

RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024, AT 1:30 PM; *DRAFT*

ENTITY	MEMBER	ATTENDING	PROXY
AVOCA	MAYOR ROBERT WHITEHORN		
BELLA VISTA	MAYOR JOHN FLYNN TAYLOR ROBERTSON	X X	
BENTON COUNTY	JUDGE BARRY MOEHRING (CHAIR) JOSH BEAM JAY FRASIER/DEAN KLINGMON	X X	
BENTONVILLE	MAYOR STEPHANIE ORMAN SHELLI KERR	X X	
CAVE SPRINGS	MAYOR RANDALL NOBLETT		
CENTERTON	MAYOR BILL EDWARDS (SEC'Y) LORENE BURNS	X	
DECATUR	MAYOR BOB THARP		
ELKINS	MAYOR TROY REED		
ELM SPRINGS	MAYOR HAROLD DOUTHIT		
FARMINGTON	MAYOR ERNIE PENN (VICE CHAIR)	X	
FAYETTEVILLE	MAYOR LIONELD JORDAN CHRIS BROWN JONATHAN CURTH	 X X	
GARFIELD	MAYOR GARY L BLACKBURN		
GATEWAY	MAYOR CHERYL TILLMAN		
GENTRY	MAYOR KEVIN JOHNSTON		
GOSHEN	MAYOR RUSSELL STROUD	X	
GRAVETTE	MAYOR KURT MADDOX		
GREENLAND	MAYOR JIM RENFROW		
HIGHFILL	CASSIE ELLIOT	X	
HINDSVILLE	MAYOR STEPHANIE CASEY		
HUNTSVILLE	MAYOR TRAVIS DOTSON		
JOHNSON	MAYOR CHRIS KEENEY (TREASURER)	X	
LINCOLN	MAYOR DOUG HUTCHENS		
LITTLE FLOCK	MAYOR JEFF VAN SICKLER		X Nicole Gibbs
LOWELL	MAYOR CHRIS MOORE		
PEA RIDGE	MAYOR NATHAN SEE		X Jessica Grady
PRAIRIE GROVE	MAYOR DAVID FAULK	X	
ROGERS	LANCE JOBE JOHN McCURDY QUNITON HARRIS	X X	
SILOAM SPRINGS	MAYOR JUDY NATION ALLAN GILBERT		X Ben Rhoads
SPRINGDALE	MAYOR DOUG SPROUSE PATSY CHRISTIE JIM ULMER	X X X	
SPRINGTOWN	MAYOR TERRI GLENN		
SULPHUR SPRINGS	MAYOR SHANE WEBER		
TONTITOWN	MAYOR ANGELA RUSSELL	X	
WASHINGTON CO.	JUDGE PATRICK DEAKINS BRIAN LESTER SAM ATA		
WEST FORK	MAYOR HEITH CAUDLE		
WINSLOW	ANN MALKIE		
ARDOT PLANNING + DISTRICTS	BRAD McCALEB JASON HUGHEY (DISTRICT 4)		X Sunny Farmahan
BEAVER H2O DISTRICT	LANE CRIDER	X	
McDONALD COUNTY	COMMISSIONER BRIAN HALL		
MoDOT	MARVIN MORRIS (BRITNI O'CONNOR)	X	
NAT. AIRPORT AUTH.	AARON BURKES	X	
PINEVILLE, MO	MAYOR GREG SWEETEN		
RAZORBACK TRANSIT	GARY K. SMITH (ADAM WADDELL)		X
U OF A	SCOTT TURLEY (JAY HUNEYCUTT)		X
OZARK REG. TRANSIT	JOEL GARDNER (NON-VOTING)		
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: Lacie Lawson (Goshen); Mark Latham (Tontitown), Dennis Birge (Bentonville); Nicola Hoofard (Centerton); Minghua Qiu Miller & David Siskowski (ARDOT); Dan Weitkamp (FTA); Truett Smith (FHWA); Phillip Patterson (ARML); Andy Brewer (Olsson)

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 Judge Barry Moehring at 1:30 p.m.

