

**NARTS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2023 AT 10:30 AM; APPROVED JANUARY 18, 2024**

ENTITY	MEMBER	PRESENT	PROXY
AVOCA	ROBERT WHITEHORN		
BELLA VISTA	DOUG TAPP	X	
BENTON COUNTY	JUDGE BARRY MOEHRING JOSH BEAM JAY FRASIER (TRACY BACKS)	X	
BENTONVILLE	DENNIS BIRGE DAN WEESE	X X	
CAVE SPRINGS	MAYOR RANDALL NOBLETT	X	
CENTERTON	MAYOR BILL EDWARDS LORENE BURNS	X	
DECATUR	MAYOR BOB THARP		
ELKINS	MAYOR TROY REED		
ELM SPRINGS	MATT CASEY	X	
FARMINGTON	MELISSA McCARVILLE	X	
FAYETTEVILLE	JONATHAN CURTH PAUL LIBERTINI CHRIS BROWN	X  X	
GENTRY	MAYOR KEVIN JOHNSTON		
GRAVETTE	KURT MADDOX	X	Ami Murray
GREENLAND	MAYOR JIM RENFROW		
HIGHFILL	JEREMY JOHNSON		
JOHNSON	MAYOR CHRIS KEENEY		
LITTLE FLOCK	MAYOR JEFF VAN SICKLER	X	Nicole Gibbs
LOWELL	KAREN DAVIS	X	
PEA RIDGE	MAYOR NATHAN SEE		
PINEVILLE	MAYOR GREG SWEETEN		
PRAIRIE GROVE	MAYOR DAVID FAULK	X	
ROGERS	LANCE JOBE SHAWN GRINDSTAFF JOHN MCCURDY	X X X	
SILOAM SPRINGS	BEN RHOADS ( <b>VICE CHAIR</b> ) KEVIN MOORE	X X	Kevin Moore
SPRINGDALE	PATSY CHRISTIE ( <b>CHAIR</b> ) RYAN CARR	X  X	Ben Peters
TONTITOWN	MAYOR ANGELA RUSSELL		
WASHINGTON CO.	BRIAN LESTER SAM ATA JEFF CROWDER	X	
WEST FORK	MAYOR HEITH CAUDLE		
WINSLOW	ANN MALKIE		
NWARPC	TIM CONKLIN	X	
BEAVER H2O DISTRICT	CODY HUDSON		
OZARK REG. TRANSIT	JOEL GARDNER		
RAZORBACK TRANSIT	GARY K. SMITH (ADAM WADDELL)	X	
U OF A	SCOTT TURLEY (JAY HUNNEYCUTT)	X	
McDONALD COUNTY	COMM. BRYAN HALL		
MoDOT	FRANK MILLER (MARVIN MORRIS)	X	
NWA NATIONAL AIRPORT	AARON BURKES	X	
ARDOT PLANNING AND DISTRICT 9	CHRIS DILLAHA SUNNY FARMAHAN STACEY BURGE	X X	Anthony Hunter Will Ward

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**NWARPC STAFF:** Tim Conklin; Nicole Gibbs; Tim Reavis; Cristina Scarlat

**OTHERS:** Taylor Robertson (Bella Vista); David Keck (Cave Springs); Brandi Holt (Huntsville); Quinton Harris and Jennifer Turner (Rogers); Britini O'Connor (MoDOT); Andy Brewer, Nick Steinke, and Eric Fuselier (Olsson); Michael Stengel and Julia Ryan (Michael Baker); AJ Cook (CEI); Aaron Boehmler (Burns & McDonald); and Nathan McCloskey.

**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 in-person and virtual NWARPC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting was called to order by Chair Patsy Christie at 10:32 a.m.

**(2) ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**

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

**(3) APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 17, 2023 AND OCTOBER 19, 2023 TAC MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Christie asked the Committee whether there were any additions or corrections to the meeting minutes and hearing none, requested a motion to approve the August 17, 2023 and October 19, 2023 TAC Meeting Minutes.

