

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



**PLANNING FOR A SAFE,
CONNECTED, AND RESILIENT
NORTHWEST ARKANSAS**



**PLAN.
COLLABORATE.
CONNECT.**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission serves as a Council of Governments and the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Commission supports cities and counties through innovative planning, transportation choice, and responsible growth to shape a safe, connected, and resilient region.

LONG-TERM GOALS

- 1:** Advance plans and policies that enable transportation choice, respect the natural and human environment, and enhance quality of life
- 2:** Implement a safe, efficient, and reliable multimodal transportation system
- 3:** Foster regional collaboration and reinforce economic competitiveness



NWARPC

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission (NWARPC) was formed in 1966 through a cooperative agreement between Benton County, Washington County, and the cities of Bentonville, Fayetteville, Rogers, Siloam Springs, and Springdale. Today, the Commission includes 39 units of government in Benton, Madison, and Washington Counties in Arkansas and a portion of McDonald County in Missouri, as well as other public agency partners.

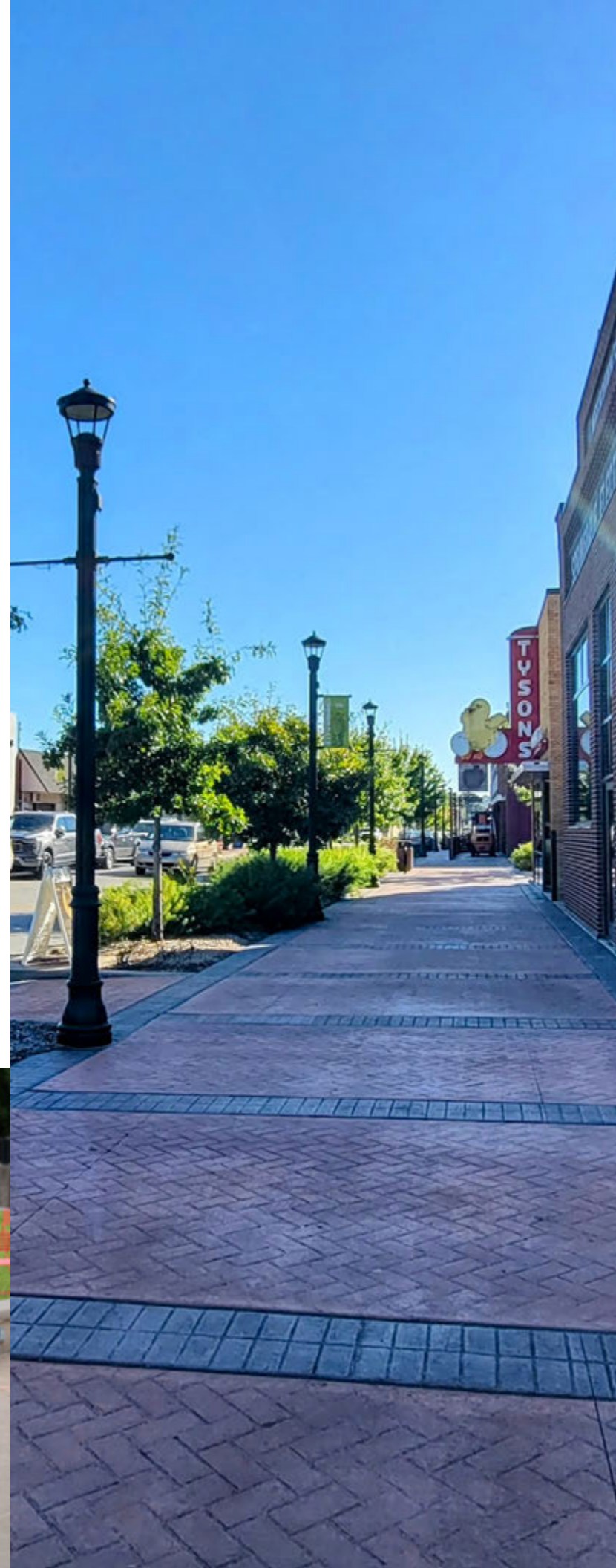
In 1983, NWAPRC was designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) under U.S. DOT regulations for transportation planning purposes. In addition to acting as a forum for regional dialogue and cooperation, the Commission provides a wide range of services to member governments including multi-jurisdictional planning, community planning, information services, and special projects.

After surpassing 200,000 in population in 2010, the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO urbanized area was designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA). TMAs are subject to additional federal requirements and receive suballocations of Surface Transportation Block Grant Program – Attributable (STBGP-A), Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) and Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funding, which is administered by NWARPC on an annual basis through a competitive process.

NWARPC has several standing committees. The RPC/ Policy Committee is the chief decision-making body for the MPO and consists of the jurisdictions' chief elected official and/or other appointed representatives. The TAC develops the technical aspects of plans and reports and makes recommendations to the RPC/Policy Committee.

Northwest Arkansas is a polycentric region, with no central city which anchors development and economic activity. Instead, the region has four large cities, several medium sized cities, and many small cities and rural areas that together will account for 1 million people by the year 2050. Many of the challenges that we face as a region today such as the transportation of people and goods, stormwater, solid waste, drinking water, and wastewater regularly cross municipal boundaries. The solutions to our shared challenges will rely upon collaboration and cooperation.

In 2025, the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission worked hard to facilitate the cooperation needed to empower the region to maintain a high quality of life while accommodating growth. This report outlines the efforts by staff and members to build a safe, connected, and resilient region through partnership.



NWARPC MEMBERSHIP & PLANNING PARTNERS

Jurisdictions:

Avoca	Johnson
Bella Vista	Lincoln
Bentonville	Little Flock
Cave Springs	Lowell
Centerton	Pea Ridge
Decatur	Pineville, MO
Elkins	Prairie Grove
Elm Springs	Rogers
Farmington	Siloam Springs
Fayetteville	Springdale
Garfield	Springtown
Gateway	Sulphur Springs
Gentry	Tontitown
Goshen	West Fork
Gravette	Winslow
Greenland	Benton County
Highfill	Madison County
Hindsville	Washington County
Huntsville	McDonald County, MO
Jane, MO	

Other Agencies:

Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT)
Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT)
Beaver Water District (BWD)
NWA National Airport Authority (XNA)
Ozark Regional Transit (ORT) Authority
Razorback Transit
University of Arkansas

Non-Voting Transportation Planning Partners:

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
Arkansas Highway Commission
Human Service Agencies
Arkansas Missouri Railroad

2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

The organization achieved significant progress in 2025 through major infrastructure investments, expanded regional leadership responsibilities, and strengthened organizational capacity.

Among the year’s most notable accomplishments was securing a \$25 million grant for Highway 112 improvements, advancing a critical regional transportation corridor through complete streets investments and enhanced community connectivity. In addition, the organization, working closely with regional planning partners, began implementation of projects funded through the \$36.25 million Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). These efforts position the region to make substantial progress toward long-term sustainability and resiliency goals identified in the Northwest Arkansas Energy and Environment Innovation Plan. The organization also assumed administrative responsibility for the \$7 million E-bike Rebate Program, further expanding its role in delivering innovative mobility solutions and increasing transportation choice throughout the region and in Arkansas.

Several major planning initiatives advanced substantially during 2025. Staff prepared the draft of Forward2050, the region’s long-range transportation plan, which establishes a strategic framework to guide future transportation investments and regional growth. Staff also completed a draft Transit Alternatives Study, evaluating opportunities for high-capacity transit solutions designed to improve regional mobility and expand transportation options. In addition, the Razorback Greenway Corridor Plan was completed, providing a long-term regional framework for connectivity, land use, housing, and active transportation along one of the region’s most important and recognized corridors.

Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, the organization plans to further strengthen regional coordination and organizational capacity. Through the FUSE Corps partnership, two additional full-time equivalent (FTE) positions are anticipated during 2026–2027 to support the Northwest Arkansas Regional Mobility Authority and enhance the agency’s effectiveness as the region’s Council of Governments (COG), ensuring it can meet the scale and complexity of a rapidly growing region. Additional strategic priorities include the formation of a Stormwater Management Coordinating Council to enhance regional collaboration on stormwater infrastructure, watershed planning, and resiliency initiatives.

Through these accomplishments and planned initiatives, the organization continues to strengthen its role as a regional leader in transportation, sustainability, and collaborative planning while positioning Northwest Arkansas for continued growth and long-term success.

Tim Conklin
NWARPC Executive Director



A NOTE FROM OUR CHAIR

“Northwest Arkansas has changed significantly during my time as Mayor, but it remains a wonderful place to live, work, learn, and play. Our natural beauty, trail system, cultural amenities, and strong schools continue to attract new residents and businesses.

NWARPC forecasts that Northwest Arkansas will reach a population of one million by 2050. This growth sets the stage for economic prosperity, expanded amenities, and new opportunities for future generations. It will also bring challenges, including rising congestion, increased stormwater runoff, and added pressure on utility systems. In 2025, NWARPC worked proactively to prepare the region for this growth - securing a \$25 million RAISE grant for the Highway 112 corridor, advancing Forward 2050, strengthening transit through bus stop improvements and a Transportation Alternative Study, and more.