(2) ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

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

(3) APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 27, 2024, RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Chair Judge Barry Moehring introduced the item and asked whether there were any additions or corrections to the March 27, 2024, RPC/Policy Committee Meeting Minutes and hearing none, requested a motion to approve the minutes.

MOTION: Mayor Ernie Penn made a motion to approve the March 27, 2024, RPC/Policy Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. Mayor Russell Stroud provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

(4) DIRECTOR'S REPORT/CLEARINGHOUSE REPORT

Chair Judge Barry Moehring introduced the item and Tim Conklin stated there was no Clearinghouse Report for April, as no new federal grants were filed through the state of Arkansas.

Conklin summarized the director's report, first providing an update on the Commission's successful efforts in establishing two Certificate of Deposit (CD) accounts with five percent interest. He said that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be coming to meet with staff on May 8, 2024 for NWARC's Triennial Review. Staff will work with FTA to review the organization's compliance with federal regulations. He said staff has issued Task Order #2 to Olsson to begin work on the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Energy & Environment Innovation (EEI) – Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP). He said the state of Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment has suballocated 100% federal funding to NWARPC for the regional planning work. Conklin said that the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) will be presented for approval at this meeting and the FY 2025 Budget will be presented for approval at the next meeting on May 22, 2024. He noted that the Commission fiscal FY2025 year starts on July 1, 2024 and ends on June 30, 2025. Lastly, he recapped a recent ARDOT highway groundbreaking for the XNA Access Road and US 612 Bypass. He said that this is a monumental project of regional significance that has been in the works for decades, and he is happy to see the project come this far.

(5) FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2025 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

Chair Judge Barry Moehring introduced the item and Tim Conklin explained the purpose of the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is to show how we plan to use our federal funds each fiscal year. He said this UPWP covers work between July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024, and the

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public comment period for the document was held from April 8 - April 22, 2024. He said the UPWP outlines work tasks for: Program Support and Administration, General Development and Comprehensive Planning, Long-Range Transportation Planning, Short-Range Transportation Planning, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He said about \$1.9 million in federal funding will come through the NWARPC in 2025, including \$300,000 from the state of Arkansas and the EPA to fund work on the CPRG EEI Comprehensive Action Plan. Conklin also mentioned that some projects listed on the UPWP are Walton Family Foundation funded.

A. RESOLUTION #2024-09 – Approving the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Chair Judge Barry Moehring asked whether there were any questions and hearing none requested a motion to approve Resolution #2024-09 Approving the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

MOTION: Jim Ulmer made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-09 Approving the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Mayor Ernie Penn provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

Scrivener’s Error Note: Resolution #2024-09 was drafted using a resolution number that was already in use (“2024-07”). The documents were updated and new signatures were collected to reflect the new resolution number (“2024-09”).

(6) REMIX TRANSIT PLANNING SOFTWARE CONTRACT RENEWAL – Razorback Transit Planning Features

Chair Judge Barry Moehring introduced the item and Tim Reavis provided an overview of the contract to be renewed, explaining that NWARPC has been using this software since 2018, in partnership with Razorback Transit and Ozark Regional Transit (ORT), and that this agreement would continue the existing services being offered by Remix. He said that since this item was first brought to the commission back in March, Razorback Transit had requested an additional operations scheduling feature be added to the contract at an added cost of \$54,580 to be 100% paid by Razorback Transit alone. He said that otherwise, the software would still be funded 80% with the Commission’s federal funds and the 20% local match cost would be shared among Razorback Transit, ORT, and NWARPC at \$1,542.67 each, per year. He said the total contract cost is now \$124,000. Chair Judge Barry Moehring asks what the need is for the additional software and Adam Waddell of Razorback Transit stated the software helps staff in planning routes and anticipating staffing and scheduling needs year-round as demand fluctuates.

