RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2025, AT 1:30 PM; *APPROVED MAY 28, 2025*

ENTITY	MEMBER	ATTENDING	PROXY
AVOCA	MAYOR ROBERT WHITEHORN		
BELLA VISTA	MAYOR JOHN FLYNN	X	
	TAYLOR ROBERTSON	X	Chris Hyatt
BENTON COUNTY	**JUDGE BARRY MOEHRING (TREASURER)**	X	
	JOSH BEAM	X	
	JAY FRASIER		
BENTONVILLE	MAYOR STEPHANIE ORMAN	X	
	SHELLI KERR	X	Mayor Orman
CAVE SPRINGS	MAYOR RANDALL NOBLETT		
CENTERTON	**MAYOR BILL EDWARDS (VICE CHAIR)**		
	LORENE BURNS		
DECATUR	MAYOR BOB THARP		
ELKINS	MAYOR TROY REED		
ELM SPRINGS	MAYOR HAROLD DOUTHIT		
FARMINGTON	MAYOR ERNIE PENN	X	
FAYETTEVILLE	MAYOR MOLLY RAWN		
	CHRIS BROWN	X	
	JONATHAN CURTH	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	
GREENLAND	MAYOR JIM RENFROW		
HIGHFILL	CASSIE ELLIOT	X	
HINDSVILLE	MAYOR STEPHANIE CASEY		
HUNTSVILLE	MAYOR TRAVIS DOTSON		
JOHNSON	**MAYOR CHRIS KEENEY (SECRETARY)**		
LINCOLN	MAYOR DOUG HUTCHENS		
LITTLE FLOCK	MAYOR JEFF VAN SICKLER	X	
LOWELL	MAYOR CHRIS MOORE	X	
PEA RIDGE	MAYOR NATHAN SEE	X	Keegan Stanton
PRAIRIE GROVE	MAYOR DAVID FAULK		
ROGERS	LANCE JOBE	X	
	JOHN McCURDY	X	
	QUNITON HARRIS	X	
SILOAM SPRINGS	MAYOR JUDY NATION	X	Ben Rhoads
	ALLAN GILBERT		
SPRINGDALE	**MAYOR DOUG SPROUSE (CHAIR)**	X	
	BEN PETERS	X	
	JIM ULMER	X	
SPRINGTOWN	MAYOR TERRI GLENN		
SULPHUR SPRINGS	MAYOR SHANE WEBER		
TONTITOWN	MAYOR ANGELA RUSSELL	X	Mark Latham
WASHINGTON CO.	JUDGE PATRICK DEAKINS		
	BRIDGETT RUSSELL	X	
	SAM ATA		
WEST FORK	MAYOR HEITH CAUDLE		
WINSLOW	ANN MALKIE		
ARDOT PLANNING + DISTRICTS	TRAVIS BROOKS		Sunny Farmahan
	JASON HUGHEY (DISTRICT 4)	X	
BEAVER H2O DISTRICT	LANE CRIDER	X	
McDONALD COUNTY	COMMISSIONER BRIAN HALL		
MoDOT	MARVIN MORRIS		
	(EZEKIEL HALL)		
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)		
ARDOT TRANSIT	GREG NATION (NON-VOTING)		
HWY COMMISSION	PHILLIP TALDO (NON-VOTING)		

RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2025, AT 1:30 PM; *APPROVED MAY 28, 2025*

NWARPC STAFF: Tim Conklin; Nicole Gibbs; Tim Reavis; Cristina Scarlat, and Luke Aitken
OTHERS: Mellissa McCarville (Farmington); Phillip Patterson (ARML), Bernadette Rhodes (Metroplan)

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 1:30 p.m. and Sprouse welcomed members attending in person and virtually.

(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 MARCH 26, 2025, RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse stated that the March 26, 2025, Policy Committee meeting minutes were deferred for approval until the next meeting.

(4) DIRECTOR REPORT & CLEARINGHOUSE REPORT

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse introduced the item and Director Tim Conklin said the commission has completed their FFY 2024 Financial Audit and that staff will soon upload the audit to the federal audits clearinghouse once approved and send a copy to all commission members for their records.

