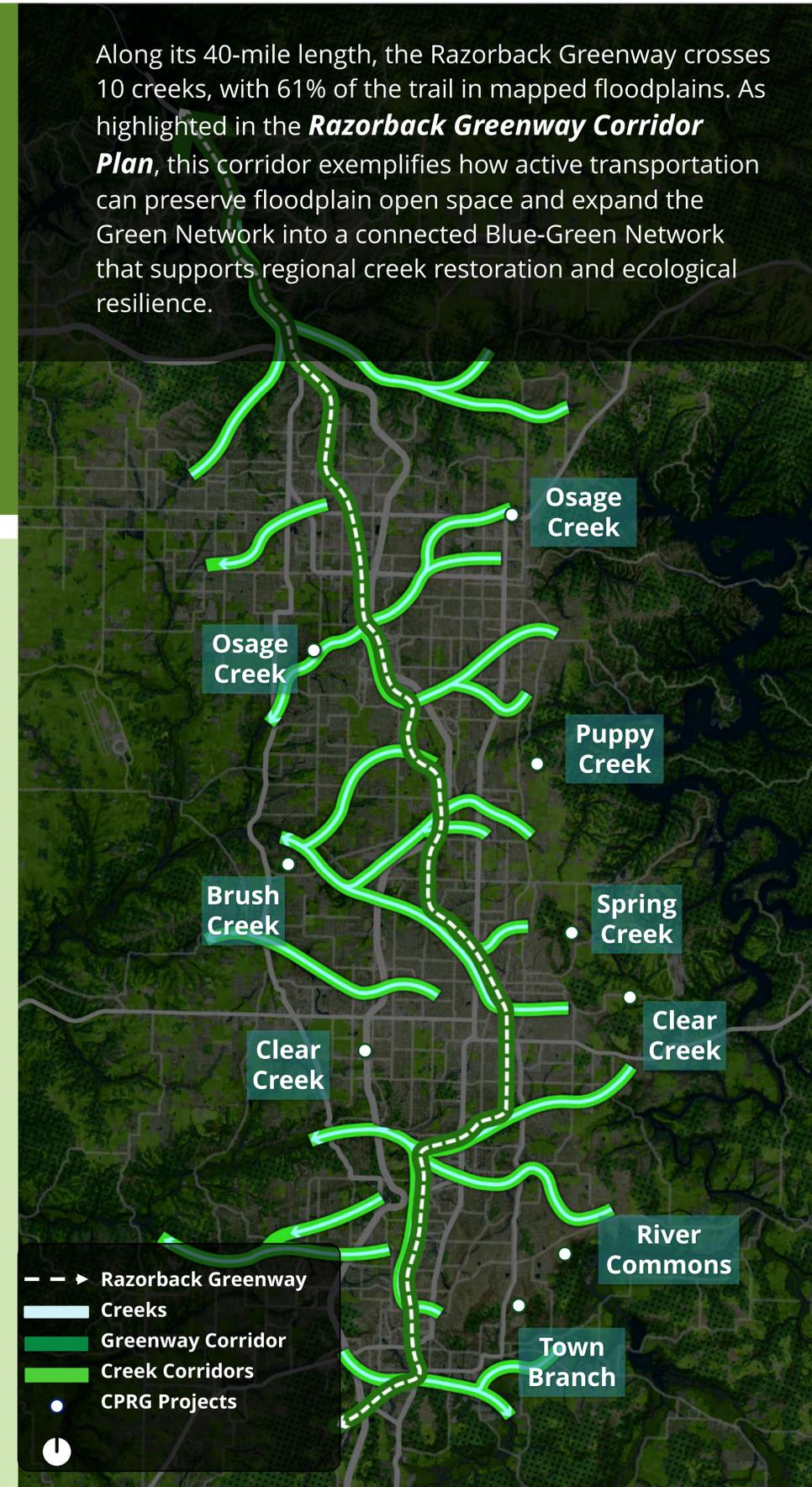
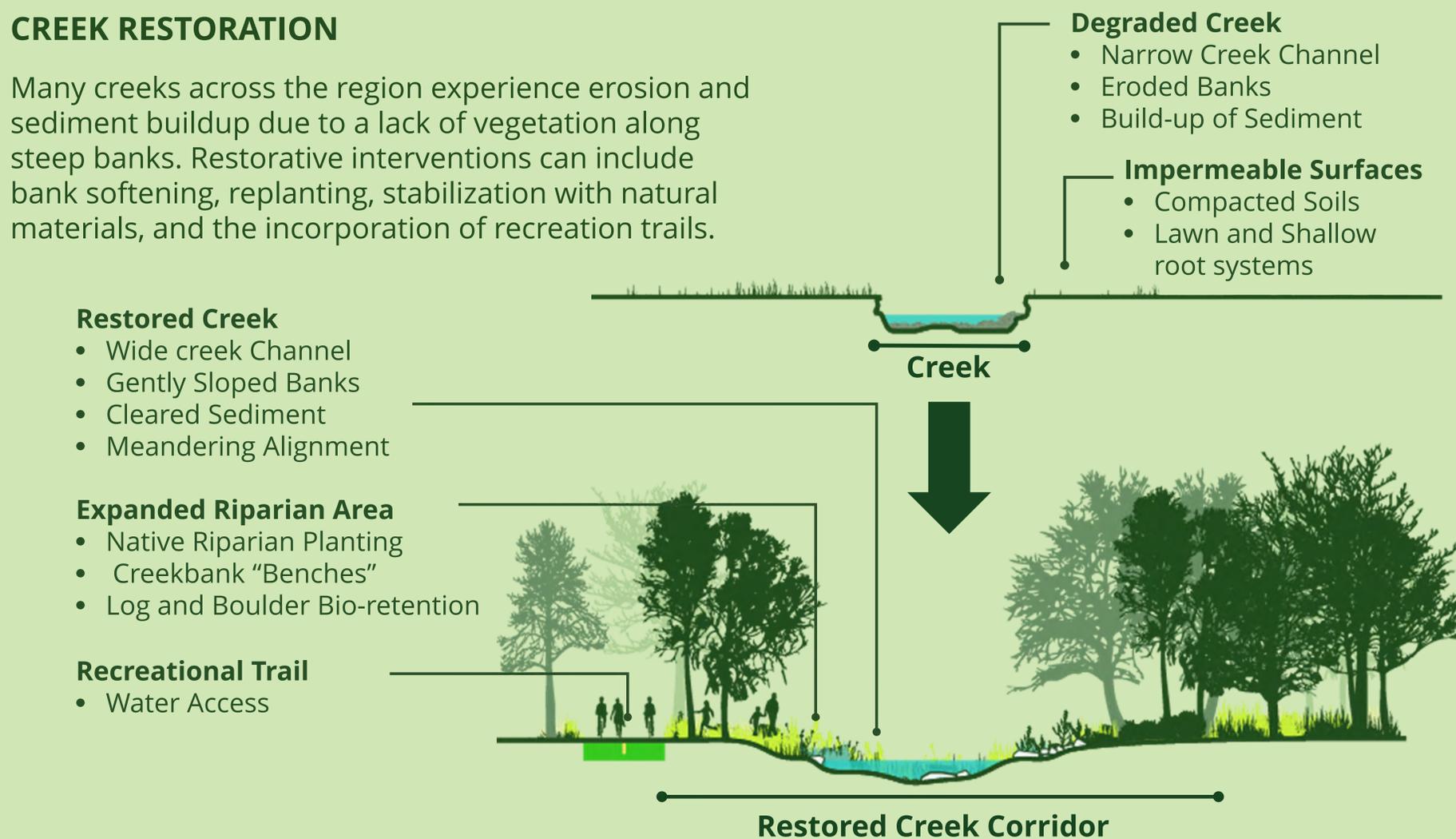
RESILIENCE THROUGH CONNECTED SYSTEMS