A. RESOLUTION #2024-08 – Authorizing NWARPC to Enter into a Three-Year Contract for the Purchase of REMIX Transit Planning Software for Use by Razorback Transit, Ozark Regional Transit, and the NWARPC.

Hearing no other questions on the item, Chair Judge Barry Moehring asked for a motion to approve the resolution for item 6.

MOTION: Mayor Bill Edwards made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-08 Authorizing NWARPC to Enter into a Three-Year Contract for the Purchase of REMIX Transit Planning Software

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for Use by Razorback Transit, Ozark Regional Transit, and the NWARPC. Lance Jobe provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

(7) PROJECT AND OTHER UPDATES

A. FFY 2025 Funding Programs – STBGP-A/TAP/CRP

Chair Judge Barry Moehring introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs provided an outline of the NWARPC STBGP-A, TAP, and CRP Funding Programs timeline for FFY 2025 as follows:

FFY 2025 Timeline:

Call for Projects (Applications open)	Sunday, January 7, 2024
Application Deadline (<i>Resolution Required</i>)	Thursday, April 4, 2024 @Midnight
Project Sponsor Presentation to TAC Committee	Thursday, April 18, 2024
Selection Committee Site Visits/Scoring/Rec	May 1, 2024
Selection Committee Recommendation to TAC	Thursday, May 16, 2024
TAC Recommendation to RPC/Policy	Wednesday, May 22, 2024

She stated there is expected to be about \$15 million awarded by NWARPC in this funding cycle, and that the commission received 24 applications for 19 different projects in the region, with five projects submitting applications in multiple funding programs for a total of \$16.5 million in project requests.

\$17.9M total application requests:

- **11** STBGP-A Applications for \$13.5M
 - 5 “New” Project requests \$10.3M
 - 6 “Existing” Project requests \$3.2M
- **6** TAP Applications for \$1.9M
- **7** CRP Applications for \$2.5M

\$16.5M in total project requests (\$1.5M difference)
 (5 projects submitted projects for multiple funding programs)

FFY 2025 Funding Estimates
 (based on FFY 2024 levels)

STBGP-A	\$12,086,192
TAP	\$1,404,724
CRP	\$1,505,332
TOTAL	\$14,996,248

Tim Conklin said there was discussion among the selection committee and Technical Advisory Committee regarding funding projects which include improvements to state highways. He said that typically the selection committee will prioritize projects on local roadways, and only funds state highway improvements once ARDOT has signed a cost-sharing agreement to provide continuing project funding. Gibbs mentioned details of the upcoming selection committee site visit tour which will be held May 1st at 8:00 AM at the NWARPC office. She said the committee plans to tour all the project application sites and then end the day by scoring the projects and making funding recommendations. She said staff will take the committee’s recommendation to the Technical Advisory Committee on May 16th, which will then be presented at the following RPC meeting May 22nd.

B. FY 2024 STBGP-A/TAP/CRP Project Development

Nicole Gibbs thanked ARDOT staff again for a quick turnaround on the FY 2024 Award Agreements and stressed the importance of communities remaining in touch with NWARPC and ARDOT in the

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coming months to accommodate the obligation process for the FY 2024 funds by the September 30, 2024, obligation deadline. She shared the draft Obligation Plan Scenario for FY 2024 funds with the group and said the application timeline for the funding award programs were moved up this year to give staff more time to work toward the obligation deadline.

C. NWA Safety Action Plan Update (USDOT-SS4A)

Nicole Gibbs reminded attendees of the upcoming deadlines for this program, including the new deadline for this year’s SS4A implementation grant applications of May 16, 2024, and reminded attendees that cities should have vision zero plans adopted prior to applying for funding.

