

RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2025, AT 1:30 PM; APPROVED MAY 28, 2025

ENTITY	MEMBER	ATTENDING	PROXY
AVOCA	MAYOR ROBERT WHITEHORN		
BELLA VISTA	MAYOR JOHN FLYNN TAYLOR ROBERTSON	X X	
BENTON COUNTY	JUDGE BARRY MOEHRING (TREASURER) JOSH BEAM JAY FRASIER	X	
BENTONVILLE	MAYOR STEPHANIE ORMAN SHELLI KERR	X	
CAVE SPRINGS	MAYOR RANDALL NOBLETT		
CENTERTON	MAYOR BILL EDWARDS (VICE CHAIR) LORENE BURNS	X	
DECATUR	MAYOR BOB THARP		
ELKINS	MAYOR TROY REED		
ELM SPRINGS	MAYOR HAROLD DOUTHIT		
FARMINGTON	MAYOR ERNIE PENN	X	Melissa McCarville
FAYETTEVILLE	MAYOR MOLLY RAWN CHRIS BROWN JONATHAN CURTH	X X	Chris Brown
GARFIELD	MAYOR GARY L BLACKBURN		
GATEWAY	MAYOR CHERYL TILLMAN		
GENTRY	MAYOR KEVIN JOHNSTON		
GOSHEN	MAYOR RUSSELL STROUD		
GRAVETTE	MAYOR KURT MADDOX	X	Ami Murray
GREENLAND	MAYOR JIM RENFROW		
HIGHFILL	CASSIE ELLIOT	X	Tim Conklin
HINDSVILLE	MAYOR STEPHANIE CASEY		
HUNTSVILLE	MAYOR TRAVIS DOTSON		
JOHNSON	MAYOR CHRIS KEENEY (SECRETARY)	X	
LINCOLN	MAYOR DOUG HUTCHENS		
LITTLE FLOCK	MAYOR JEFF VAN SICKLER	X	Nicole Gibbs
LOWELL	MAYOR CHRIS MOORE		
PEA RIDGE	MAYOR NATHAN SEE		
PRAIRIE GROVE	MAYOR DAVID FAULK		
ROGERS	LANCE JOBE JOHN McCURDY QUNITON HARRIS	X X	
SILAM SPRINGS	MAYOR JUDY NATION ALLAN GILBERT	X	Ben Rhoads
SPRINGDALE	MAYOR DOUG SPROUSE (CHAIR) BEN PETERS JIM ULMER	X X	Mayor Doug Sprouse
SPRINGTOWN	MAYOR TERRI GLENN		
SULPHUR SPRINGS	MAYOR SHANE WEBER		
TONTITOWN	MAYOR ANGELA RUSSELL	X	
WASHINGTON CO.	JUDGE PATRICK DEAKINS BRIAN LESTER SAM ATA	X	Bridgett Russell
WEST FORK	MAYOR HEITH CAUDLE		
WINSLOW	ANN MALKIE		
ARDOT PLANNING + DISTRICTS	TRAVIS BROOKS JASON HUGHEY (DISTRICT 4)	X	Anthony Hunter
BEAVER H2O DISTRICT	LANE CRIDER	X	
MCDONALD COUNTY	COMMISSIONER BRIAN HALL	X	
MoDOT	MARVIN MORRIS (EZEKIEL HALL)	X	
NAT. AIRPORT AUTH.	AARON BURKES		
PINEVILLE, MO	MAYOR GREG SWEETEN		
RAZORBACK TRANSIT	GARY K. SMITH (ADAM WADDELL)	X	
U OF A	CHARLES ZIMMERMAN (KRISTEN KNIGHT)	X	
OZARK REG. TRANSIT	JOEL GARDNER (NON-VOTING)	X	
ARDOT TRANSIT	GREG NATION (NON-VOTING)		
HWY COMMISSION	PHILLIP TALDO (NON-VOTING)		

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

OTHERS: Mark Latham (Tontitown); Dan Weese (Bentonville); Kathryn Wright (Sen. John Boozman); Brittany Parker (Sen. Tom Cotton); Jessica Hart (Jacobs); Rob Smith (NWA Council); Jason Corral (Jacobs)

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

(1) CALL TO ORDER

The hybrid, in-person and virtual NWARPC/Policy Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse at 1:32 p.m.

(2) ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

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

(3) APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 26, 2025, RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse stated that February 26, 2025, Policy Committee meeting minutes were presented for approval. Sprouse asked for any comments or corrections on the minutes and hearing none from the committee requested a motion to approve the item.

MOTION: John McCurdy made a motion to approve February 26, 2025, RPC/Policy Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. Seconded by Mayor Chris Keeney. Motion carried unanimously.