While progress is clear, important work remains, not only for NWARPC but for every community across Northwest Arkansas. Preparing for one million residents will require strong collaboration and a unified regional approach. Together, we can ensure Northwest Arkansas grows in ways that are thoughtful, connected, and resilient.”

Mayor Doug Sprouse of Springdale
NWARPC Board Chair



FORWARD

2050

Forward 2050 Regional Transportation Plan:

Developing the Region's Long Range Vision for a Safe, Connected, and Growing Northwest Arkansas

In 2025, NWARPC advanced the development of Forward 2050, the region's federally required Metropolitan Transportation Plan that will guide transportation investment and policy for the next 25 years. Building on technical work initiated in 2024, staff, local jurisdictions, transit partners, state and federal agencies, stakeholders, and the public collaborated throughout 2025 to shape a long range vision that supports a region projected to exceed one million residents by 2050. As the plan describes, Forward 2050 "sets the region's vision, strategies, and investment priorities across all transportation modes... while providing a coordinated framework for local governments, transit agencies, and regional partners."

2025 Planning Process & Milestones

Throughout 2025, NWARPC completed major components of the plan's development, including:

- Regional needs assessment covering safety, congestion, multimodal connectivity, and system preservation
- Scenario planning and growth analysis to evaluate long term travel demand
- Financial planning to align priorities with realistic revenue forecasts
- Project evaluation and prioritization for the fiscally constrained project list
- Draft plan preparation, incorporating technical analysis, public input, and partner review

Public Engagement & Outreach

Public involvement was a defining element of Forward 2050's development. Across surveys, open houses, focus groups, stakeholder meetings, and community events, more than 1,300 residents contributed input that shaped the plan's priorities and direction.

Residents consistently expressed a desire for a transportation system that responds to current pressures—especially congestion and safety—while protecting the qualities that define Northwest Arkansas: scenic landscapes, natural beauty, and a strong sense of place. Many voiced interest in high-capacity regional transit, particularly between Fayetteville and Bentonville, and emphasized the need for safer, more connected bicycle and pedestrian routes. Participants also highlighted the importance of supporting mobility needs for underserved communities, including carless households and older adults.

Across all engagement activities, residents stressed the need for regional collaboration to address shared challenges such as congestion, sprawl, and mobility inequities—issues no single community can solve alone. These conversations reinforced that Forward 2050 is a living, evolving document shaped directly by community input.

Forward 2050 Outreach by the Numbers:

1,300 + residents engaged
3 Regional Open Houses
891 public survey responses
8 advisory committee meetings
30+ Community events and partner meetings
dozens of local government coordination sessions

A Framework for the Region's Future:

Forward 2050 is guided by four themes that reflect community values and regional priorities:

Forward 2050 Themes

Predictable and Fiscally Responsible Development Patterns

Encouraging development that makes efficient use of infrastructure and maximizes public investment.

A Connected Multimodal Region

Expanding safe and convenient transportation choices across driving, transit, biking, and walking.

A Safe and Resilient Natural and Built Environment

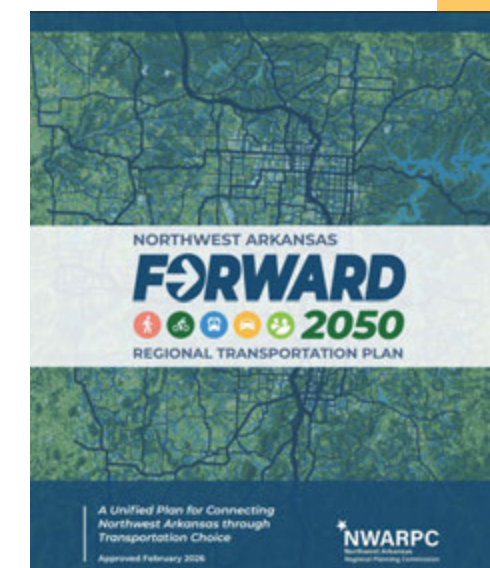
Advancing Vision Zero goals for safety while protecting natural resources and ensuring resilience against future risks.

Healthy, Inclusive Communities and a Thriving Regional Economy

Supporting access to opportunities while strengthening the region's economic vitality.

These themes translate into three Forward 2050 goals:

- G1** Implement a safe, efficient, and reliable multimodal transportation system
- G2** Advance plans and policies that enable transportation choice, respect the natural and human environment, and enhance quality of life
- G3** Foster regional collaboration and reinforce economic competitiveness



STBGPA & TAP AWARDS

FFY 2026 NWARPC Federal-Aid Transportation Program Awards

\$16.6M Awarded for Local Transportation Improvements

In May 2025, the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission advanced a major regional investment in transportation infrastructure by awarding \$16.6 million in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2026 funding for local road, trail, sidewalk, and safety projects across the urban area. These awards were made through three key federal-aid programs administered annually by NWARPC: the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program – Attributable (STBGP A), the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). These programs support local and regional infrastructure improvements that enhance mobility, promote safety, encourage alternative transportation, and reduce transportation emissions across the region.

A total of 21 community-driven projects across ten (10) communities were selected through a competitive process, each requiring a 20 percent local match. Funded projects will benefit communities throughout Northwest Arkansas, including Washington County, Tontitown, Springdale, Rogers, Lowell, Fayetteville, Centerton, Bentonville, Benton County, and Bella Vista. These investments reflect the region’s continued commitment to strategic, multimodal transportation investments as Northwest Arkansas prepares for a population projected to reach one million by 2050.

By leveraging federal dollars suballocated to the region through strong local partnerships, NWARPC and its member jurisdictions are delivering long-lasting improvements that benefit residents, businesses, and visitors alike.



FFY 2026 NWARPC Funding Program Awards

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program-Attributable (STBGP-A)		
Jurisdiction	Project	Federal Funding Award
Benton County	McNelly Rd – Spanker Rd/Plentywood Intersection & Impvts.	\$ 500,000
Bentonville	SW Regional Airport Blvd./S. Vaughn Rd. Intersection Imprvts.	\$ 1,544,000
Bentonville-Centerton	Greenhouse Road Improve ments (Hwy 12 to Hwy 102)	\$ 2,372,920
Centerton	Highway 102/E Centerton Blvd & Womack St. Traffic Signal	\$ 100,000
Fayetteville	Highway 112/Garland Ave. (Poplar to Drake)	\$ 500,000
Fayetteville	North Street Corridor (Garland to College)	\$ 300,000
Lowell	Highway 264 Razorback Greenway Tunne l & Trail Realignment*	\$ 478,603
Lowell	Highway 264/Bellevue/Spring Creek Intersection	\$ 3,511,000
Springdale-Johnson	Gene George Blvd. Phase 2	\$ 3,000,000
Tontitown	Highway 412 & Barrington Rd. Intersection Impvts.	\$ 1,300,000
Washington County	Wheeler Rd. Bridge Replacement-Clabber Creek Str. & Apprs.	\$ 119,920
11	Total STBGP-A	\$ 13,726,443

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)		
Jurisdiction	Project	Federal Funding Award
Bella Vista	Reimagining 71 Feasibility Study	\$ 310,400
Centerton	Centerton Sidewalks Project Phase 2	\$ 400,000
Fayetteville	Transit Stop Enhanceme nts	\$ 150,000
Lowell	Highway 264 Razorback Greenway Tunne l & Trail Realignment*	\$ 142,897
Springdale	Smart School Connections	\$ 444,800
Tontitown	E Fletcher Ave and S Barrington Rd Intersection Impvts.	\$ 87,271
6	Total TAP	\$ 1,535,368

Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)		
Jurisdiction	Project	Federal Funding Award
Bella Vista	Bella Vista Trails and Greenway Masterplan Update	\$ 160,000
Fayetteville	Rupple Road Lighting (Persimmon to MLK)	\$ 500,000
Fayetteville	Drake Street Connections	\$ 210,534
Rogers	Active Mobility (Bicycle & Pedestrian) Plan	\$ 200,000
Springdale	40th Street Side Path Extension	\$ 328,000
5	Total CRP	\$ 1,398,534
21*	Total FFY 2026 NWARPC Funding Awarded	\$ 16,660,345

*Lowell Hwy. 264 Razorback Greenway Tunnel & Trail Realignment awarded with STBGP-A and TAP funding.

OTHER NOTABLE ROAD PROJECTS

Highway 112 Corridor Improvements

In January 2025, the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission secured a \$25 million RAISE grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to advance transformative improvements along the 17.5 mile Highway 112 corridor between Fayetteville and Bentonville. This major federal investment supports a shared regional vision—formalized by the NWARPC Board in 2019—calling for a complete streets corridor that improves safety, reduces travel times, and expands multimodal transportation options across eight communities.

The RAISE grant enables the region to partner with ARDOT on key upgrades including widening Highway 112 from two to four lanes, adding a raised median and multiple roundabouts to reduce severe crashes, and constructing a 12 foot separated multi use sidepath to enhance bicycle and pedestrian access. These improvements help advance the region’s goal of providing transportation choice and incorporate proven safety countermeasures that improve reliability for all roadway users.