Restoring riparian buffers, reconnecting streams to their floodplains, and integrating natural infrastructure—such as wetlands, bioswales, and native plantings—can slow, filter, and store stormwater before it enters creeks. When these **natural systems are linked with active transportation corridors**, they form continuous ecological pathways that support habitat, improve water quality, and strengthen community resilience. Integrating these networks also **maximizes public assets**—aligning parks, trails, floodplains, and stormwater systems to create shared efficiencies and a more connected, high-performing regional landscape.

Along its 40-mile length, the Razorback Greenway crosses 10 creeks, with 61% of the trail in mapped floodplains. As highlighted in the **Razorback Greenway Corridor Plan**, this corridor exemplifies how active transportation can preserve floodplain open space and expand the Green Network into a connected Blue-Green Network that supports regional creek restoration and ecological resilience.

CREEK RESTORATION

Many creeks across the region experience erosion and sediment buildup due to a lack of vegetation along steep banks. Restorative interventions can include bank softening, replanting, stabilization with natural materials, and the incorporation of recreation trails.



MISSOURI

Bella Vista

Bentonville

Rogers

Lowell

Springdale

Johnson

Fayetteville

40 miles

10 years

\$38+ million

7 cities

3 Watersheds

**A REMARKABLE
ACCOMPLISHMENT**

In just 10 years, the region came together to create 40+ miles of continuous greenway, spanning three watersheds, seven cities, and connecting approximately 230,000 people who live within a 15-minute bike ride of the trail.



The Razorback Greenway



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Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice



nwarpc.org/transit/connect-northwest-arkansas/

CONNECT NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

Connect Northwest Arkansas is a **10-year Transit Development Plan** that will serve as a Blueprint for improving and expanding transit in NWA. Transportation opportunities and challenges are regional and cannot be defined by one jurisdiction. The plan identifies **key connections and funding sources** to improve public transit in NWA.



If you **connect** people and save them **time**, you give them **freedom**.

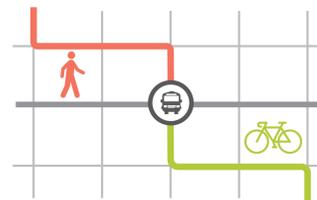
What supports transit?

Density



Transit works best when stops are located near a variety of destinations where people want to go such as job centers, schools, medical facilities, & housing complexes.

Connectivity



Transit should provide seamless transitions to other routes, park & rides, sidewalks, and bicycle routes. This ensures ease and comfort for passengers navigating the system.

Ease of Use



Transit should be easy to navigate and convenient to use. Great transit is integrated with technology to make taking transit an easy choice for travel.

Community Support



Whether you advocate for transit at city hall or simply choose to ride the bus, support from the community encourages local leaders to invest in great transit.

Why does transit matter?



Save Money

A household can save \$10k by living with one less car.



Reduce Congestion

Congestion costs Northwest Arkansas residents \$103M per year. Transit helps reduce the number of vehicles on the roadways.



Environment Friendly

Public transit saves the country 4.16 billion gallons of fuel per year.



Travel Safely

Transit is 10x safer than traveling by automobile.



FORWARD



Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice



nwarpc.org/bicycle-and-pedestrian/walk-bike-nwa/

WALK BIKE NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

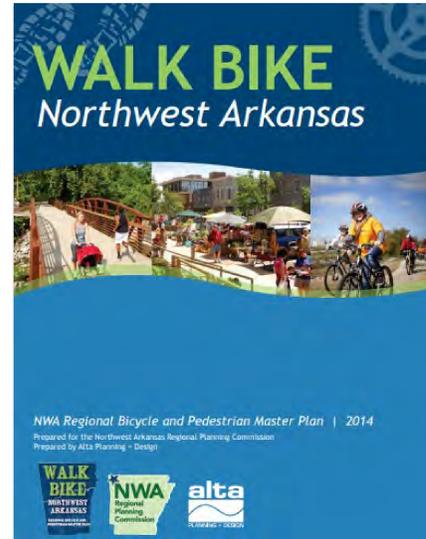
Walk Bike NWA, adopted in 2015 set the region on a course for developing a world class bicycle and pedestrian network, **proposing over 1,700 miles of bikeways and shared use facilities.**