(4) DIRECTOR REPORT & CLEARINGHOUSE REPORT

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse introduced the item, and Director Tim Conklin said the commission expects to have their FFY 2024 Financial Audit completed by the end of March, at which point staff will upload the audit to the federal audits clearinghouse and send a copy to all commission members for their records. He then mentioned that the Commission has been invited to apply for a Walton Family Foundation grant to bring a delegation from the region to attend the 33rd Congress for New Urbanism, which will take place in Providence, RI on June 11-14, 2025. Conklin stated that the 34th Congress for New Urbanism will be held right here in Northwest Arkansas in the summer of 2026, and encouraged members to attend this year's congress in Rhode Island, setting the stage as conference hosts for the 2026 event coming to NWA.

Conklin stated that several bills have been filed at the AR State Legislature which could change cities' and counties' authorities related to land use planning and zoning regulation. Conklin stated that the Governor had signed ACT 313 and ACT 314, focusing on removing regulations around accessory dwelling units and municipal territorial jurisdiction respectively. Members were also briefed on several significant bills under consideration, including SB518 (floodplain regulation), SB456 (housing flexibility), and HB1754 (property use restrictions). There was discussion among members on how to comply with the new laws, the likelihood of some of the bills being passed into law, and around the possible effects of the new legislation on land use planning efforts in the region. Lastly Conklin outlined recent federal funding requests, featured in the latest Federal-Aid Clearinghouse Report, and said this report is shared for informational purposes only and no action is needed by the Board.

Conklin asked if there were any questions from the group and there were none heard.

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(5) STATEWIDE NORTHWEST ARKANSAS ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT INNOVATION COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PLAN (NWA EEI PLAN) APPROVAL

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse introduced the item, and Tim Conklin gave an overview of the completion of the Northwest Arkansas Energy and Environment Innovation Comprehensive Action Plan (NWA EEI Plan). Conklin said the plan was 100-percent funded through a subaward of the EPA CPRG Planning Grant through the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment (ADEE). This plan enabled the Tri-Region Coalition to be eligible for the awarded \$99.99 million EPA CPRG Implementation Grant. The next steps involve the formal adoption of the plan and continued reporting on the grant's implementation to ADEE through 2027.

Conklin said the NWA EEI Comprehensive Action Plan Supplement was sent to the State of Arkansas on February 28, 2025 in accordance with the grant agreement, and includes objectives such as a voluntary framework to align local efforts and increase funding opportunities. Challenges addressed in the plan include rapid growth, limited transportation choices, infrastructure needs, and waste management. Conklin said the plan also includes a nature-based solutions GIS mapping tool available to all planning partners as a planning resource.

A. RESOLUTION #2025-06 – Approving the Northwest Arkansas Energy & Environment Innovation Comprehensive Action Plan (NWA EEI Plan)

Chair Mayor Sprouse asked whether there were any questions from the group, and hearing none, requested a motion to approve Resolution #2025-06 Approving the Northwest Arkansas Energy & Environment Innovation Comprehensive Action Plan (NWA EEI Plan).

MOTION: Judge Barry Moehring made a motion to approve Resolution #2025-06 Approving the Northwest Arkansas Energy & Environment Innovation Comprehensive Action Plan (NWA EEI Plan) Seconded by Lane Crider. Motion carried unanimously.

(6) PROJECT AND OTHER UPDATES

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

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs stated that project sponsors should be working toward obligation of their federal aid projects and the timely submission of quarterly reports to ARDOT and NWARPC.

Gibbs shared the timeline for the FFY 2026 NWARPC Funding Programs along with the estimated funding apportionments for each of the commissions three funding programs. She also emphasized the importance of member jurisdictions having a signed resolution from their city council for a complete funding application. She presented the following timeline:

FFY 2026 NWARPC Funding Programs Timeline:

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

Gibbs also reminded applicants if they are seeking additional funds for an existing federal aid project

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to ensure they are applying within the parameters of their original resolution, or a new resolution may be required. She presented the estimated funding availability table as follows:

NWARPC Funding Program	FFY 2025 Apportionment	Additional Not Awarded (FFY2025)	FFY 2026 Funding Estimates
Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP-A)	\$ 11,963,043	\$ 234,570	\$ 12,197,613
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	\$ 1,330,597	\$ 28,235	\$ 1,358,832
Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)	\$ 1,430,720	\$ 28,054	\$ 1,458,774
	\$ 14,433,501		\$ 15,015,219

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

Tim Reavis provided an overview of recent staff efforts to kick off the *Forward2050 Plan* (2050 MTP) and its components. He stated that the MTP is federally required to be updated every five years. He said NWARPC is under contract with consultant WSP to assist staff in developing two key components of the MTP: an update to the Travel Demand Model (TDM) and a new Transit Alternatives Study (TAS) to better prepare the region for its projected population growth through 2050.

Reavis said that a public survey to help inform the plan was launched on March 1, 2025. He stated that the questions featured on that survey will be mostly identical to those posed during the 2045 MTP development and the responses will be compared with those received in the past. He also mentioned that there will be open house style meetings held at the Fayetteville Public Library April 9, 2025 and the Bentonville Public Library April 10, 2025 to gather public input to support the plans development. He said consultant WSP will be present at the Open House meetings to provide more information on the TDM and TAS updates.

