

RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 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		
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	Melissa McCarville
FAYETTEVILLE	MAYOR LIONELD JORDAN CHRIS BROWN JONATHAN CURTH	X	
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	
HINDSVILLE	MAYOR STEPHANIE CASEY		
HUNTSVILLE	MAYOR TRAVIS DOTSON		Brandi Holt
JOHNSON	MAYOR CHRIS KEENEY (TREASURER)	X	
LINCOLN	MAYOR DOUG HUTCHENS		
LITTLE FLOCK	MAYOR JEFF VAN SICKLER	X	
LOWELL	MAYOR CHRIS MOORE		
PEA RIDGE	MAYOR NATHAN SEE	X	Jessica Grady
PRAIRIE GROVE	MAYOR DAVID FAULK		
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	
SPRINGTOWN	MAYOR TERRI GLENN		
SULPHUR SPRINGS	MAYOR SHANE WEBER		
TONTITOWN	MAYOR ANGELA RUSSELL	X	Mark Latham
WASHINGTON CO.	JUDGE PATRICK DEAKINS BRIAN LESTER SAM ATA	X	Bridgett Russell
WEST FORK	MAYOR HEITH CAUDLE		
WINSLOW	ANN MALKIE		
ARDOT PLANNING + DISTRICTS	BRAD McCALEB JASON HUGHEY (DISTRICT 4)	X	X Minghua Miller
BEAVER H2O DISTRICT	LANE CRIDER	X	
McDONALD COUNTY	COMMISSIONER BRIAN HALL		
MoDOT	MARVIN MORRIS (Ezekiel Hall)		
NAT. AIRPORT AUTH.	AARON BURKES	X	
PINEVILLE, MO	MAYOR GREG SWEETEN		
RAZORBACK TRANSIT	GARY K. SMITH (ADAM WADDELL)		
U OF A	SCOTT TURLEY (JAY HUNEYCUTT)	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: Dennis Birge (Bentonville); Phillip Patterson (ARML); Doug Thompson (NWADG-Press).

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

Chair Judge Barry Moehring was absent from the meeting – Mayor Chris Keeney, Treasurer, served as Acting Chair.

The hybrid, in-person and virtual NWARPC/Policy Committee meeting was called to order by Acting Chair/Treasurer Mayor Chris Keeney 1:30 p.m.

(2) ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

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

(3) APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 28, 2024, RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Acting Chair Mayor Keeney stated the approval of the latest set of Minutes from August 28, 2024 Policy Committee meeting are being deferred to the next meeting.

(4) CLEARINGHOUSE REPORT

Acting Chair Mayor Keeney introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs stated that Director Tim Conklin is currently in Portland Oregon attending a USDOT Peer-to-Peer event for Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A). She said that he was invited to speak with others across the county to showcase regional activities and projects focused on safety. Gibbs outlined the federal funding requests shown in the October Federal-Aid Clearinghouse Report and said this is for informational purposes only and no action is needed by the Board. Gibbs asked if there were any questions and there were none.

(5) 2025 ARDOT & MoDOT PERFORMANCE TARGETS FOR SAFETY, PAVEMENT AND BRIDGE CONDITION, AND TRAVEL TIME RELIABILITY

Acting Chair Mayor Chris Keeney introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs said as an MPO, we are required to establish performance measure targets for safety, bridge and pavement condition, and system reliability. She said we must either support the state’s established targets or adopt our own within 180 days of the state’s targets approval. She said MPO’s are required to report baseline conditions and progress toward achievement of these performance targets, including plans to achieve future targets, in their Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). She said MoDOT and ARDOT both have proposed new safety targets and pavement condition targets this year. She said TAC has recommended approval of these new targets.

A. RESOLUTION #2024-15 – Support the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) and Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Established Performance Targets for Safety, Pavement and Bridge Condition, and Travel Time Reliability

Acting Chair Mayor Keeney asked whether there were any questions and hearing none, requested a motion to approve Resolution #2024-15 Supporting the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) and Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Established Performance Targets for Safety, Pavement and Bridge Condition, and Travel Time Reliability

MOTION: Mayor Bill Edwards made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-15 – Supporting the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) and Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Established Performance Targets for Safety, Pavement and Bridge Condition, and Travel Time Reliability, seconded by Mayor Doug Sprouse. The motion carried unanimously.