2025 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update

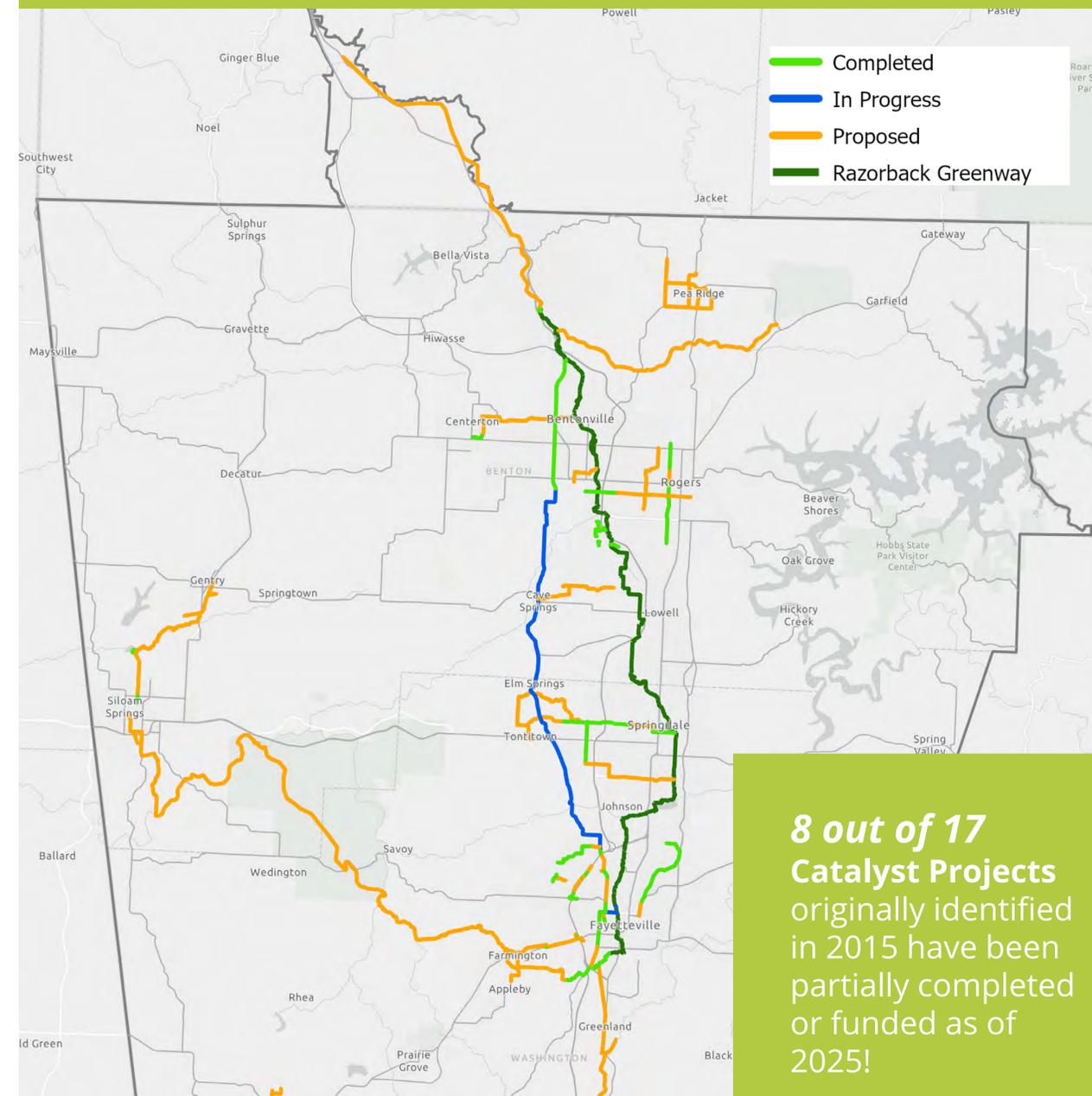
Walk Bike Northwest Arkansas, is currently being updated by incorporating the most up to date design guidance and priority projects to continue the development our active transportation network to serve people of all ages and abilities. This plan builds upon previous regional bicycle and pedestrian successes, setting a clear path for NWA to link its communities and regional destinations network by 2050.

2025 Plan Goals include:

- 1. CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS** – Connect NWA’s communities and key destinations to enable active transportation and micromobility.
- 2. HEALTH** – Support a healthy region by promoting active transportation and recreation.
- 3. ENVIRONMENT** – Advance regional environmental resilience and promote responsible growth patterns.
- 4. SAFETY** – Build a safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian network for users of all ages and abilities.

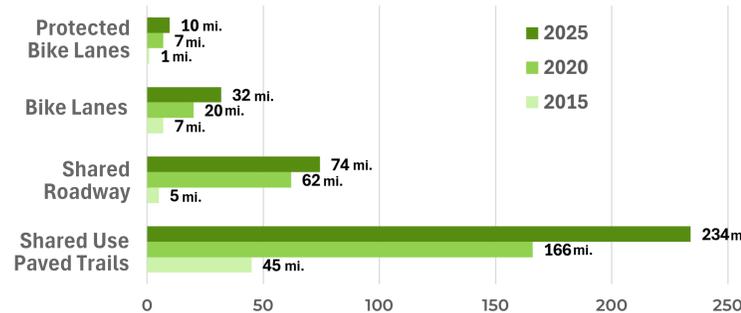


WALK BIKE NWA Catalyst Project Status



Miles of Trails Added (2015-2025)

The reach of our region’s bicycle and pedestrian network has grown significantly since 2015, **adding over 250 miles** of new shared use paved paths, sidewalks, and on-street cycling facilities to connect residents to schools, parks, employment centers, and downtowns like never before.



FORWARD



Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice

Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)

ITS is the application of electronic technologies and communications to increase the safety and efficiency of the transportation system. The ITS architecture allows stakeholders to plan for what they want their system to look like in the long-term and then break the system into smaller pieces that can be implemented over time as funding permits. **Strategies** include:

S1: Enhance regional traffic management efficiency, effectiveness, and safety.

S2: Expand travel data collection, storage, and sharing for improved operations and users information.

S3: Strengthen regional emergency response to incidents and disasters.

S4: Use ITS to improve access to alternative transportation and reduce emission and vehicle miles.

S5: Increase regional collaboration on ITS development and applications.



Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO)

Transportation Systems Management and Operations (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.

Congestion Management Process (CMP)

A congestion management process (CMP) identifies congestion, monitors transportation system performance and reliability, and develops strategies for funding and implementation. **Objectives** include:

- Improve system reliability and efficiency through better **management, operations,** and **ITS.**
- Implement **safety** strategies to reduce fatalities, and serious injuries.
- **Maintain infrastructure** to minimize work zone delays, road closures, and service disruptions.
- Support **alternative modes** and **land development** that enhance efficiency and choice.
- **Prioritize truck/freight corridors** to boost economic vitality.
- **Reduce energy consumption and air pollution** by improving congestion management and system reliability.



FORWARD



Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice



nwarpc.org/funding-programs/

Regional Transportation Funding Programs

Central to its role as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Northwest Arkansas, the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission is responsible for administering the federal transportation funds allocated to the region. Since 2013, the Commission has awarded over **\$133 million** to projects of regional significance.

- **Surface Transportation Block Grant Program—Attributable (STBGP-A) —Approx. \$12M annually**— Flexible funding to preserve and improve conditions and performance of the transportation network
- **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) —Approx. \$1.3M annually**— Funding for smaller-scale transportation alternatives such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- **Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) —Approx. \$1.4M annually**— Funding for projects designed to reduce transportation emissions from on-road highway sources.

Since 2013, NWARPC
has awarded over
\$133 million

to projects of regional significance.

\$15 million

awarded annually by the
NWARPC Board of Directors



Since 2014, NWARPC
has been awarded over
\$101 million
in Discretionary Awards

- \$15M Razorback Greenway (TIGER)
- \$25M I-49 AR-MO Connector (BUILD)
- \$25M Highway 112 (RAISE/BUILD)
- \$36.25M NWA Green Network

Yes, we helped fund that...!!!

- Extending the Razorback Greenway into Bella Vista (Mercy Way Blvd \$5.8M) – *Complete*
- Reconnecting the Razorback Greenway in Bentonville (RG Relocation \$750K) – *Complete*
- 8th Street Improvements (\$4.5M) – *Complete*
- Dixieland Rd. through JB Hunt Campus (\$5.4M) – *Complete*
- Don Tyson Parkway I-49 Interchange (\$3.4M) – *Complete* + Extension (\$9M) – *Ongoing*
- Gene George Blvd. Phases (\$7.9M) – *Ongoing*
- Ruppel Road Improvements (\$5.7M) – *Complete*
- College Avenue Complete Streets Improvements (\$3.3M) – *Ongoing* **(...AND MUCH MORE!)**



FORWARD



Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice

Highway 112: Complete Streets. Connecting Communities.