Groundbreaking in Fayetteville

In November 2025, state and local partners celebrated the groundbreaking of the first construction segment in Fayetteville, marking the start of an eight project effort led by ARDOT. This initial phase includes roadway widening, multiple roundabouts, and new pedestrian infrastructure—early steps toward delivering a safer, more connected north–south alternative to I 49. Construction on additional segments is expected to begin as early as 2026, supported by both the RAISE grant and previously allocated state and federal funding.

Together, the RAISE award and the launch of construction represent a major milestone in delivering long term regional mobility improvements and advancing Northwest Arkansas’ commitment to transportation choice and community connectivity.



Highway 170 Ribbon Cutting – Farmington

In July 2025, partners gathered in Farmington to celebrate the completion of the Highway 170 corridor improvement project, marking the culmination of a nearly decade long effort. The project began in late 2014, when the NWARPC Policy Committee awarded initial funding to launch design and environmental work. Since then, NWARPC has invested a total of \$7.6 million in Surface Transportation Block Group Attributable (STBGP-A) funding into the project.

Led by the City of Farmington in partnership with NWARPC and ARDOT, the project transformed a narrow two lane roadway with no shoulders into a Complete Street corridor featuring sidewalks and a center two way left turn lane. These improvements align with the region’s Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, adopted in 2024, which promotes FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures.

Potential safety benefits identified in national studies include:

- 28–48% reduction in total crashes associated with adding a dedicated left turn lane
- 65–89% reduction in pedestrian related crashes associated with adding sidewalks

The ribbon cutting represents a major milestone for Farmington and the region, delivering a safer, more accessible corridor and demonstrating the long term value of sustained local, regional, and state partnerships.



2024 Groundbreaking in Farmington

AREAS OF PERSISTENT POVERTY GRANT PROGRAM

In 2025 Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission entered into a \$200,000 contract with Olsson to complete design and engineering work for improvements for 10 bus stops, 5 on the Ozark Regional Transit System and 5 on the Razorback Transit system.



The 5 stops on the Ozark Regional Transit System are located in Springdale (2) and Rogers (3):



24th St. at Osage Creek



24th St. at Turtle Creek Apartments



Park St at Luther George Park (west)



Park St at Luther George Park (east)

5 stops on the Razorback Transit system are all located in Fayetteville:



15th & Razorback



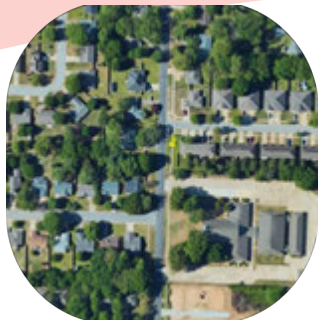
Lot 320



Markham Hill



Walnut at Locke Supply



Porter & Skyler



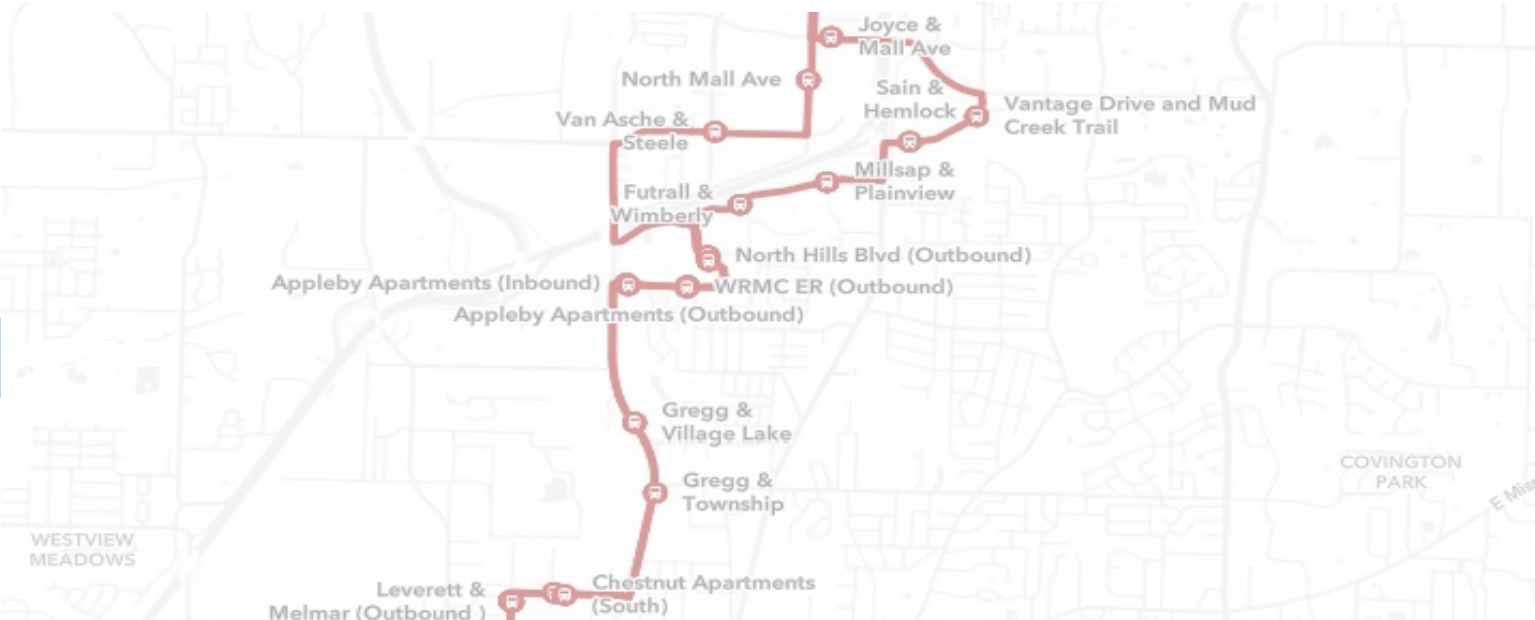
Porter & Lawson



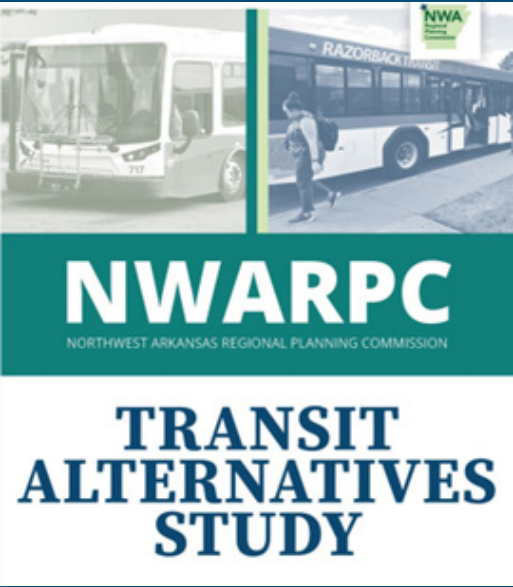
RAZORBACK TRANSIT BUS STOP PLAN & TAS

NWARPC partnered with Razorback Transit and the City of Fayetteville to hire the consulting firm Toole Design to create a Razorback Transit Bus Stop Enhancement Plan. Razorback Transit plays a critical role in providing reliable, safe, and accessible transit services that connect residents, students, and visitors throughout Fayetteville and the broader Northwest Arkansas region. As the demand for public transportation continues to grow and evolve, bus stops have become increasingly important not just as transit waiting points, but as integral elements of community mobility and multimodal connectivity.

The Razorback Transit Bus Stop Enhancement Plan aims to systematically evaluate existing conditions, identify gaps in infrastructure and amenities, and develop actionable strategies for enhancing rider comfort, safety, accessibility, and convenience. The plan was endorsed by the Policy Committee in October 2025.



NWARPC hired consulting firm WSP to conduct a Transit Alternatives Study (TAS) to improve the future of multimodal transportation for the region. This project assesses alternative transit improvements to better connect Bentonville, Rogers, Lowell, Springdale, and Fayetteville with a rapid transit service. The (TAS) examines the benefits and costs of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Light Rail Transit (LRT), and Commuter Rail (CR) to best meet the needs of residents and visitors of the NWARPC region. After assessing existing conditions, receiving input from the public and a multi-disciplinary stakeholder committee, and scoring identified evaluation criteria, the study recommended Bus Rapid Transit on Hwy 71b and MLK Blvd in Fayetteville as a feasible high-capacity transit alternative.



TOOLE
DESIGN

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS
REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION

RAZORBACK TRANSIT
BUS STOP
ENHANCEMENT PLAN

October 2025 | FINAL

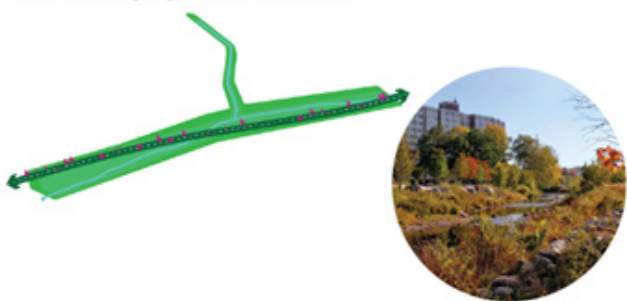
RAZORBACK GREENWAY CORRIDOR PLAN

The Razorback Greenway Corridor Plan is a regional planning framework that builds on the success of the Razorback Greenway to guide its long-term evolution as more than a recreational trail. The Plan examines the full length of the 40-mile corridor across seven Northwest Arkansas cities and establishes a shared vision for how the Greenway functions as an active transportation spine, public space, and organizing element for growth. The plan focuses on coordinating land use, mobility, design, and investment along the corridor, with strategies tailored to urban, suburban, and rural contexts. Importantly, the plan provides a regional framework that local governments can use to align policies, capital investments, and development decisions.