A. Accepting the 2024 NWARPC Audit

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse asked whether there were any questions and hearing none, requested a motion to accept the 2024 NWARPC Audit.

<u>MOTION</u>: Jim Ulmer moved to accept the 2024 NWARPC Audit; Barry Moehring seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Conklin continued his Director's report, highlighting the Arkansas State Legislative Session and various Bills that have been signed into law affect cities' and counties' authorities related to land use planning and zoning regulation. He showed and summarized the information below:

2025 Arkansas Legislative Session (*informally ended April 16, 2025*)

Bills Signed into Law (Planning Legislation):

ACT 313 "Accessory Dwelling Units" (HB1503)
An act to amend the law concerning municipal regulations; to prohibit certain restrictions on the regulation of accessory dwelling units; and for other purposes.

ACT 314 "Territorial Jurisdiction" (HB1510)
An act to amend the law concerning territorial jurisdiction of municipalities; to repeal the authority for a municipality to exercise territorial jurisdiction over an unincorporated area of a county; and for other purposes.

ACT 591 "Third-Party Contractors" (SB322)
An act to amend the law concerning construction and development; to allow third parties to perform plan reviews and site inspections; and for other purposes.

ACT 595 "Administrative Rezonings" (SB505)
An act to amend the law concerning municipal planning; to require an administrative procedure for changes to the zoning or district designation of property in certain instances; and for other purposes.

ACT XXX "County Property in City Limits" (SB571) *ORDERED ENROLLED 4/16/2025*
An act to amend the law concerning municipal building and zoning regulations; to prohibit a municipality from enforcing buildings and zoning regulations on county property; and for other purposes.

Notes:

- Bills from this session will take effect 90 days after Sine Die – meaning early August.
- In mid-late May APA AR and ARML plan to set up a Spring Meeting (possibly a one-day seminar) to discuss the impact of legislation from the session.

Conklin said the Commission has been invited to apply for a Walton Family Foundation grant to bring a delegation from the region to 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 outlined upcoming events in the region including the NWA Vulnerable Road Users Safety Summit on June 3, 2025 and the ULI NWA Spring Symposium on Infrastructure on April 25, 2025. Lastly, he said NWARPC has agreed to help Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment to circulate basic messaging for public outreach purposes on the regional Air-Quality Watch "Code Orange" ozone advisories. Conklin asked if there were any questions from the group and there were none.

(5) FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2026 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) APPROVAL

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs summarized the draft UPWP (covering July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026) including work-element budgets, financial tables, and the long-range work-product timeline. She said a public comment period was held March 31 through April 14, 2025, and the Technical Advisory Committee recommended approval on April 18, 2025. Tim Conklin outlined the work tasks covered in the work plan and summarized the multiple source financial summary.

A. RESOLUTION #2025-07 – Approving the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Chair Sprouse asked for any outstanding questions from the group, and hearing none, requested a motion to approve Resolution #2025-07 Approving the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

<u>MOTION:</u> Barry Moehring made a motion to approve Resolution #2025-07 Approving the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Seconded by Ernie Penn. Motion carried unanimously.

(6) ARKANSAS TRI-REGION COALITION CPRG IMPLEMENTATION GRANT – Metroplan Progress Summary

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse introduced the item and Tim Conklin gave an overview of the EPA CPRG Implementation Grant and the NWA Green Network projects and programs before introducing Bernadette Rhodes, Metroplan Deputy Director and Senior Regional Planner for Partnerships and Grants. Rhodes thanked the Board for having her and gave an update on progress made to date on the Tri-Region Coalition EPA CPRG Implementation Grant. She reported that 14 sub-award agreements are now signed and executed. Early restoration work is now underway at River Commons, University of Arkansas Oak Ridge, and Rogers Osage/Blossom Way Creeks. She stated that only $32,000 in draw-downs have been processed to date; adding that quarterly site visits to monitor progress will continue through 2025. Rhodes asked for any questions on the material presented and none were heard.

(7) PROJECT AND OTHER UPDATES

A. NWARPC Funding Programs (STBGP-A/TAP/CRP) – FFY2025 Obligation Plan & FFY2026 Funding Cycle

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse introduced the item and Tim Conklin that project sponsors should be working toward obligation of their federal aid projects and the timely submission of quarterly reports to ARDOT and NWARPC. He said staff met with ARDOT on April 18, 2025 to go over project status and discuss a FFY 2025 obligation plan scenario. He reminded project sponsors of roles and responsibilities between the LPA's, NWARPC, and ARDOT.