In 2019, local communities along the corridor came together to create a shared vision for the future of Highway 112, focusing on safer, more accessible roadway design for all modes.

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission has been awarded a **\$25 million** US Department of Transportation grant to help bring this vision to life with improved infrastructure for all users.



Project Highlights



Expand Highway 112 from 2 to 4 lanes to alleviate congestion and implement access management strategies to reduce travel times.



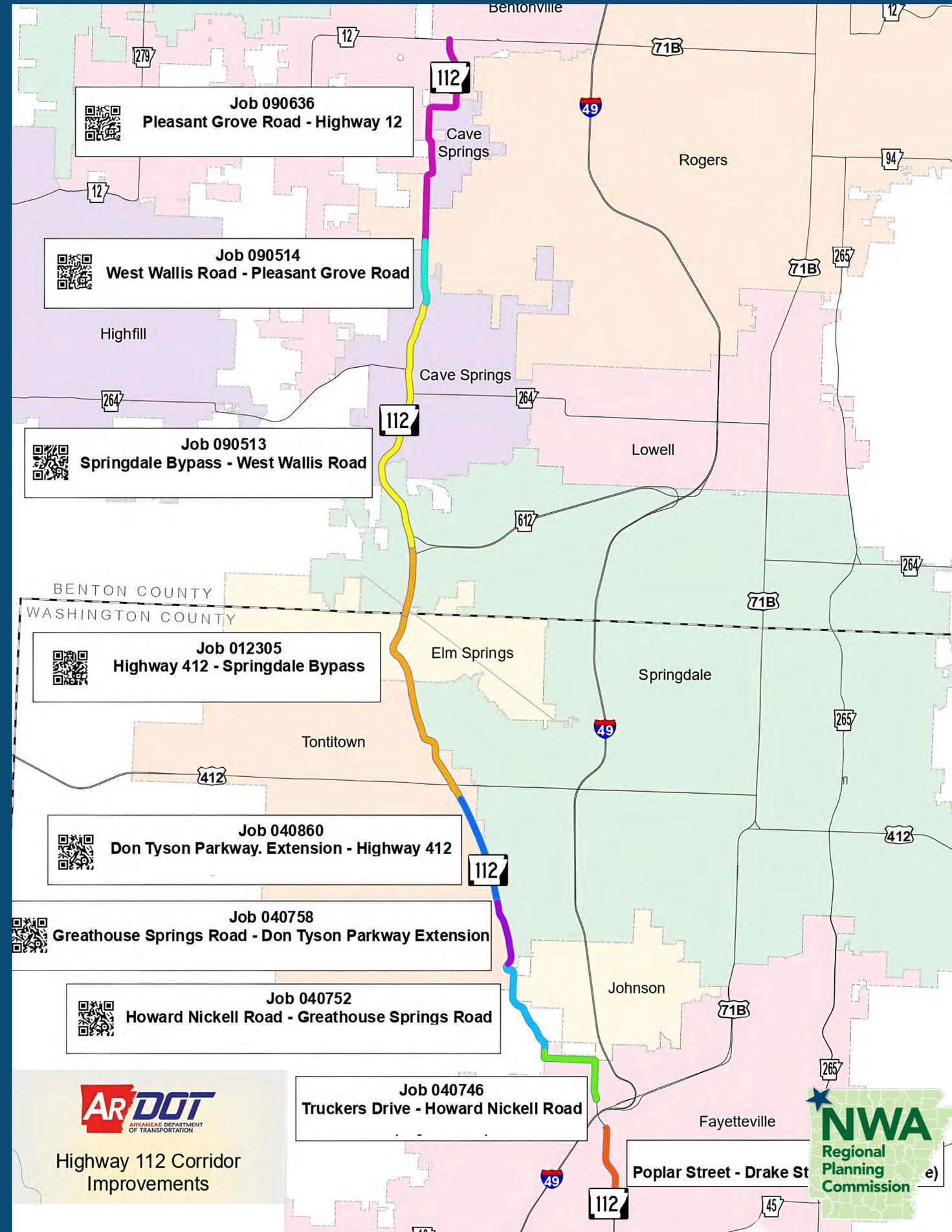
Add a center median along the 17.5-mile corridor to improve safety by reducing left-turn crashes.



Construct a 12-foot sidepath that separates active transportation users from traffic, creating a looped trail system with the Razorback Greenway.



Install 27 roundabouts in lieu of conventional intersections to reduce fatal & serious injury crashes.