Six long range projects identified in the frame work are:

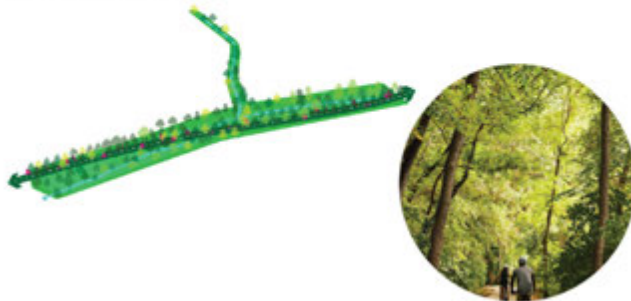
1 **Protect & Restore Creek Corridors**

Preserve floodplains as open space to improve ecological function and stormwater management while creating regional bike corridors.



2 **Re-Wild the Greenway**

Implement a large-scale tree planting program to provide shade, absorb carbon, and improve air quality.



3 **Manage Stormwater in Sponge Parks**

Design 'Sponge Parks' that collect and treat stormwater from neighborhoods, incentivizing development and forming new public spaces.



4 **Grow New Neighborhoods on the Greenway**

Build new housing and develop walkable, bikeable neighborhoods within a half mile of the Greenway.



5 **Complete a Commuter Bike Network**

Create urban loops that strengthen multi-modal connections between neighborhoods and the Greenway, and connect people to jobs.



6 **Connect Destinations & Experiences**

Locate destinations along the Greenway, creating more active and vibrant places to live, gather, shop, and experience local culture.



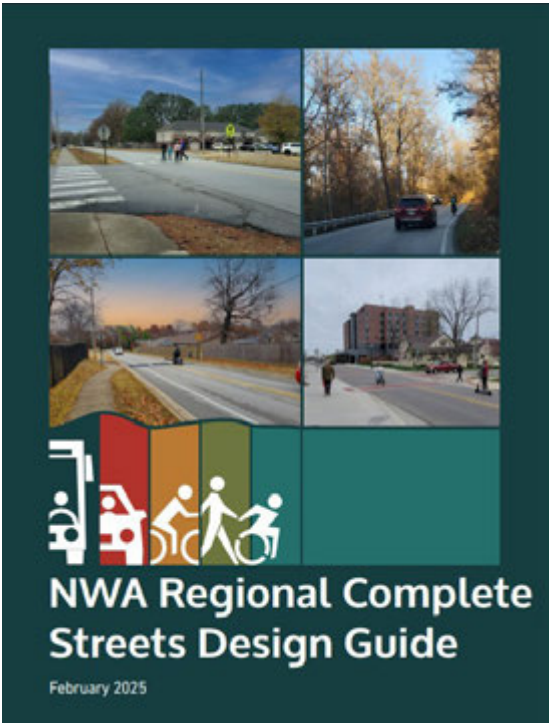
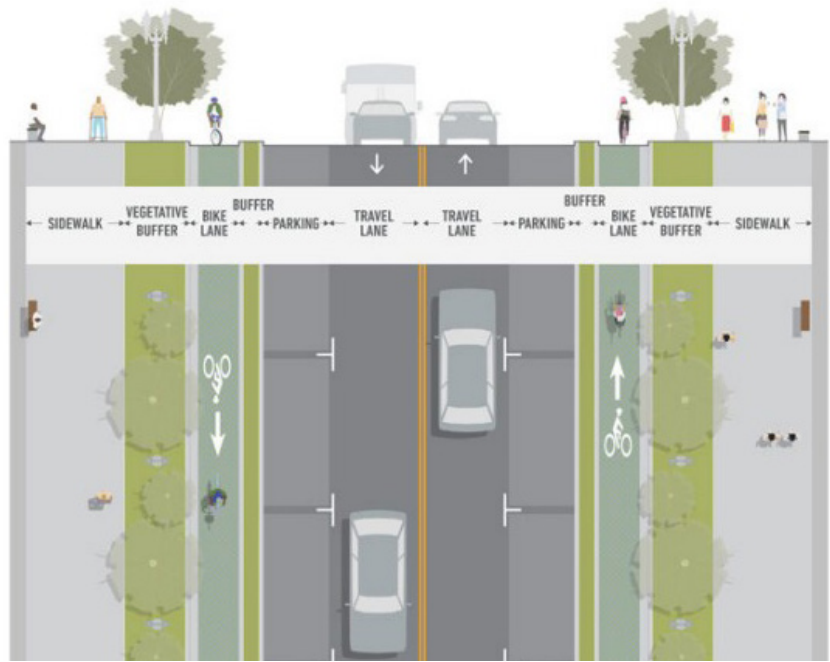
COMPLETE STREETS

In 2025, NWARPC worked with Toole Design to develop the NWA Regional Complete Streets Design Guidelines. The development of this resource was primarily funded through a 2023 federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Action Planning Grant, with the required local matching funds provided by the Walton Family Foundation. The guide itself is a supplement to the NWA Regional Vision Zero Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP), adopted in June 2023.

Informed by a Regional Complete Streets Working Group that solicited input from local planners and elected leaders, this document serves as a comprehensive design resource by providing a set of consistent, context-sensitive design principles to guide the development and retrofitting of the region's transportation facilities as truly complete streets, streets that are balanced for all modes of transportation, including walking, bicycling, rolling, taking transit, freight, and driving.

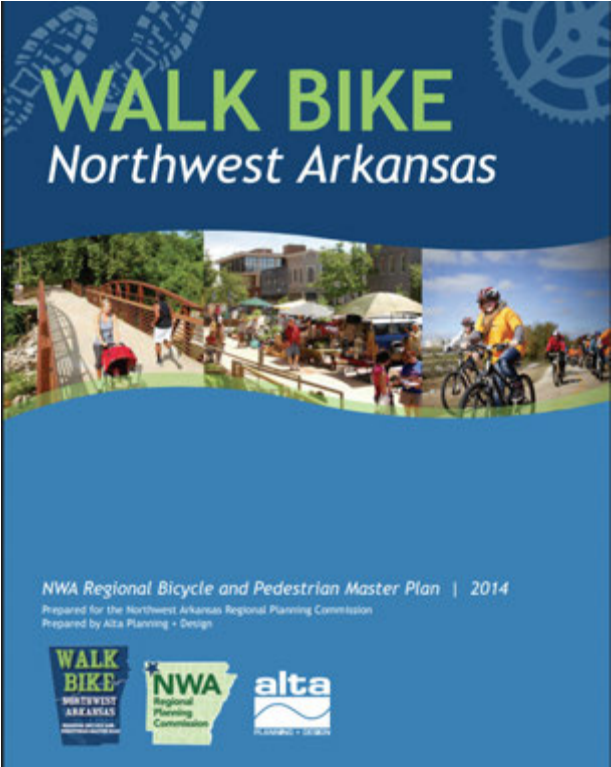
The Design Guidelines establish a vision for how local governments and project sponsors can adopt and apply Complete Streets policies, provides a multimodal street typology to supplement traditional roadway functional classifications, outlines design elements and strategies that support context sensitive street typologies and multimodal facilities, and offers implementation considerations for local, regional, and partner organizations.

This resource helps NWARPC, local governments, and project sponsors implement the Safe System Approach toward Vision Zero, define multimodal projects for federal and state funding programs, and advance the goals and vision of the recently adopted 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, all while meeting the increasing transportation demands of a rapidly growing region.



A complete street in Northwest Arkansas allowing transportation via driving, biking, and walking.

NWA REGIONAL BIKE/PED MASTER PLAN UPDATE



In 2025, NWARPC continued to lead the regional conversation around advancing active transportation, supporting planning, funding, outreach, and education efforts across communities in Northwest Arkansas. The reach of our region's on-street and off-street bicycle and pedestrian network has grown significantly, linking the region's neighborhoods, parks, and downtowns like never before.

The 2014 NWA Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, Walk Bike Northwest Arkansas, is currently being updated to incorporate these changes and continue advancing the development of our region's robust active transportation and recreational trail networks. The plan update will integrate design best practices to guide the ongoing development of safe, connected, and accessible streets and trails for people of all ages.