- **April 4, 2024, 5 p.m. (EDT):** Deadline #1 for Planning and Demonstration Grants
- **May 16, 2024, 5 p.m. (EDT):** Sole deadline for Implementation Grants; Deadline #2 for Planning and Demonstration Grants.
- **August 29, 2024, 5 p.m. (EDT):** Deadline #3 for Planning and Demonstration Grants; NOFO closes.

Gibbs summarized the Phase 2 SS4A project deliverables, which will include the development of tailored Community Safety Action plans for Bentonville, Centerton, Rogers, Springdale, and Fayetteville. She encouraged communities to reach out if they have particular interest in doing safety demonstration projects with the help of SS4A funding and Toole Design.

- **Regional Complete Streets Design Guide**
- **5 Individual Community Safety Action Plans**
- **2 Systemic Safety Webinars**
- **2 Safety Demonstration Projects**
- **Communications and Outreach Tools**

She said the next Complete Streets Working Group meeting (#2), will be held on June 5, 2024, from 11AM-1PM here at the NWARPC office. She said Toole Design will be in touch with the group prior to that in-person meeting with other preparation material and information requests. She encouraged communities to attend and be on the lookout for more information from Toole Design.

D. Energy & Environment Innovation (EEI) Plan (EPA-CPRG)

Nicole Gibbs said the commission’s work on this plan is taking two forms, an implementation grant in collaboration with statewide partners, and a planning grant with staff working with Olsson to develop a Comprehensive Action Plan. She showed the table of relevant dates below:

EVENT/DELIVERABLE	DATE/DUE DATE
NWARPC Priority Action Plan Supplement to ADEE	December 1, 2023
CPRG Notice of Intent to Apply	January 31, 2024
ADEE Priority Plan to EPA	March 1, 2024
CPRG Implementation Grant Applications	April 1, 2024
NWARPC Priority Action Plan (PAP) - for adoption	May 2024
Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) Supplement to ADEE	February 28, 2025
NWARPC Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) - for adoption	Spring 2025
Status Report Supplements	March 1, 2027

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She provided an overview of the CPRG implementation grant application, which was submitted in collaboration with MetroPlan and the City of Fort Smith. She said the application included a proposal for 18 different community led projects in NWA addressing everything from environmental restoration and preservation to workforce development, and e-bike incentive programs. She said that phase two – Comprehensive Action Plan development – has begun, and Tim Conklin told attendees to be on the lookout for relevant communications coming soon and said that he hopes our regional partners will adopt the plan to become eligible to apply for more EPA CPRG Grant programs in the future.

E. Enhancing Equitable Transit Connections Project Update (FTA-AoPP)

Tim Reavis introduced the item and said that procurement for the grant is now underway, with Requests For Proposals (RFP's) having been sent out to interested firms. He also reminded attendees of the one-to-one matching challenge grant for this program, provided by the Walton Family Foundation, which will fund cities up to \$200,000 match for the design and engineering of bus stop facilities and access improvements.

Reavis also provided an update on the Razorback Transit Bus Stop Enhancements Plan, made possible by funding from the Walton Family Foundation and the City of Fayetteville. He said the selection committee met last week and selected Toole Design as the consultant on the project, and that contract negotiations are ongoing.

F. NWA Mobility – Strategic Communications Plan

Nicole Gibbs provided an update on the NWA Strategic Communications Plan, funded by the Walton Family Foundation, which seeks to advance the regional conversation around mobility to respond to the rapid growth of the region. She said procurement is underway for a consultant, and that the selection committee has interviewed all firms that submitted letters of interest and will be selecting a firm very soon. She also thanked the communications staff of our member agencies, who make up the selection committee for this project, for providing their time and expertise.

Tim Reavis provided an update on the Travel Demand Model (TDM) Update & Transit Alternatives Study. Reavis stated that in preparation for the required 2050 MTP update NWARPC will be updating their TDM and studying transit alternatives. The TDM will be modified to show three different land use scenarios, forecasting those scenarios' impact on transportation demand through 2030, 2040, and 2050. He said that procurement is underway for the projects and the interested consultants have all been sent RFP's which are due back by May 7th.