FORWARD



Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice



nwarpc.org/transportation/mtp/

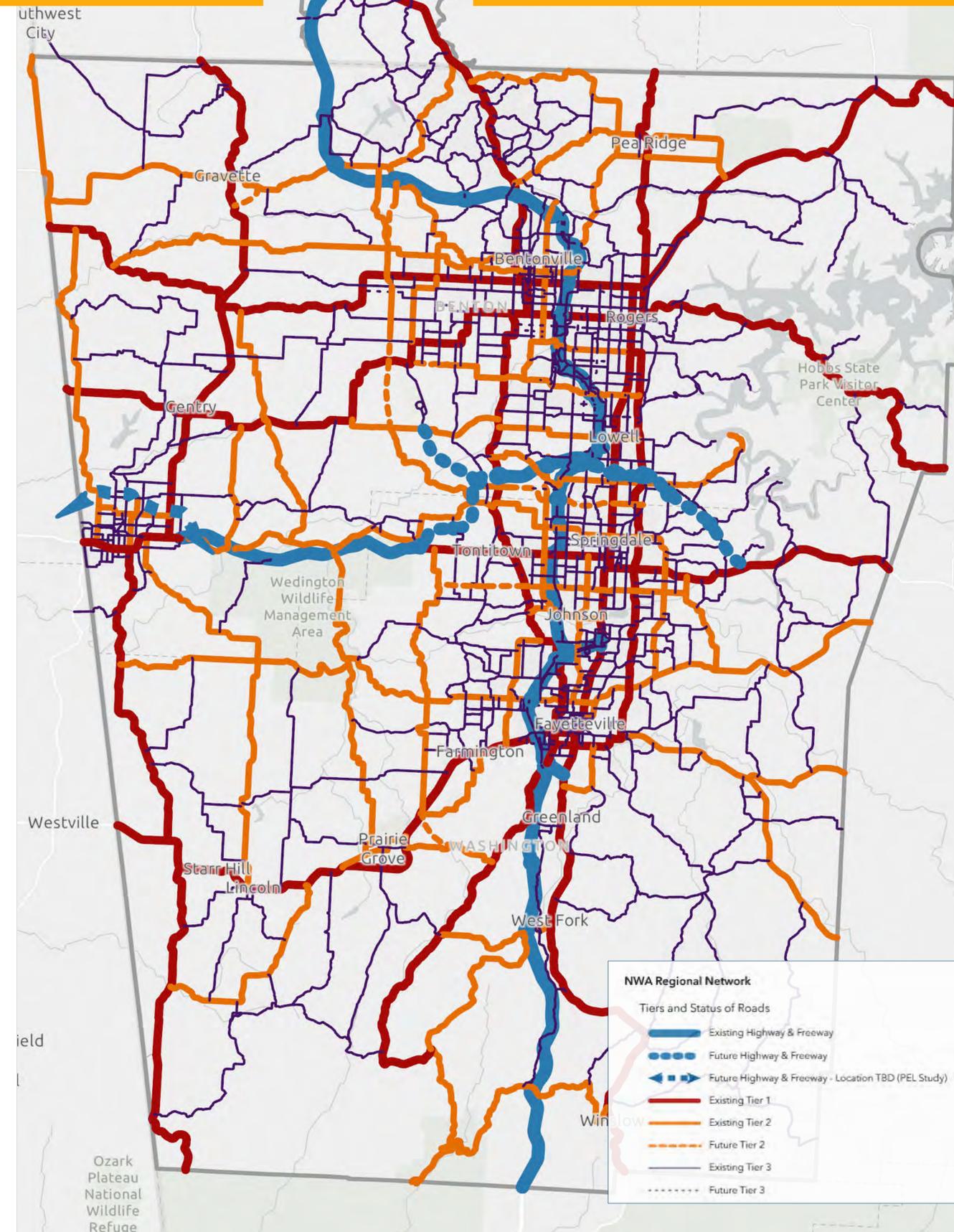
2050 Regional Network

Purpose Framework for **regional connectivity** to guide **investment priorities** and **design strategies** through 2050.

Approach Data-driven policy tool integrating the **Complete Streets Design Guide** to connect land use and connectivity with street design, identifying corridors of **regional significance** without prescribing specific projects.

Framework Organizes facilities into **Freeway + Tier 1-3 Corridors**, balancing mobility, safety, and multimodal access to support long-term growth and a resilient, connected system.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Freeway System | <p>Inter-state connectivity (backbone of regional system) High-speed, high-capacity, fully controlled access (little-to-no regional control of facility design)</p> |
| Tier 1 | <p>Inter-regional connectivity (external trips) High-capacity connectors across region, link major employment hubs/regional nodes; primary freight and regional trips, some local trips</p> |
| Tier 2 | <p>Intra-regional connectivity (internal trips) Increased complexity of land use contexts along the corridor; provides urban/suburban connection; more local trips</p> |
| Tier 3 | <p>Sub-regional connectivity (local trips + alternate routes) Primary connectors for local mobility, placemaking, mixed-use support; highly integrated transportation and land use; provide system redundancy through alternative routes</p> |



FORWARD



Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice

2050 Interstate/Freeway System

The Primary Regional Corridors in Northwest Arkansas are the interstate and fully-controlled access freeways, connecting major regional nodes, serving as essential routes for long-distance and regional travel, and facilitating uninterrupted flow from one end of the region to the other.

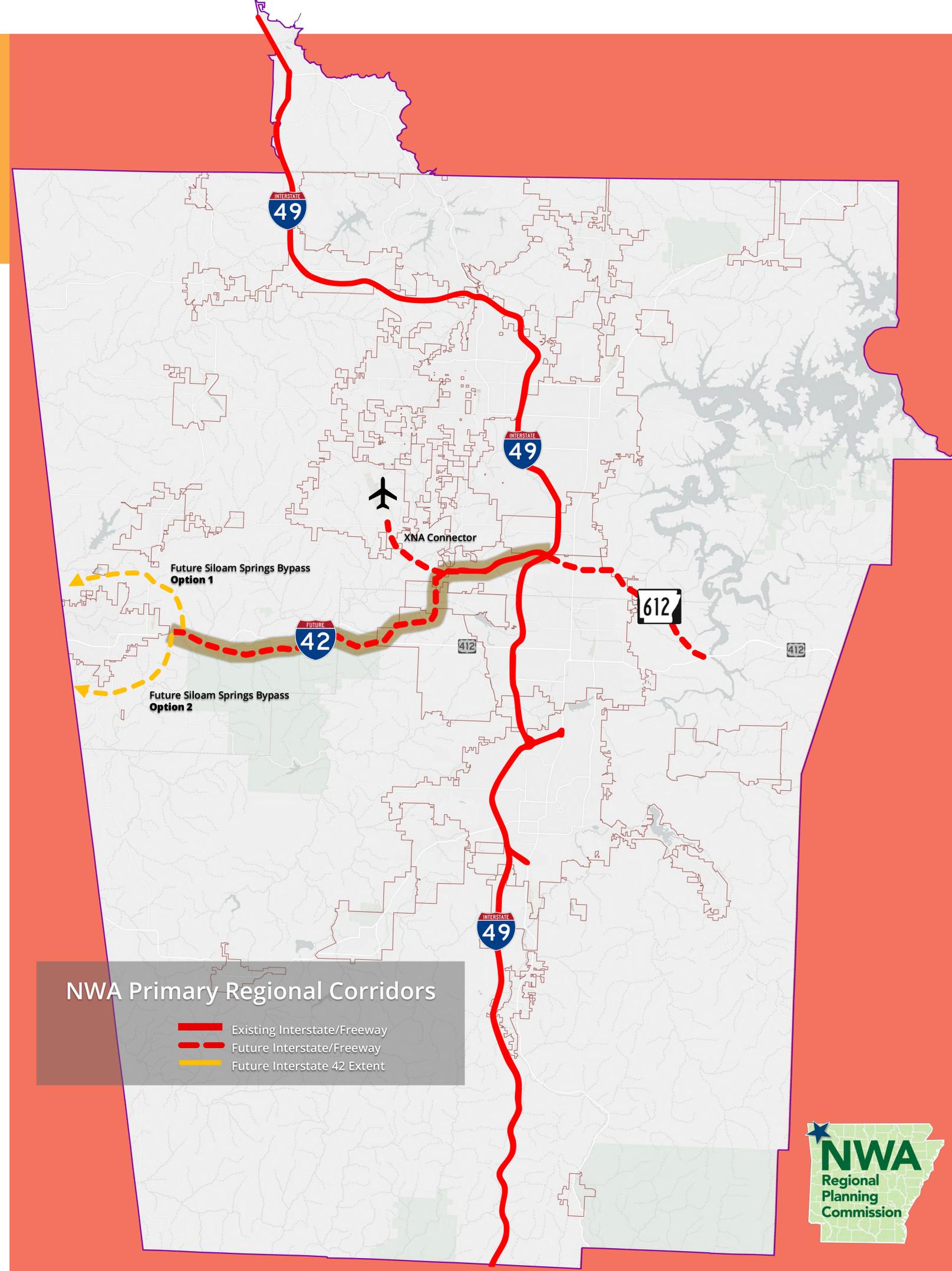
Interstate 49: The final segment of the first fully-controlled interstate freeway in the region was finished in 2021, thanks to a \$25M USDOT BUILD Grant from NWARPC, boosting regional access and mobility.