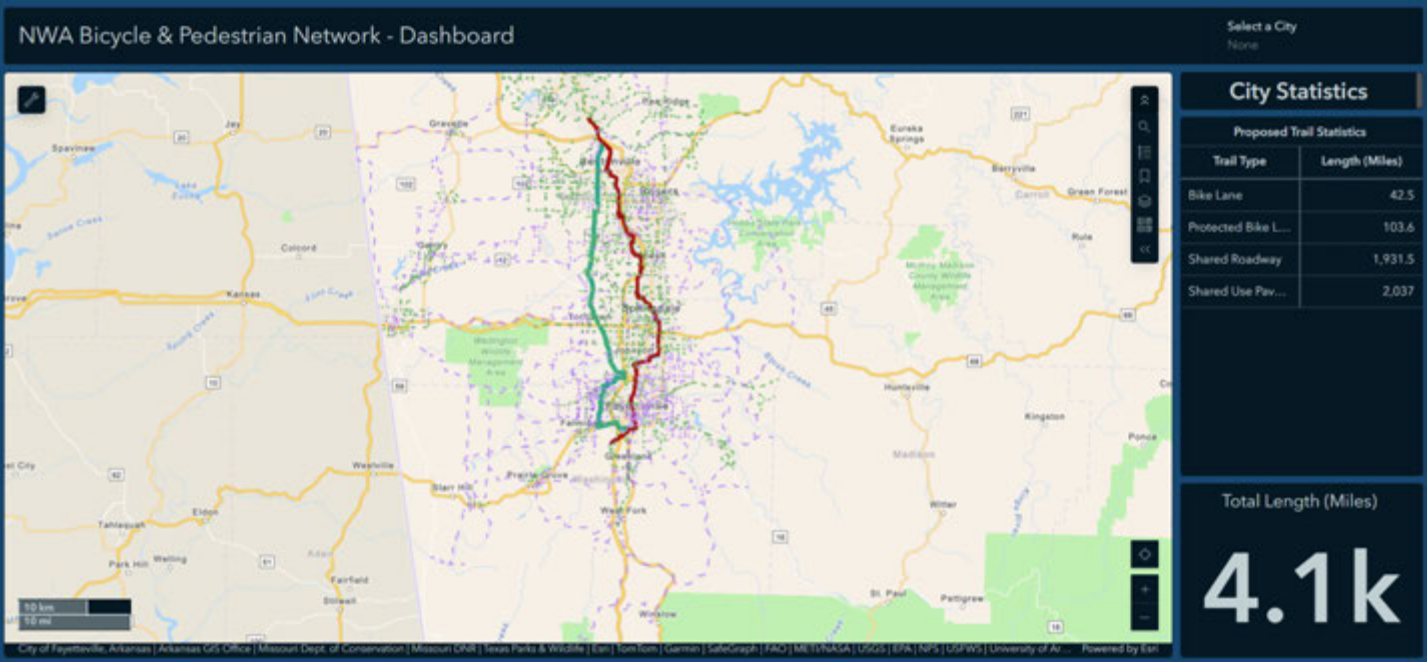
HERITAGE TRAILS

The Heritage Trail Partners (HTP) met regularly throughout 2025 to advance the regional network of historic roadways relating to the Butterfield Stagecoach Route, Civil War troop movements, and the Trail of Tears. HTP continued discussions and work around the Heritage Trail signs replacement and updating the Heritage Trail interactive map. After over 20 years of hard work by the Heritage Trail Partners with support from NWARPC, Local, State, and Federal leaders, the Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail (NHT) was added to the National Parks Service's National Trails System on January 5, 2023. In 2025, work began, in collaboration with National Parks Service NHT Planners, to develop a Butterfield Overland NHT Comprehensive Plan. HTP met with local parks planners throughout NWA in 2025 to solicit input on the plans recommendations and to meet with NPS staff on a quarterly basis to coordinate support for this federal planning effort. A draft version of the Butterfield Overland NHT Comprehensive Plan is set to be completed by late summer 2026. The Butterfield Overland NHT is 3,292 miles long, crosses seven states, and was designated to commemorate the impact the Butterfield Overland Mail service during the shaping of the nation.



ACT

The Northwest Arkansas Active Transportation Subcommittee and Heritage Trail Partners met on a bimonthly basis further advancing active transportation in the Region and facilitating cooperation between interested stakeholders. ACT meets every two months on the first Thursday of the month at 1:30 pm with open participation from cities, counties, local non-profit organizations, and citizens interested in advancing active transportation in the region. ACT worked on several projects in 2025, to include supporting the ongoing update to the NWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Walk Bike NWA, providing feedback on the development of a regional interactive GIS map the NWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Dashboard, and providing feedback during the development of the NWA Complete Streets Design Guidelines, which will be incorporated into the update of Walk Bike NWA, replacing Appendix A – Design Guidelines of the original 2015 master plan.



A major component of the effort to update the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is to map existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on an online interactive map and dashboard. NWARPC staff significantly advanced this effort in 2025, and the dashboard will be made available to the public in 2026.



THE NORTHWEST ARKANSAS TRAVEL DEMAND FORECASTING

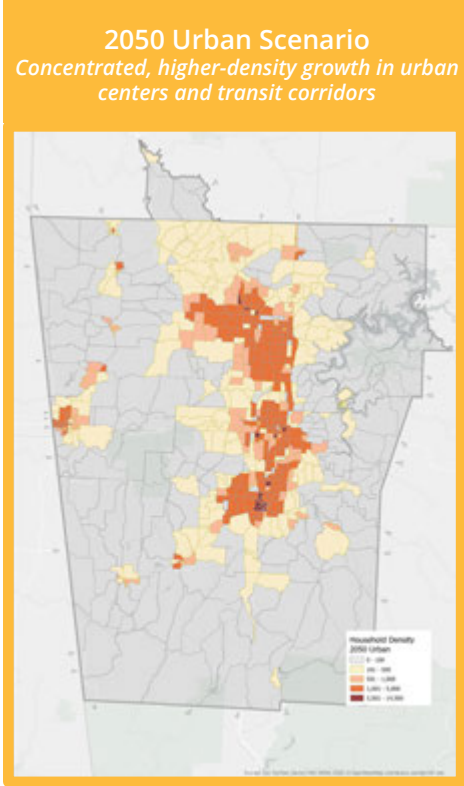
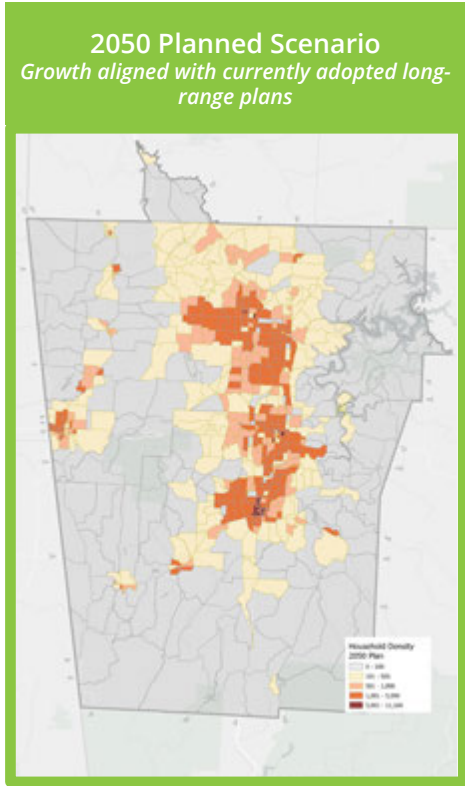
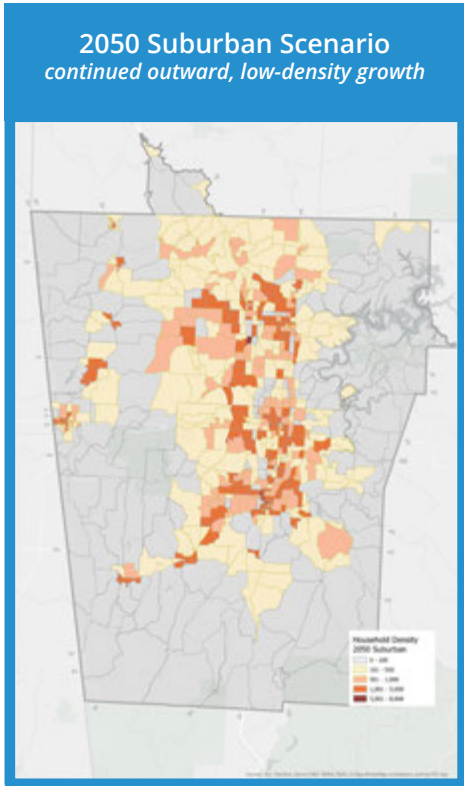
The Northwest Arkansas Travel Demand Forecasting Model is a key tool used to help planners and regional leaders understand how people and goods are likely to move in the region. The NWA TDM was also utilized to evaluate how well the transportation system will perform as the region grows and it was a key component and planning tool in the development of the Forward 2050 Regional Transportation Plan Update.

Recent Updates (2024–2025)

The NWA TDM was updated with a new base year of 2022 and forecast years of 2030, 2040, and 2050. As part of this effort, three land use scenarios for 2050 were developed to explore how different growth patterns could shape the region and to support the Transit Alternatives Study by incorporating three high-capacity transit options: Bus Rapid Transit, Commuter Rail, and Light Rail. The updated model was calibrated using observed 2022 data to ensure it accurately reflects real-world travel conditions. This validation process confirmed that the model reliably represents current travel patterns across both roadways and transit systems.