Nicole Gibbs gave an overview of the FFY 2026 NWARPC Funding Programs Timeline, showing the following:

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 to ensure they are applying within the parameters of their original authorization, or a new resolution may be required. She presented the estimated funding availability for the three federal funding programs administered by the NWARPC 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**

Gibbs also presented the list of funding request applications for FFY 2026 Funding Programs, shown below:

Blue = projects submitted for application in more than one funding program

FFY 2026 NWARPC Funding Requests

Job No.	Jurisdiction	Project	Phase	Requested Amounts: STBGP-A-FEDERAL	TAP-FEDERAL	CRP-FEDERAL	TOTAL FEDERAL REQUESTED (per application)	TOTAL FEDERAL REQUESTED (per project)
040958	Washington County	Wheeler Rd. Bridge Replacement-Clabber Creek Str. & Apprs.	Design & Enviro.	$ 119,920	$ -	$ -	$ 119,920	$ 119,920
040957	Tontitown	Hwy 412 & Barrington Rd. Inters. Impvts.	Design/ROW/Utilities	$ 1,500,000	$ -	$ -	$ 1,500,000	$ 1,500,000
New	Tontitown	E Fletcher Ave and S Barrington Rd Inters. Impvts.	Construction	$ -	$ 87,271	$ -	$ 87,271	$ 87,271
040848	Springdale-Johnson	Gene George South, Phase 2	Construction	$ 8,000,000	$ -	$ -	$ 8,000,000	$ 8,000,000
New	Springdale	Smart School Connections	Construction	$ -	$ 444,800	$ -	$ 444,800	$ 444,800
New	Springdale	Smart School Connections	Construction	$ -	$ -	$ 444,800	$ 444,800	
New	Springdale	40th Street Side Path Extension	Construction	$ -	$ 328,000	$ -	$ 328,000	$ 328,000
New	Springdale	40th Street Side Path Extension	Construction	$ -	$ -	$ 328,000	$ 328,000	
New	Rogers	Active Mobility (Bicycle & Pedestrian) Plan	Planning	$ -	$ -	$ 200,000	$ 200,000	$ 200,000
090433	Lowell	Hwy-264/Belleview/Spring Creek Intersection	Utility/Construction	$ 3,711,000	$ -	$ -	$ 3,711,000	$ 3,711,000
090722	Lowell	Hwy. 264 Razorback Greenway Tunnel & Trail Realignment	ROW/Utilities/Const	$ 621,500	$ -	$ -	$ 621,500	$ 621,500
New	Fayetteville	Transit Stop Enhancements	Construction	$ -	$ 150,000	$ -	$ 150,000	$ 150,000
040967	Fayetteville	Rupple Road Lighting — Persimmon to MLK	Construction	$ -	$ -	$ 500,000	$ 500,000	$ 500,000
040955	Fayetteville	Drake Street Connections	Construction	$ -	$ 300,000	$ -	$ 300,000	$ 300,000
New	Fayetteville	Highway 112/Garland Ave. (Poplar - Drake St)	Construction	$ 2,000,000	$ -	$ -	$ 2,000,000	$ 2,000,000
New	Fayetteville	North Street Corridor (Garland to College)	Design/Enviro/ROW	$ 500,000	$ -	$ -	$ 500,000	$ 500,000
New	Centerton	Hwy102/E Centerton Blvd & Womack St Traffic Signal	All Phases	$ 1,250,000	$ -	$ -	$ 1,250,000	$ 1,250,000
090XXX	Centerton	Centerton Sidewalks Project Phase 2	Construction	$ -	$ 400,000	$ -	$ 400,000	$ 400,000
090628	Bentonville-Centerton	Greenhouse Road	ROW/Utilities	$ 2,572,920	$ -	$ -	$ 2,572,920	$ 2,572,920
090613	Bentonville	Vaughn Rd	ROW/Utilities	$ 2,544,000	$ -	$ -	$ 2,544,000	$ 2,544,000
New	Benton County	McNelly Rd – Spanker Rd/Plentywood Inters. & Impvts.	Design/Enviro	$ 640,000	$ -	$ -	$ 640,000	$ 640,000
New	Bella Vista	Reimagining 71	Feasibility Study	$ 310,400	$ -	$ -	$ 310,400	$ 310,400
New	Bella Vista	Bella Vista Trails and Greenway Masterplan Update	Planning	$ 160,000	$ -	$ -	$ 160,000	$ 160,000
New	Bella Vista	Bella Vista Trails and Greenway Masterplan Update	Planning	$ -	$ -	$ 160,000	$ 160,000	
				$ 23,929,740	**$ 1,710,071**	**$ 1,632,800**	**$ 27,272,611**	**$ 26,339,811**
			Total Estimated Funding	**$ 13,638,358**	**$ 1,535,368**	**$ 1,458,774**		**$ 16,632,500**
			Total Requests	**$ 23,929,740**	**$ 1,710,071**	**$ 1,632,800**		**$ 26,339,811**
			Difference (Est.-Requests)	$ (10,291,382)	$ (174,703)	$ (174,026)		$ (9,707,311)