XNA Connector: Scheduled to be completed by late 2026/early 2027, this vital link will provide seamless, fully-controlled access to the airport from I-49.

Highway 612 Bypass: Four segments programmed in various stages of development:

- *I-49 to Highway 112:* Completed in 2018, improving regional flow. **(Future I-42)**
- *Highway 112 to US 412 (Tontitown):* Under construction, set for completion in 2026. **(Future I-42)**
- *I-49 to Highway 265:* Pre-construction underway, with funding programmed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
- *Highway 265 to Highway 412 (Sonora):* Final segment, moving forward as funding and priorities align.

Future Interstate 42: The future of interstate travel! Designated as a new corridor from I-49 to I-35 in Oklahoma, with the Planning and Environmental Linkage Study completed in 2024. A new bypass around Siloam Springs is on the horizon—stay tuned!

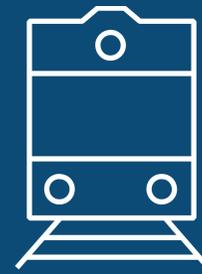
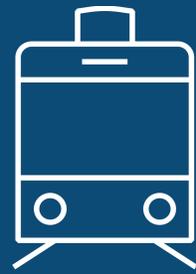


NWA Primary Regional Corridors

- Existing Interstate/Freeway
- - Future Interstate/Freeway
- - Future Interstate 42 Extent

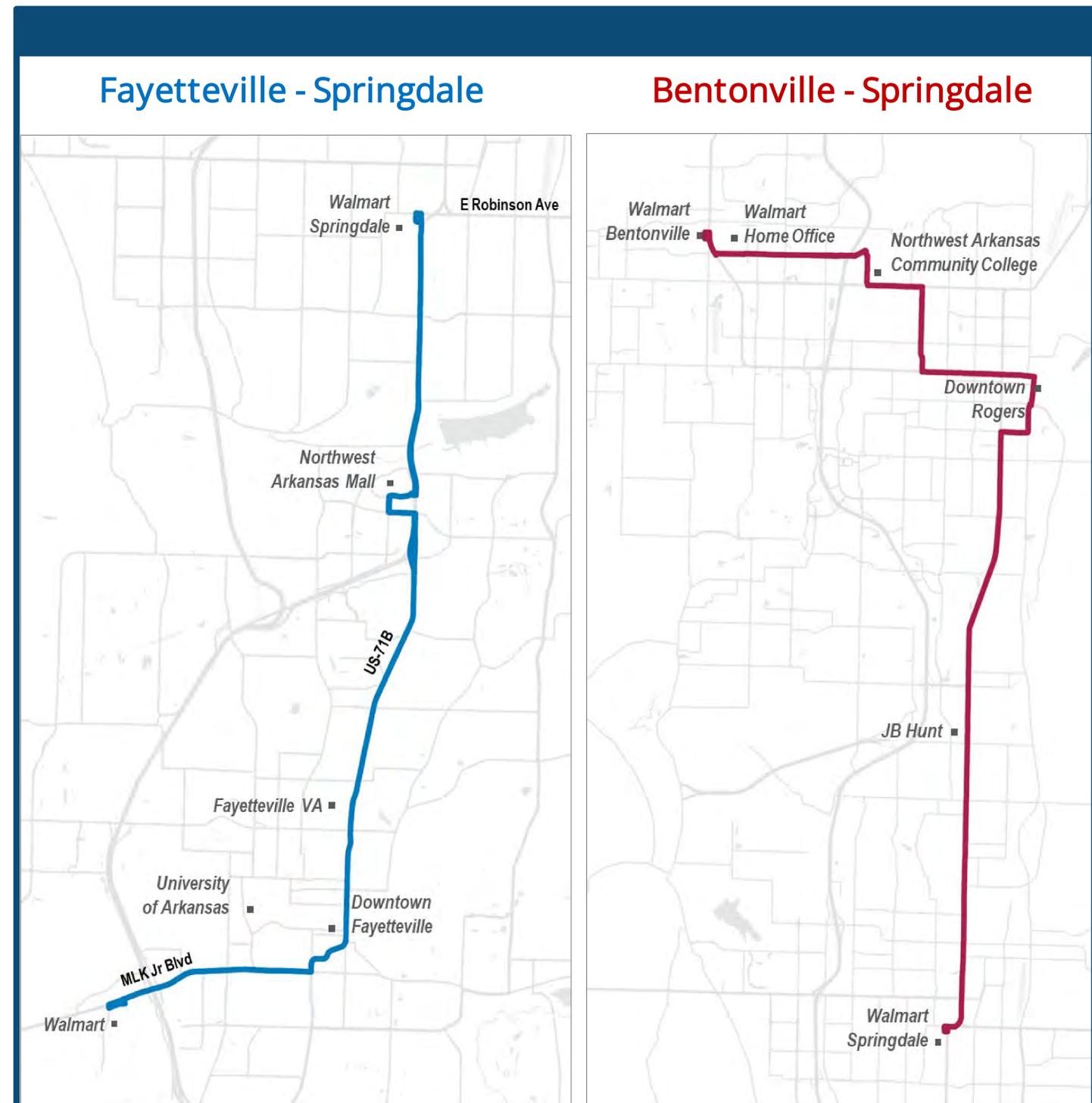


Transit Alternatives Study



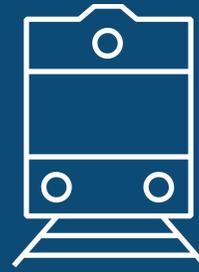
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

- Enhanced bus service emulating fixed-rail transit more cost-efficiently
- Dedicated bus-only lanes or mixed traffic
- High frequency – bus every 15 minutes or less in peak service
- Station spacing approx. ½ mile
- Distinctive stations and passenger amenities
- Technology
 - Transit Signal Priority
 - Next bus arrival time signage
 - Off-board fare collection
- System branding and unique identity





Transit Alternatives Study



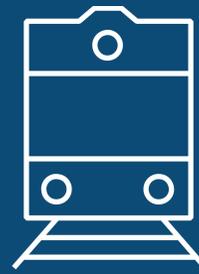
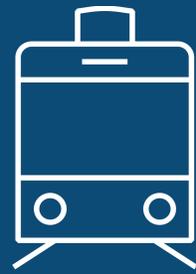
Light Rail Transit (LRT)

- Fixed rail transit service
- Operate as a single LRT vehicle or multiple cars for higher passenger capacity
- Powered by overhead electric system
- Generally, in dedicated lanes, but can operate in mixed traffic
- Peak frequency approx. 15 minutes
- Station spacing ½ - 1 mile
- High amenity passenger stations with level-boarding
- Off-board fare collection
- Transit Signal Priority
- Signal system and communications