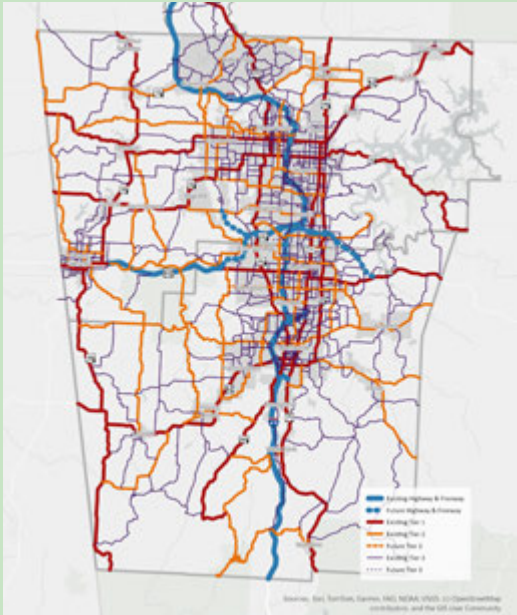
Planning for 2050

With continued growth expected in Northwest Arkansas, land use decisions will play a major role in shaping future mobility and quality of life. The model is used to evaluate how different development patterns impact congestion, travel demand, and access to destinations. The three growth scenarios for 2050 —Planned Growth, Suburban Growth, and Urban Growth—were developed to compare potential outcomes. These scenarios are not predictions, but tools to help decision-makers understand tradeoffs and guide investments in transportation infrastructure.



GIS & MAPPING SUPPORT

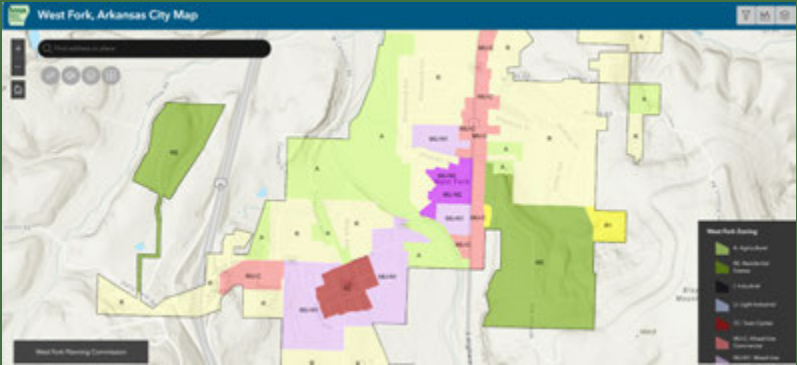
NWARPC continues to support member jurisdictions by providing mapping, planning tools, and GIS-based services, as well as facilitating public access to transportation and planning reports and maps. In 2025, NWARPC maintained a shared subscription to the REPLICA platform—a transportation modeling and built environment decision-support tool, available to all member jurisdictions.



Northwest Arkansas Regional Network Map

GIS services provided by NWARPC staff in 2025 included:

- Annexation support for cities in Benton and Washington Counties, including research, mapping, legal descriptions, and coordination with the State GIS Office
- Updates to Master Street Plans, zoning maps, and land use maps
- Transportation safety analysis to support planning and project development
- Development of mapping and analytical products for grant applications
- Creation and maintenance of interactive maps for approximately 20 jurisdictions, as well as regional maps supporting major plans and initiatives
- GIS training, data sharing, and technical assistance for jurisdictions within the MPO area



Interactive Zoning Map for the City of West Fork

GIS USERS GROUP

The Northwest Arkansas GIS Users Group, led by NWARPC staff, continued to meet virtually on a bi-monthly basis throughout 2025, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among regional GIS professionals.

The Northwest Arkansas GIS Users met and celebrated GIS Day in Fayetteville!

GIS Day, held on November 19, 2025, brought together Northwest Arkansas's vibrant community of GIS users and professionals for a day of learning, collaboration, and networking. Presenters shared valuable technical insights, highlighted successful projects, and delivered engaging sessions at the Fayetteville Police Station Community Room.

Attendees also had the opportunity to participate in a guided tour of the Fayetteville Police Department Dispatch Center, followed by an afternoon of geography- and GIS-themed activities.



The event was co-sponsored by NWARPC, the City of Fayetteville GIS Office, the Washington County GIS Office, and the Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies at the University of Arkansas. As a free, public event, GIS Day welcomed both experienced professionals and individuals interested in learning more about the use of GIS across Northwest Arkansas.

Learn more: nwagisusers.org

STORMWATER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Over the past two decades, the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission has partnered with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service (UACES) to assist communities, counties and the University of Arkansas in Washington and Benton Counties to meet EPA's Phase II stormwater regulations.

In urbanized areas, stormwater picks up pollutants and flows, untreated, through Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), into local creeks, streams and lakes.

To prevent harmful pollutants from being washed or dumped into a storm drain system, the USEPA requires that jurisdictions obtain permits to properly manage and discharge stormwater.

Eighteen Northwest Arkansas cities, Benton and Washington counties, and the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville are partnering with the U of A Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service and the NWARPC on a regional approach to stormwater management.

Both the EPA and the Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality have recognized the collaborative NWA Urban Stormwater Education Program as an innovative and effective pollution prevention education effort to help protect the region's water resources.

NWARPC and the individual MS4 jurisdictions sign a new Memorandum of Understanding each year in order to receive programming of the UACES for the Northwest Arkansas Regional Stormwater Education Program. A 21-member Stormwater Education Steering Committee meets annually to guide and direct the UACES's regional urban stormwater education and involvement programs.

A key role of the NWARPC is coordinating regular meetings of the MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group (SCG). The MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group's members are the local MS4 representatives, NWARPC staff and the UACES staff and it meets bi-monthly to discuss permit compliance challenges, local stormwater education program needs and accomplishments, and regional coordination of stormwater protection efforts.

The MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group continues to be a model for other MS4s in Arkansas. NWARPC will continue with the work of assisting the NWA MS4s, as well as others, in the development of their stormwater management programs and meeting the EPA Phase II requirements.



EDUCATIONAL CONTACTS IN 2025

- Tabling Events - 1139 contacts were made at 17 local events
- Adult Programs - 496 adults participated in 15 events
- Employee Trainings - 661 municipal employees were trained in 23 events
- Youth Programs - 638 kids were educated in 14 events
- Pre-Construction Program - 354 construction professionals completed our online program on construction BMPs and permit requirements.

PICK UP WHERE YOU PLAY

Pick Up Where You Play is a yearly regional effort to remove litter from waterways and is coordinated by the NWA Stormwater Education Program. The 2025 cleanup season ended with:

- 684 volunteers
- 17 events
- 11,473 pounds of trash removed

WHISKER PROJECTS:

The Whisker Project is a temporary public art installation using survey whiskers and concrete stickers to create a visual flow of stormwater as it moves underground from our streets to our creeks with the goal of bringing awareness in an interactive way. There were three whisker project installations in 2025 in:

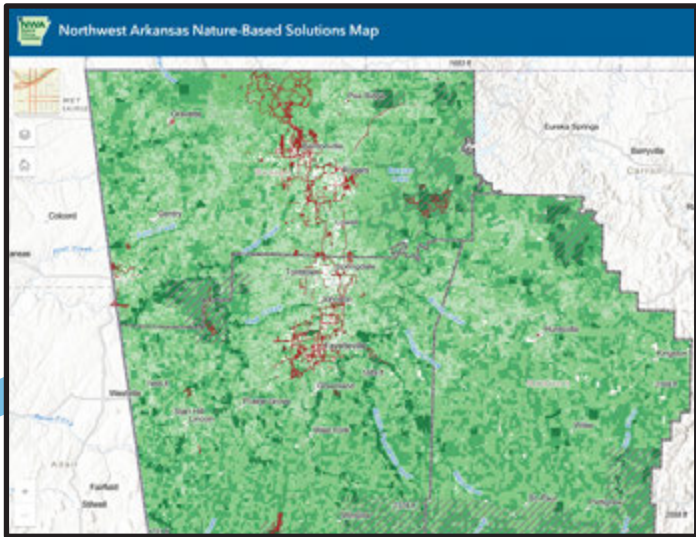
- Lowell at the George Looney Trailhead (March)
- Elkins at the Elkins Library (June)

EEI PLAN + CPRG UPDATES

The Northwest Arkansas Energy and Environment Innovation (EEI) Plan – Comprehensive Action Plan was adopted on March 26, 2025, as part of NWARPC's continued participation in the Inflation Reduction Act's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program. Building on the 2022 NWA Energy & Environment Innovation Priority Action Plan and following a successful application and award of **\$36.25 million** in CPRG funding, the Comprehensive Action Plan expands upon earlier efforts while incorporating new measures that reflect the priorities of local residents, cities, businesses, and organizations.



Regional Partners visit CPRG project sites



Nature-Based Solutions Map
As a part of Phase 2 of the EEI Priority Action Plan, NWARPC developed a geospatial analysis and model to better understand the distribution, condition, and vulnerability of natural infrastructure across Northwest Arkansas. Parcels in Benton, Washington, and Madison County were scored for ecosystem services, ecosystem resilience, carbon sequestration and storage, and social equity. The map can be used as a tool to inform land use planning decisions, evaluate environmental impacts, prioritize green infrastructure investments, and engage community members.