Gibbs said project sponsors gave brief presentations to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on April 17, 2025 and the selection committee is scheduled to tour and score the project proposals on May 7, 2025. She said we anticipate having a recommended list of projects for Board consideration at the next meeting on May 28, 2025.

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. Reavis 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 and has received 811 responses so far. He said two Public Open House Events were held at the Fayetteville Public Library on April 9, 2025 and at the Bentonville Public Library on April 10, 2025 to gather public input to support the plan's development. He said they were very well attended and thanked those who came out in support of the effort. He said the regional transportation plans' core goals remain focused on integration of local plans and guidance to improve the quality of life in NWA as the region's population rapidly grows.

C. Other Ongoing Project Updates

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

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs summarized following status of phase two deliverables:

> **Regional Complete Streets Design Guide**
> - *(Complete – Board Approval 2/20/25)*
>
> **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 elected officials and staff leaders from all seven cities will accompany Field Operations and NWARPC staff on a trip to the Atlanta Beltline tomorrow. He said the group will be touring the Beltline and meeting with Atlanta Beltline, Inc. staff, and others to hear about successes and lessons learned. Reavis said one-on-one meetings with the consultant team and city leadership are scheduled for the following week, May 1 and 2, 2025. He said the consultants and staff will also be tabling during the Square2Square event on Saturday, May 3, 2025 as one of two primary outreach events for the project and to promote the ongoing project survey.

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 agreement:

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**

Tim Conklin provided an overview of the USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All SS4A Grant programs upcoming deadline on June 26, 2025 and shared information and applicant guidance for the program. He also shared the ARDOT TAP & RTP application deadline is coming up with applications due April 30, 2025.

(8) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES

A. Active Transportation Committee (ACT)

Nicole Gibbs said the group last met April 3, 2025 and their next meeting will be held virtually on June 5, 2025 at 1:30 PM.

B. NWA Open Space Coalition

Nicole Gibbs said the group last met April 9, 2025 and their next meeting will be held on June 11, 2025 at 11:00 AM.

C. MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group

Nicole Gibbs recapped the group's last meeting held on April 16, 2025 and said the MS4 Stormwater Compliance group's next meeting will be held virtually on June 18, 2025 at 10:30 AM.

D. NWA GIS User Group

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

(9) PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Mayor Doug Sprouse asked whether there were any public comments for consideration, and none were heard. Sprouse said there was one written public comment included in the invitation email and meeting packet.

(10) OTHER BUSINESS

A. Future Meeting Dates:

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

- **TAC Meeting –** Thursday, May 15, 2025 @ 10:30 AM
- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, May 28, 2025 @ 1:30 PM
- **ARDOT Public Involvement Meeting: Hwys 59 & 72 Intersection (Gravette)** – Tuesday, April 29, 2025, 4:30–6:30 PM, Gravette Civic Center.

Chair Mayor Sprouse asked whether there was any other business.

(11) ADJOURN

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 PM.

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

Doug Sprouse

Mayor Doug Sprouse, Chair, NWARPC

ATTEST: _____