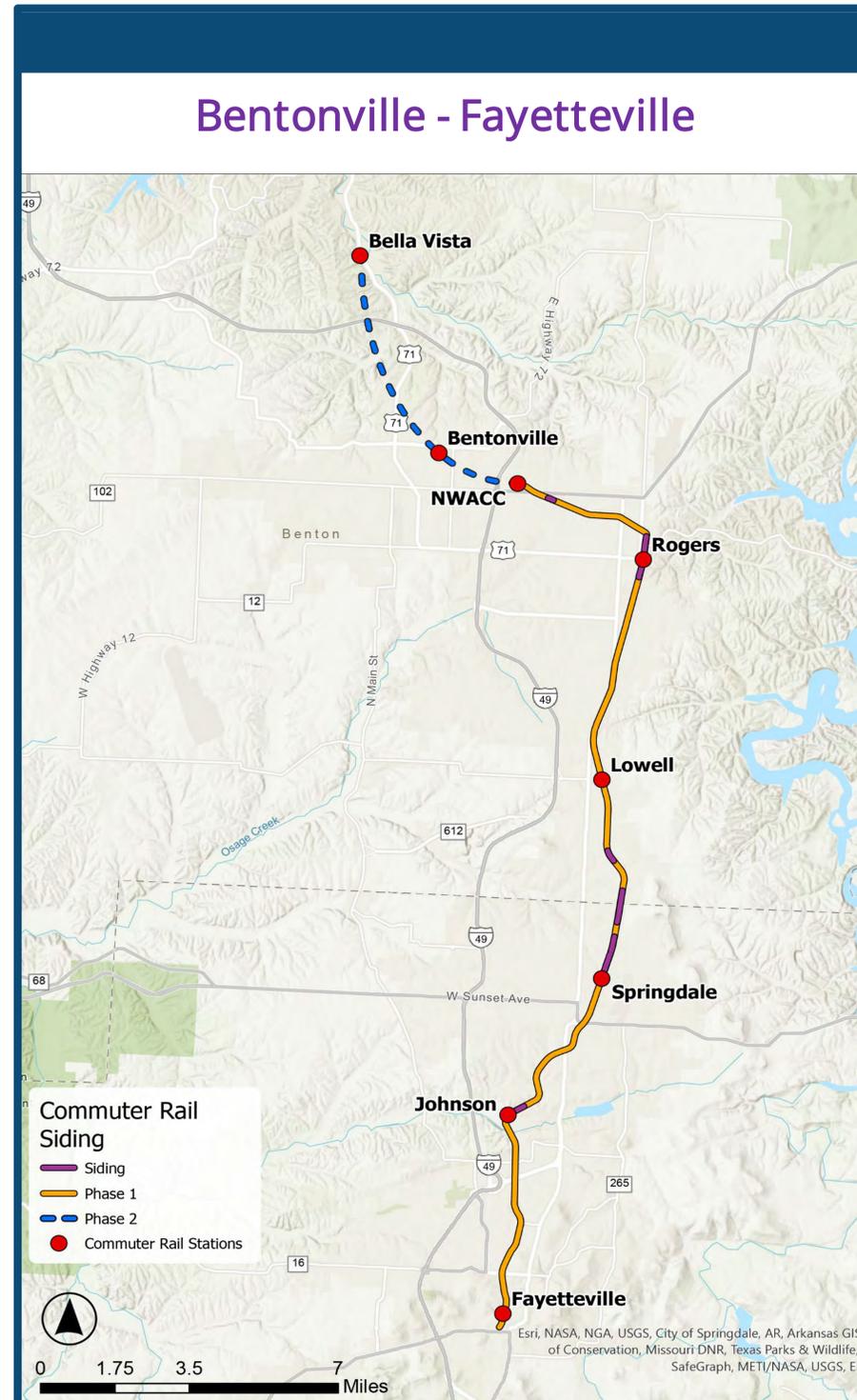


Transit Alternatives Study



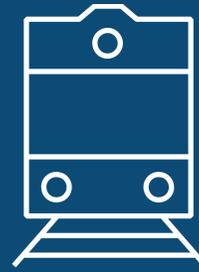
Commuter Rail

- Train sets operating in freight rail environments
- Diesel or electric-powered trains
- Traditional trains or Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU)
- Higher passenger capacity
- Large stations with platforms
- Off-board fare collection
- Station spacing approximately 2 - 10 miles
- Longer trips with lower frequency
- Generally focused on peak travel times
- Safety and communications technology required (Positive Train Control, Communications, and signals)