CPRG Project Spotlight- River Commons

The River Commons Green Network project is a good example of partners working together toward a common vision. The Watershed Conservation Resource Center, Beaver Water District, the City of Fayetteville, and the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust are working together to restore and preserve 180 acres of prairie and riparian area and build a paved shared use trail. The restoration led by WCRC has included prescribed burns and removal of invasive plant species via chemical and mechanical means. The design for the trail, led by the City of Fayetteville, is well underway. Additionally, many members of the public have had the opportunity to tour the site via events like the Arkansas Game and Fish Birding Tour, Urban Land Institute Place Summit, and school field trips from Happy Hollow Elementary School.



OPEN SPACE COALITION



Open Space Coalition meets in the parking lot of Devil's Eyebrow before touring the natural area.

The Open Space Coalition (OSC) met regularly throughout 2025 to advance the regional conversation around regional open space preservation and environmental conservation and restoration work in Northwest Arkansas. The group met for two in person meetings hosted at the Regional Planning Commission Office and traveled to meet on-site at 4 unique locations throughout the year, working with NWALT staff to highlight wins, by visiting recently preserved Open Spaces in the region. The NWA Open Space Plan was developed in 2016 and was utilized as the basis of the environmental component of the NWARPC Metropolitan Transportation Plan. A core recommendation of the 2016 plan was to establish an advisory committee on open space planning, in support of efforts to develop a coordinated, voluntary program to raise funds for the protection of the region's most valued natural landscapes and open spaces. The main goal of the Plan is to preserve these assets, thereby maintaining a high quality of life and high level of access to open space as the region continues to grow in population.

WASTEWATER UPDATE

Northwest Arkansas is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country, with the population of the region projected to reach 1 million people by 2050. As a result of the rapid growth, many infrastructure systems, including wastewater treatment, have been placed under significant strain. Hawkins-Weir Engineers, Inc. has been selected to complete a study to guide wastewater infrastructure investments in Northwest Arkansas, as a part of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture Arkansas Water Plan. This plan is a collaboration between the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and the Northwest Arkansas Council with monthly updates provided to the Regional Planning Commission.



PPP UPDATE

Adoption of the 2025 Public Participation Plan (PPP)

In February 2025, the NWARPC Policy Committee approved the updated Public Participation Plan (PPP) by Resolution 2025-03. The PPP outlines how NWARPC ensures an open, transparent, and inclusive transportation planning process, providing opportunities for residents, employers, and transportation providers to engage early and throughout each planning stage.

The 2025 update:

- Prioritizes complete information, timely notices, and clear access to decisions
- Ensures early and ongoing public involvement
- Adapts engagement tools to reflect regional growth and changing demographics
- Builds on past outreach while remaining flexible for future needs

The PPP also maintains compliance with federal public participation requirements, reinforcing NWARPC's commitment to equitable access, transparency, and meaningful community involvement as the region continues to grow.

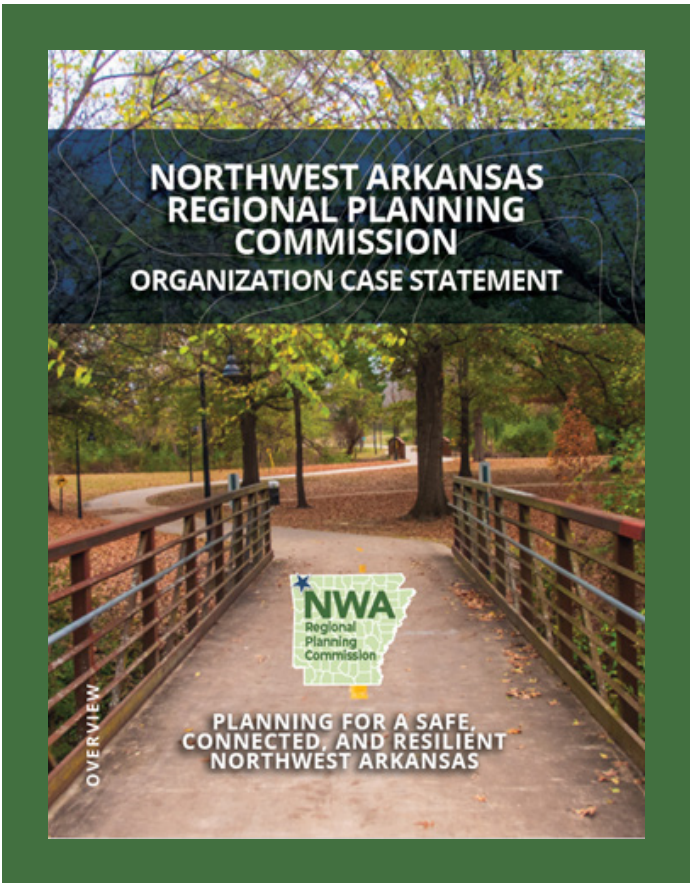


COMMUNICATIONS

In 2025, Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission continued implementation of its regional Mobility Strategic Communications Plan with support from MHP-SI and funding from the Walton Family Foundation.

Building on outreach initiated in 2024, efforts focused on developing a coordinated communications framework around mobility, transportation choice, and growth-related planning issues across the region. Work completed during the year included focus groups, a scientific public opinion survey, stakeholder interviews, messaging guidance, updates to the Public Participation Plan, and expanded public engagement efforts tied to regional transportation planning.

NWARPC also partnered with MHP-SI to produce social media content highlighting ongoing regional projects and clarifying the Commission's role in long-term transportation planning. The Commission now maintains an active presence on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram to support public understanding of regional mobility initiatives and future growth planning.



NWARPC STAFF CHANGES



After joining the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission in 1973, Donna Lange retired in 2025 following 52 years of remarkable service. Her legacy is deeply woven into the growth and success of NWARPC and the broader Northwest Arkansas region.



GIS Analyst, Stephanie Shaw has transitioned from NWARPC to work at the City of Pea Ridge. We are excited to see what Stephanie will accomplish at Pea Ridge as she continues to serve the Northwest Arkansas Region with her talents and skills!



Left to Right: Madison Kienzle AICP, Shimon Beazer, Stephanie Marpe

Madison Kienzle, AICP joins NWARPC after serving as Planning Director for Benton County Government. Shimon Beazer comes to NWARPC with experience as an intern at OzarksGo and as a Surveyor/GIS Analyst with the Ministry of Works and Transport in Antigua and Barbuda. Stephanie Marpe brings more than a decade of experience in operations and financial management, most recently serving as Operations Director for Downtown Bentonville Incorporated (DBI).

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Staff attended local, state, and national conferences to learn about best practices in planning and to network with peer regions and local planning partners.