(6) PROJECT AND OTHER UPDATES

A. NWARPC Funding Programs (STBGP-A/TAP/CRP) – Project Development & Obligation Plan

Acting Chair Mayor Chris Keeney introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs reminded attendees that quarterly progress reports on active projects are to be sent to NWARPC and ARDOT, noting the importance of jurisdictions progressing their federal aid project development. She said ARDOT staff are currently working through development of all new project agreements for projects that were awarded funding in May 2024. Gibbs thanked ARDOT staff and member agency staff who worked to get projects in shape to meet the September FFY 2024 obligation deadline. Gibbs said the FFY 2026 NWARPC Funding Program cycle is proposed to follow a similar timeline as the last cycle, and we would bring an item to the Board in December to authorize the call for projects to go out in January with applications being due in April. She encouraged everyone to be thinking of projects to bring for funding requests.

B. NWARPC 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

Acting Chair Mayor Chris Keeney introduced the item and Tim Reavis provided the committee with an overview of recent progress made on the update to the MTP. He stated that the update project, carried out every five years, is now underway with the steering committee landed on *Forward2050* for the plan title. Reavis said that the three key elements of the plan update will be 1. A forward facing vision and shared goals 2. Convening regionally and fostering agency collaboration 3. Project funding and plan implementation. 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) highlighting potential impacts of regional transit development in NWA including Bus Rapid Transit, Light Rail, and Commuter Rail. Reavis outlined the purpose and functions of the Travel Demand Model and mentioned that this update will include three different land use scenarios, showing the function of our regional transportation network in each scenario of future growth. He said this modeling will be done using 2050 population projections from the Arkansas Economic Development Institute, and the models will show how population growth can be allocated across the cities of our region. Reavis gave the group a preview of some of the plans key principles such as: Collaboration, Regional Aspiration, Respect for Local Plans, and Protection and enhancement of NWA Quality of Life, as well as some key themes including: Predictable and Responsible Development Patterns, Multimodal Connectivity, Safety and Resilience in natural and built environments, and Healthy, Inclusive Communities. Reavis said the 2050 MTP update is targeted for adoption by the Policy Committee once completed in March 2026.

Reavis also mentioned that the City of Rogers recently adopted a new Future Land Use Plan and said NWARPC will be working with communities during the MTP’s development to incorporate current long-range plans throughout the region into the TDM update to capture a more accurate picture of future regional development patterns in the new MTP.

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C. Other Ongoing Project Updates

Luke Aitken 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, 2 safety demo projects, 2 systemic safety webinars, and the main resource, a Regional Complete Streets Design Guide (CSDG). He said a safety demonstration project took place in Bentonville in early October with their Fire Department and other city staff from the region which supplemented the third and final Complete Streets Working Group meeting Oct 2, to provide a final round of stakeholder input for the development of the NWA Complete Streets Design Guide. He explained the format of the Bentonville safety demonstration and stated the purpose was to quantify traffic calming installation impacts on emergency response times and specialty vehicles. He also stated a second safety demonstration project in Rogers, near a school, is slated for early November which will provide an opportunity for data collection around the safety benefits of traffic calming near school zones and during student pickup and drop-off. Aitken stated that staff is currently reviewing content with Toole Design to be incorporated into the CSDG.

Nicole Gibbs said the next phase of the NWA Energy and Environment Innovation (EEI) planning work is the Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) deliverable, using the funding suballocated to us by Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment (ADEE). She stated the CAP will build upon the priority measures outlined in the original EEI Priority Action Plan (PAP) adopted by the Board in May. She said that staff has hosted multiple open houses for public outreach in this phase, one in Huntsville on September 17, 2024 and one in Springdale on September 19, 2024, with Staff conducting pop up tabling at numerous events through September and October. She said two additional stakeholder input meetings are scheduled with corporate stakeholders and a LIDAC-focused meeting. NWARPC plans to bring the EEI Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) to this committee for adoption in the Spring of 2025. Gibbs also mentioned that work is underway on the \$36.25 million EPA CPRG Implementation grant for the region, stating that a grant agreement has been provided by the EPA for our signatures. This grant will enable 18 projects identified across 10 jurisdictions to be implemented by 2030. Gibbs said the lead applicant, Metroplan, is working with EPA staff to finalize the grant award, and Metroplan is drafting the multi-party subaward project agreements, which will be signed by all subrecipients on the project, along with Metroplan and NWARPC.

Gibbs also provided an update on the NWA Strategic Communications Plan, funded by a grant from the Walton Family Foundation, which seeks to advance the regional conversation around mobility to respond to the rapid growth of the region. She said consultant mhp.si has conducted focus groups and a scientific public opinion survey which provides base level insights from this project, showing overall themes of the public's impressions around transportation planning taking place in the NWA region, and their knowledge of NWARPC's involvement in planning and transportation planning regionally. She stated the scientific public opinion survey is now complete with results being analyzed by the consultant team.