Transit Alternatives Study



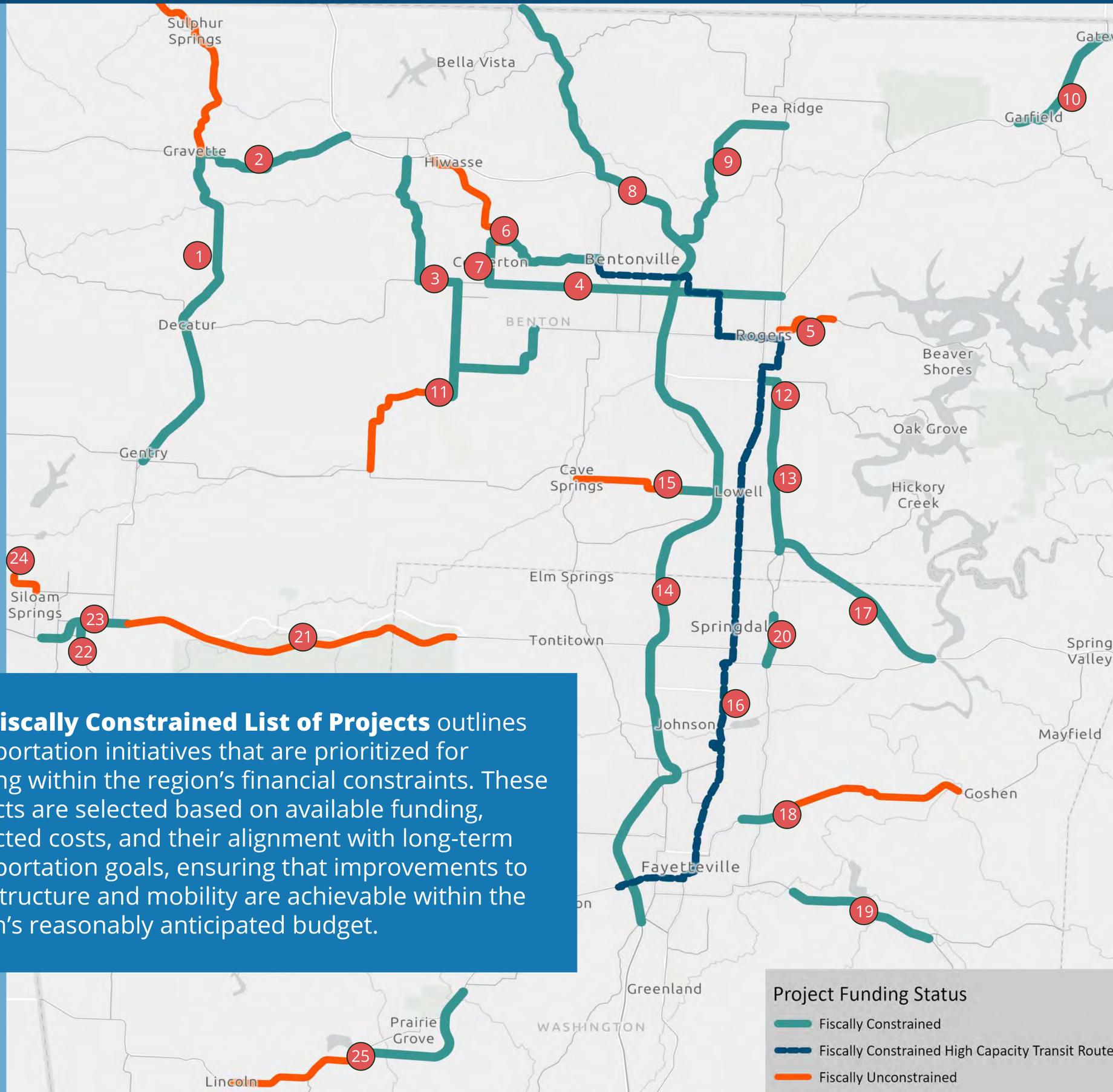
Transit Mode Comparison

| | Commuter Rail | Light Rail | Bus Rapid Transit |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Right-of-way | Arkansas – Missouri Railroad | Existing US 71B Right-of-Way | Existing US 71B Right-of-Way |
| Stop Spacing | 2-8 miles | ½ to 2 miles, less in CBD | ½ to 2 miles, less in CBD |
| Corridor Length | 20 Miles | Under 30 Miles | Under 30 Miles |
| Typical Headway (Pk/Off Pk) | 10-30 mins/ 30-60 mins | 5-15 mins/ 15-30 mins. | 5-15 mins/ 15-30 mins. |
| Hours of Operation | Weekdays | All Day, Eves, Weekends | All Day, Eves, Weekends |
| Capital Cost | \$1,130,000,000 | \$5,790,000,000 | \$210,000,000 |
| Annual Operating Cost | \$46,900,000 | \$11,800,000 | \$6,430,000 |
| Draft Preferred Alternative | ✘ | ✘ | ✔ |

FORWARD



Connecting Northwest Arkansas through Transportation Choice



Forward 2050 Projects (Fiscally Constrained & Unconstrained)

- 1 Highway 59
- 2 Highway 72
- 3 Highway 279
- 4 Highway 102
- 5 Highway 12
- 6 Highway 72
- 7 Highway 102B
- 8 I-49 (four to six lanes)
- 9 Highway 72
- 10 Highway 62
- 11 Highway 12
- 12 Highway 94
- 13 Highway 265
- 14 I-49 (six to eights lanes)
- 15 Highway 264
- 16 Bus Rapid Transit Line 71B
- 17 Highway 612 (265 to 412)
- 18 Highway 45
- 19 Highway 16
- 20 Highway 265
- 21 Future I-42
- 22 Highway 16
- 23 Highway 412
- 24 Highway 43
- 25 Highway 62

The Fiscally Constrained List of Projects outlines transportation initiatives that are prioritized for funding within the region's financial constraints. These projects are selected based on available funding, projected costs, and their alignment with long-term transportation goals, ensuring that improvements to infrastructure and mobility are achievable within the region's reasonably anticipated budget.

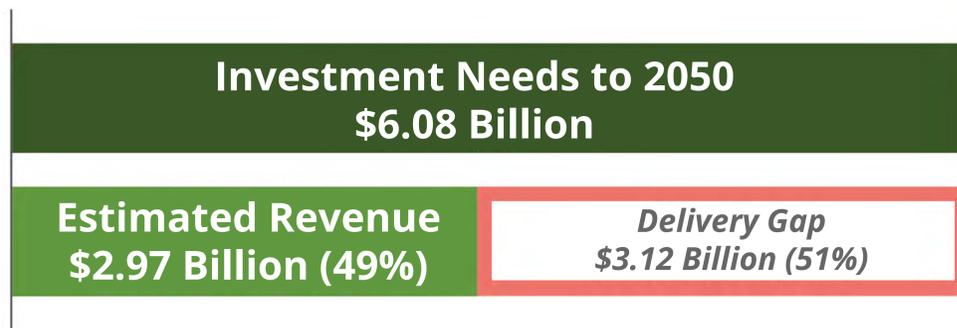
Project Funding Status

- Fiscally Constrained
- Fiscally Constrained High Capacity Transit Route
- Fiscally Unconstrained



Implementing the Plan

Sustaining the region’s growth will require substantial investments in roadway capacity, multimodal infrastructure, and transit expansion to maintain mobility and support economic vitality. Federal, state, and local revenue sources are limited – Northwest Arkansas’s transportation infrastructure faces an estimated **\$6 billion in needs** but expects only **\$3 billion in funding**.



Without new delivery tools, mobility gaps will persist and likely inflate, congestion may worsen, system performance could decline, and quality of life for residents and businesses will likely be affected. While smaller regions often rely heavily on federal and state funding, Northwest Arkansas is now at an inflection point where additional mechanisms are needed to address its growing regional transportation demands.

Regional Coordination Matters

NWA is **polycentric** – no single core city – making regional coordination complex, but essential. Transportation challenges don’t stop at city limits. Traffic, freight movement, and workforce commuting rely on shared infrastructure and investment. A regional approach is critical to **align plans, funding, and priorities** to address problems no single city can solve and that fall outside state priorities.

NWA Regional Mobility Authority (RMA)

Formed in 2008, under state law the NWA RMA can plan, **build, operate, and finance transportation projects**, providing a key tool for improving regional mobility.

Recommendations

Forward 2050 recommends using the RMA as a tool to close anticipated mobility gaps. Achieving this will require significant engagement with cities, counties, and the public.

Next Steps

- Document unmet needs and funding gaps.
- Evaluate Arkansas RMA authorities and limits.
- Compare regional funding models elsewhere.
- Develop a Regional Mobility Investment Framework – identify priority projects, revenue streams, and how RMA would partner with ARDOT, transit agencies, and local jurisdictions.

FORWARD

2050



**HOW DO YOU
CHOOSE TO MOVE?**
WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

**Explore the draft plan and
share your feedback!**

**¡Explora el borrador del plan
y comparte tus comentarios!**

**Lale karōk eo im kwalok
lemnok eo am!**



SCAN FOR THE PLAN!
nwarpc.org/transportation/mtp/

Plan. Collaborate. Connect.