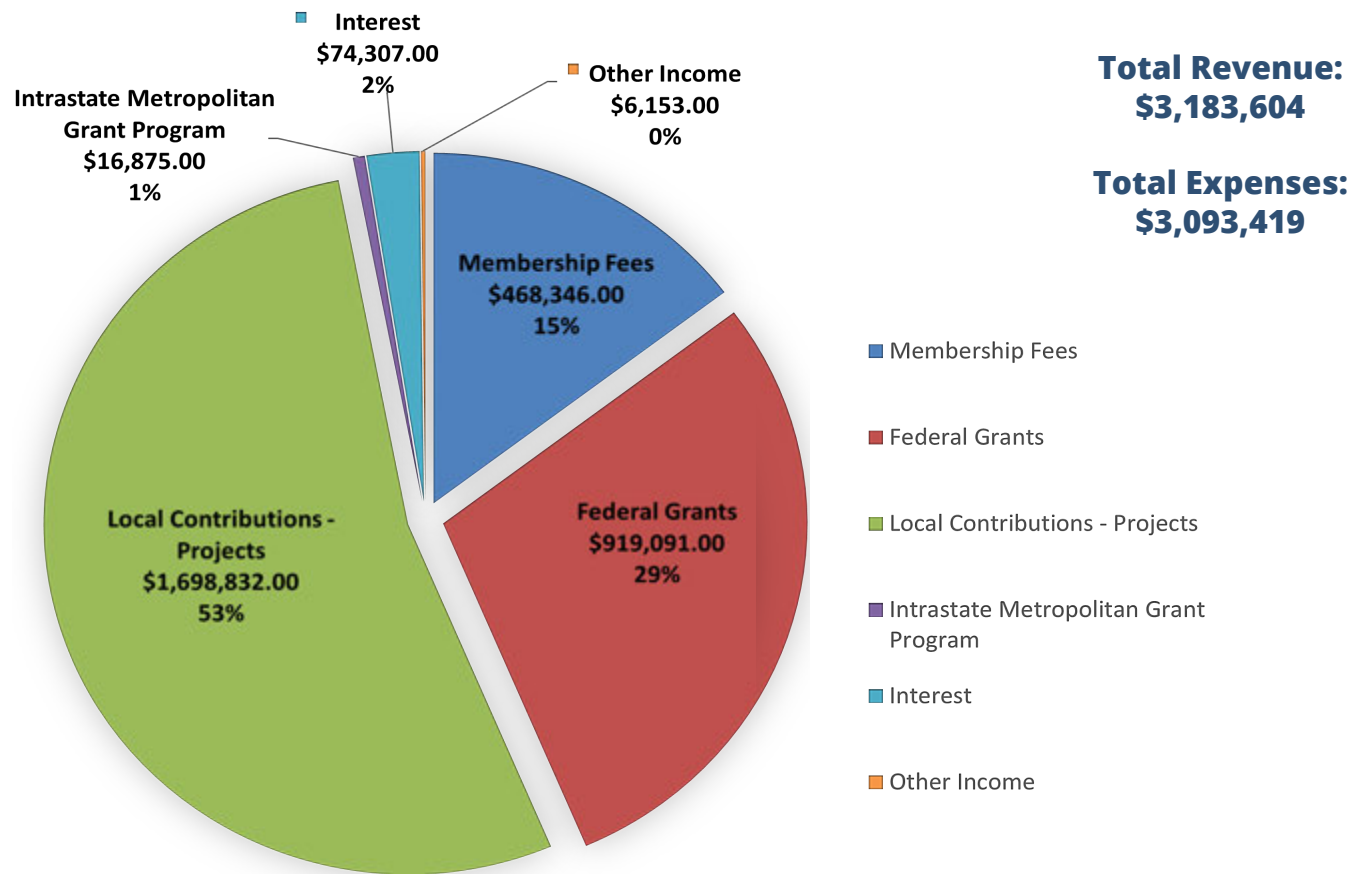
- February 18 – 21, 2025, **Southwest Transit Association Annual Conference**, Tucson, AZ
- February 27, 2025, **MoDOT 2025 Statewide Planning Partner Meeting**, Jefferson City, MO
- March 12, 2025, **NWA Growth: A Primer for Stormwater Management**, Springdale, AR
- April 2-3, 2025, **NWA Smart Growth for Water Resources**, Elm Springs, AR
- April 4, 2025, **A Five Year Recycling Roadmap** hosted by the NWA Council and The Recycling Partnership
- April 21-24, 2025, **2025 Missouri GIS Conference**, Columbia, MO
- April 24-25, 2025, **Atlanta Beltline Tour to inform the Razorback Greenway Corridor Plan**, Atlanta, GA
- April 25, 2025, **Urban Land Institute NWA Annual Spring Symposium**, Cave Springs, AR
- May 21, 2025, **American Planning Association – Arkansas Spring Meeting**, Russellville, AR
- June 3, 2025, **NWA Vulnerable Road User Safety Summit**, Fayetteville, AR
- June 11 – 24, 2025, **Congress for New Urbanism '33**, Providence, RI
- June 18 – 19, 2025, **Arkansas Municipal League 91st Annual Convention**, Little Rock, AR
- September 4, 2025, **Arkansas Municipal League NWA Housing Supply and Affordability Summit**, Cave Springs, AR
- September 15-17, **American Planning Associations Fall Bi-State Arkansas/ Missouri Conference**, 2025 St. Louis, MO
- September 15-19, 2025, **Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations Annual Conference**, Providence, RI
- October 8, 2025, **Groundwork Housing Summit**, Bentonville, AR
- October 14 – 16, 2025, **Arkansas GIS Symposium**, Eureka Springs, AR
- October 16, 2025, **Northwest Arkansas Land Trust Acre x Acre**, Fayetteville, AR
- October 24, 2025, **Benton County Disaster Preparedness Workshop**, Bentonville, AR
- October 27 – 30, 2025, **ARDOT Arkansas Transportation Summit**, Jonesboro, AR
- November 6, 2025, **Data Tools Road Show: 2025 Rural Profile & Labor Market Observatory**, Fayetteville, AR
- November 12-14, 2025, **ULI Northwest Arkansas: Place Summit 2025**, Fayetteville, AR
- November 19, 2025, **GIS Day in NW Arkansas**, Fayetteville, AR



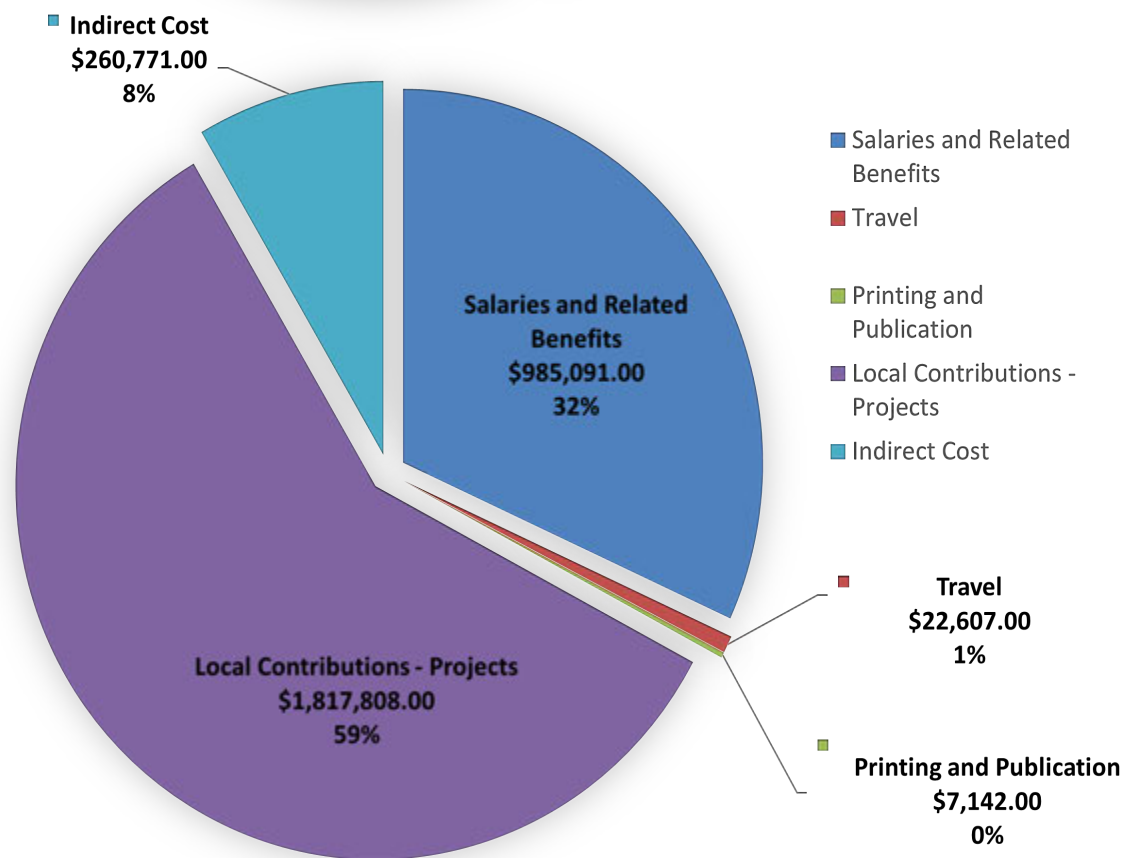
Plan.
Collaborate.
Connect.

FY 2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

Revenue



Expenditures



THANK YOU...

Thank you to our partners, members, and community. Serving and planning for our region is at the core of what we do. We are grateful for your support, feedback, and engagement as we work together to plan, connect, and prepare Northwest Arkansas to remain a thriving region for generations to come.

Staff:

Tim Conklin, AICP -Executive Director
Nicole Gibbs, AICP-Regional Planning
Cristina Scarlat - GIS Coordinator/Travel Demand Modeler
Tim Reavis, AICP- Multimodal Transportation Planner
Luke Aitken - Associate Planner
Madison Kienzle, AICP - Regional Planner
Shimon Beazer - GIS Analyst
Stephanie Marpe - Fiscal Operations Manager



NWARPC NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY: The NWARPC complies with all civil rights provisions of federal statutes and related authorities that prohibit discrimination in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Therefore, the NWARPC does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, age, national origin, religion or disability, in the admission, access to and treatment in NWARPC's programs and activities, as well as the NWARPC's hiring or employment practices. Complaints of alleged discrimination and inquiries regarding the NWARPC's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to Nicole Gibbs, AICP, Regional Planner – EEO/DBE (ADA/504/Title VI Coordinator), 1311 Clayton, Springdale, AR 72762, (479) 751-7125, (Voice/TTY 7-1-1 or 1-800-285-1131); Para llamadas en español, marque el 866-656-1842; para llamadas en inglés, marque el 711 o directamente al 800-285-1131 or the following email address: ngibbs@nwarpc.org. This notice is available from the ADA/504/Title VI Coordinator in large print, on audiotape and in Braille. If information is needed in another language, contact Nicole Gibbs. Si necesita información en otro idioma, comuníquese Nicole Gibbs, 479-751-7125, cuando menos 48 horas antes de la junta.

CLEARINGHOUSE REPORTING: 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 2023, federal-aid grants 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.



nwarpc.org

1311 Clayton Street
Springdale, AR 72762
comments@nwarpc.org
479-751-7125