Reavis said the regional transportation plans' core goals remain focused on the integration of local plans and guidance to improve the quality of life in NWA as the region's population rapidly grows. The transit modes studied in the TAS will be Bus Rapid Transit, Light Rail, and Commuter Rail. He asked whether there were any questions.

C. Other Ongoing Project Updates

- **NWA Vision Zero – SS4A Safety Action Plan – Phase 2**

Tim Conklin explained that the Commission is currently working with consultant Toole Design to carry out Phase 2 of the NWA Vision Zero SS4A (Safe Streets and Roads for All) Safety Action Plan, including development and adoption of the Regional Complete Streets Design Guide which was adopted by the Board last month. He said that Toole Design is also working with five of our member cities to develop their own individual safety action plans with tailored recommendations for local implementation. He shared the following status of phase two deliverables:

Regional Complete Streets Design Guide

- *(Complete – Board Approval 2/20/25)*

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2 Safety Demonstration Projects (Complete)

- ✓ Bentonville Fire Dept. Demonstration – held Oct. 1
- ✓ Rogers School Zone Demonstration – held Nov. 5–7

2 Systemic Safety Webinars (Ongoing)

- Webinar #1: Implementing Complete Streets – September 5, 2024
- Webinar #2 – TBD

5 Individual Community Safety Action Plans (Finalizing)

Communications and Outreach Tools (Ongoing)

- **Razorback Greenway Corridor Plan**

Tim Reavis recapped recent progress made with consultant team from Field Operations on the Razorback Greenway Corridor Master Plan. He said the consultant team came to NWA earlier this month to meet with NWARPC staff and conducted a site visit to portions of the greenway. He said the first Advisory Committee for the planning effort, with leaders from seven cities present, will be held on April 3, 2025 and one-on-one meetings with the consultant team and city leadership will be held on May 1 and 2, 2025. The leaders from all seven cities will also accompany Field Operations and NWARPC staff on a trip to the Atlanta Beltline and adjacent developments on April 24, 2025.

D. Other Grant Opportunity Updates

Tim Conklin provided an overview of the awarded federal grants to the region below, with emphasis made on the discretionary awards without an executed agreements:

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

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

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

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

Luke Aitken provided an overview of the ARDOT Transportation Alternatives (TAP) and Recreational Trails (RTP) Programs Application deadlines. He said members applying for NWARPC TAP and CRP funding should also consider applying for ARDOT TAP to increase their chances of receiving a funding award. The ARDOT deadline for applications is April 30, 2025, at 4:00 PM (CDT).

(7) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES

A. Active Transportation Committee (ACT)

Luke Aitken recapped the topics covered at the February ACT meeting and encouraged anyone

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interested to join the group's next meeting virtually on April 3, 2025. He said a new 2025 meeting schedule and outlook calendar invites for ACT have been sent out and asked members to reach out if they would like to participate in the group's coming meetings.

B. NWA Open Space Coalition

Luke Aitken recapped the group's February meeting, held here at the Commission's office. He encouraged anyone interested in the Open Space Coalition or the implementation of the NWA Open Space Plan to come to the group's next meeting on April 9, 2025. He said a new 2025 meeting schedule and the outlook calendar invites for 2025 meetings have been sent out to all current members.

C. MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group

Aitken recapped the group's last meeting held in February and said the MS4 Stormwater Compliance group's next meeting will be held virtually on April 16, 2025 at 10:30 AM.

D. NWA GIS User Group

Aitken recapped the group's last meeting held in February and said the next NWA GIS User group meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2025 at 10:30AM, virtually.

Aitken also announced the SMART GROWTH for water resources conference would be held in Springdale on April 2 and 3, 2025 and the NWA Vulnerable Road Users Safety Summit would be held in Fayetteville on June 3, 2025.

(8) PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse asked whether there were any public comments for consideration, and none were heard.

(9) OTHER BUSINESS

A. Future Meeting Dates:

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse provided an overview of the upcoming meeting dates as shown below:

- **TAC Meeting** – Thursday, April 17, 2025 @ 10:30 AM
- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, April 23, 2025 @ 1:30 PM

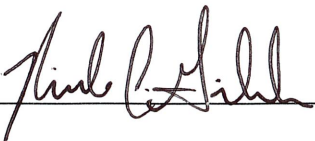
Chair Mayor Sprouse asked whether there was any other business and there was some discussion among members around recent legislative developments affecting land use planning efforts in the region.

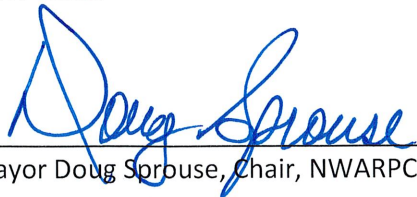
(10) ADJOURN

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:08 PM.

PASSED AND APPROVED ON THIS 28TH DAY OF MAY 2025.

ATTEST:




Mayor Doug Sprouse, Chair, NWARPC