G. Other Grant Opportunity Updates

Tim Conklin said there are new Notices of Funding Opportunity being sent out almost weekly. He provided an overview of some newer grant programs offered by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) including funding for electric vehicle charging stations and active transportation networks. He said the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) is a new competitive grant program for this year.

Conklin said NWARPC may submit a Safe Streets for All SS4A implementation grant application this year for the HWY 112 side path. This project was submitted for RAISE grant funding and was designated a project of merit in the 2023 funding cycle but was not awarded funds.

Luke Aitken provided an overview of the new Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment

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Program grant. He said ATIIP is a new competitive grant program for this year, which seeks to fund spines and greenway networks that allow connected networks of active transportation to flourish in communities. He said the program is seeking to award \$45 million in funding and the application deadline is June 17, 2024.

Tim Reavis provided a recap of the commission's efforts to secure funding for the HWY 112 side path, including applying for a RAISE grant in February 2024, and plans to continue applying under ARDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), as well as the new USDOT ATIIP Program.

Tim Conklin gave an overview of the HWY 612 project, which will extend the highway from I-49 down to HWY 265. The Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) is being completed through support from the NWA Council and grant applications for both the INFRA and MEGA federal grant programs will be resubmitted to USDOT by May 6th.

Luke Aitken reminded attendees that ARDOT TAP and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) applications are now open with a deadline of May 31st. He said that cities who have applied for FY2025 TAP funds should also do so through ARDOT's program.

(8) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES

A. Active Transportation Committee (ACT)

Luke Aitken gave an update on the last ACT meeting where progress of infrastructure projects in the region, and newly opened bicycle and pedestrian grant programs such as ATIIP and ARDOPT TAP were discussed with members.

B. NWA Open Space Coalition

Luke Aitken said that the last meeting was the first of its kind, where the coalition met on site with local leaders in Lincoln to discuss open space preservation and see the land that the region is working to preserve at Lincoln Lake. He encouraged attendees to come out to WOKA in Siloam Springs for their next meeting in May.

C. MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group

Nicole Gibbs gave an overview of the most recent MS4 group meeting, where they held a Q & A with AR DEQ staff, discussed their Q1 2024 Education Program Report and the 2024 education plan emphasis of automotive maintenance/ household hazardous waste.

D. NWA GIS User Group

Nicole Gibbs said the NWA GIS User Group did not meet in April and there are no new updates. They are scheduled to meet about June 11, 2024 at 10:30am, virtually.

(9) PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Judge Moehring asked whether there were any public comments for consideration and there were none.

(10) OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Judge Moehring provided an overview of the upcoming meeting dates below, emphasizing that the Regional Mobility Authority meeting will be held here at NWARPC after this meeting (RPC) is adjourned, at 2:30 PM.

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A. Future Meeting Dates:

- **TAC Meeting** – Thursday, May 16, 2024 @ 10:30AM
- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, May 22, 2024 @ 1:30PM
- **Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) Board Meeting** – Wednesday, April 24, 2024 @2:30PM

Tim Conklin shared a photo from the ARDOT Groundbreaking of the NWA National Airport Access Road and US 612 Bypass and said these projects are decades in the making, thanking all our planning partners for their continued work on regional transportation projects like this. He also gave an update on a proposed electric vehicle charging station in Siloam Springs along US 412. He said thanks to the NWARPC’s nomination of US 412 for “EV Corridor-Pending” Designation, the Jiffy Trip along US 412 in Siloam Springs was awarded over \$1 million for a new charging station under the NEVI Program.

Chair Judge Barry Moehring asked whether there was any other business, and hearing none, requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: Mayor Ernie Penn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Russell Stroud provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

(11) ADJOURN

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 P.M.

PASSED AND APPROVED ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 2024.

Judge Barry Moehring, Chair, NWARPC

ATTEST: _____