Gibbs then shared recent progress made by staff on the NWARPC Public Participation Plan (PPP) Update. She said that staff held their first meeting last week with the PPP update subcommittee, formed via TAC, and that staff will be working on a revised draft to bring to the subcommittee for their feedback in the coming months. Gibbs stated this is a federally required document to be updated every 5 years along with the MTP. She stated the plan will incorporate practices identified through our strategic communications work with mhp.si.

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Tim Reavis updated the group on the Razorback Greenway Corridor Plan, a planning effort spurred by an invitation to apply for a grant from the Walton Family Foundation’s Design Excellence – Planning Program. Reavis said a selection committee has convened and has chosen Henning Larsen as the top consultant to carry out the project with RPC staff, and that staff would meet with the chosen consultant soon to begin contract negotiations. This project would include development of Regional Framework for land use planning surrounding the Greenway Corridor, in addition, up to seven individual sub area plans would be developed for the cities which are bisected by the Greenway. He also thanked the selection committee’s members for their time and assistance in selecting a firm to carry out this project.

D. Other Grant Opportunity Updates

Tim Reavis provided an overview of grant programs offered by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) from the Key Notices of Funding Opportunity Webpage at the following link: (<https://www.transportation.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/key-notices-funding-opportunity>) including the USDOT PROTECT grants and the USDOT RAISE grants programs. He stated that applications are now open for the EPA Community Change Grants Program as well. Lastly, he congratulated Ozark Regional Transit (ORT) and informed the group that ORT received a \$14.9 million grant from the FHWA Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Program which will fund the installation of up to 17 new electric vehicle charging sites within Springdale, Rogers, Fayetteville, and Bentonville.

(7) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES

A. Active Transportation Committee (ACT)

Luke Aitken recapped the topics covered at the September ACT meeting and encouraged anyone interested to come join the group’s next meeting virtually on November 21, 2024, at 1:30 PM.

B. NWA Open Space Coalition

Luke Aitken recapped the July OSC meeting, encouraging anyone interested in Open Space Coalition or the NWA Open Space Plan to come out to the groups next meeting at Luther Geroge Park in Downtown Springdale on November 13, 2024, at 10:30 AM.

C. MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group

Cristina Scarlet recapped the topics covered in the groups meeting last week, including stormwater management plan (SWMP) submissions for 2025 and the 2025 MS4 Stormwater Education Program & Budget Split. She concluded by encouraging anyone interested in regional stormwater to attend the compliance group’s next meeting in-person, on December 18, 2024, at 10:30 AM here at the regional planning commission office.

D. NWA GIS User Group

Cristina Scarlet shared the group’s plans for a GIS Day Event, held November 20th from 10AM-2PM at the Fayetteville Public Library. The event will include presentations, webinars, networking opportunities and celebrations. She encouraged anyone interested in GIS or the group itself to get in touch and/or attend the in-person event on November 20th or their next virtual group meeting on December 10th at 10:30AM.

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(8) PUBLIC COMMENT

Acting Chair Mayor Chris Keeney asked whether there were any public comments for consideration, and none were heard.

(9) OTHER BUSINESS

Acting Chair Mayor Chris Keeney provided an overview of the upcoming meeting dates below.

A. NWARPC/Policy Committee Officer Elections – Form Nomination Committee

Nicole Gibbs thanked the current members serving as Board Officers, noted below. She said they have all served the limit of two terms in the same position, and we will be forming a nomination committee to recommend a new slate of officers for the calendar year 2025. She said Melissa McCarville has agreed to chair the committee and said if we do not receive volunteers to serve, we will be reaching out to folks shortly.

Current NWARPC Officers:

Chair – Judge Barry Moehring

Vice Chair – Mayor Ernie Penn

Treasurer – Mayor Chris Keeney

Secretary – Mayor Bill Edwards

B. Future Meeting Dates:

Acting Chair Mayor Chris Keeney provided an overview of upcoming meeting dates, as shown below:

- **TAC Meeting** – Thursday, November 21, 2024 @ 10:30 AM
- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, December 4, 2024 @ 1:30 PM

C. ARDOT Public Involvement Meeting – Hwy. 412 Impvts. (Springdale) Job 040894 – Thursday, November 7, 2024, at 4:00pm-7:00pm, Springdale City Hall - City Council Chambers, 201 Spring Street Springdale, AR 72764

Acting Chair Mayor Chris Keeney asked whether there was any other business and there was none.

(10) ADJOURN

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:06 PM.

PASSED AND APPROVED ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 2024.

Judge Barry Moehring, Chair, NWARPC

ATTEST: _____