**MOTION:** Shawn Grindstaff made a motion to approve the August 17, 2023 and October 19, 2023 TAC Meeting Minutes. Melissa McCarville provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

**(4) NARTS FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR (FFY) 2023-2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT #4 – NEW MoDOT SR0205 PROJECT – Recommendation to RPC/Policy Committee**

Chair Christie introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs explained that MoDOT requested a TIP Amendment to include a new project, SR0205. She said new projects require a formal amendment, including a public comment period, which is being held from November 6, 2023 to November 20, 2023. She said RPC/Policy Committee is not scheduled to meet in November because of the holidays, and to accommodate MoDOT’s project timeline, the RPC/Policy Committee will consider the amendment via digital ballot from November 16, 2023 to November 21, 2023. She said the safety project includes striping upgrades on I-49 from Rte. EE near Pineville to the Arkansas state line and showed the following addition to the STIP/TIP:

JOB	COUNTY	ROUTE	TERMINI	LENGTH	TYPE WORK	ESTIMATED COST Funding Breakdown (in thousands)	AGENCY CARRYING OUT THE PROJECT	FFY	MPO
<b>NEW:</b>									
SR0205	MCDONALD	49	Striping upgrades from Rte. EE near Pineville to the Arkansas State Line.	7.81	Safety	100 - TOTAL 90 - SAFETY 10 - State - Prior	MoDOT	2024	NARTS

Chair Christie asked the Committee whether there were any other questions or comments and hearing none, requested a motion to recommend the NARTS Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #4 to the RPC/Policy Committee.

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**MOTION: Ben Peters made a motion to recommend to the RPC/Policy Committee the NARTS Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #4. Melissa McCarville provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.**

**(5) ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT INNOVATION (EEI) REGIONAL PRIORITY ACTION MEASURES –  
Recommendation to RPC/Policy Committee**

Chair Christie introduced the item and Tim Conklin explained that the Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment (ADEE) received a \$3 million Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Planning Grant to prepare a statewide Priority Action Plan (PAP) and Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP). He said we are one of three Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA's) that received \$440,000 in suballocated funding from the state to identify regional priority measures, with no local match requirements for the funding over four-years. He said the planning effort is required to enable the state and communities to apply for CPRG Implementation Grants.

Conklin explained that we signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between ADEE and NWARPC and procured a contract with Olsson to facilitate the project in September. He gave an overview of work completed, including plan review, survey and idea box, and public engagement activities. He said the heavy lift for us is to prepare the regional Priority Action Plan (PAP) supplement to submit to the state by December 1, 2023. He said we are not starting from scratch, as we have many regional plans adopted by the Commission and those are being used to identify priority actions and measures to submit to the state.

Conklin explained that at the same time as this planning work is being undertaken, the EPA gave Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the CPRG Implementation Grant, with applications being due April 1, 2024. He said communities need to be thinking about what they want to implement, because if the measure is not in the PAP, it is not eligible for the Implementation Grant. He said the EPA will award \$4.6 billion, with grant sizes from \$2 million to \$500 million. He said the program is highly competitive, with the EPA intending to award only 30-115 grants. He said our role is to ensure that we are coordinating with eligible entities to ensure that implementable priorities are included in the PAP. He said the Implementation Grants are also 100% federal funding, with no local match requirement. He said coalitions are encouraged and the EPA has said they will not accept applications for similar measures in the same area.

Conklin summarized the public outreach conducted in October and November, including translated surveys, public Open House meetings, and stakeholder meetings. Conklin presented the proposed regional Priority Action Plan (PAP) Measures that we plan to submit to ADEE on December 1, 2023, saying please ensure that the language included covers any implementable projects you may have in mind:

## PRIORITY ACTION PLAN MEASURES

### ✓ ELECTRIC POWER SECTOR

Develop and implement a regional/statewide renewable energy innovation program to:

- Install renewable energy and energy storage systems on municipal/government facilities.
- Develop distributed and community-scale renewable energy distribution and storage, including in LIDAC and rural communities.
- Develop and implement programs that support smart-grid and/or behind-the-meter technologies.



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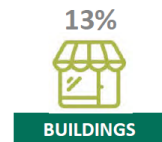


## PRIORITY ACTION PLAN MEASURES

### ✓ BUILDINGS

Develop a residential/commercial energy efficiency and innovation program to:

- Establish an incentive program for implementation of end-use energy efficiency measures and certified energy-efficient appliances, heating and cooling equipment, and lighting.
- Provide incentives for adoption and implementation of up-to-date building energy codes.
- Develop voluntary programs and policies that promote low and zero-emission options and vehicle charging, with a focus on buildings in rural and LIDAC areas; multi-family residential buildings; and commercial buildings.



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## PRIORITY ACTION PLAN MEASURES

### ✓ WASTE, WATER, & SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

Develop and implement a waste minimization and management program that reduces carbon emissions, including:

- Providing incentives for community composting programs.
- Support development of biochar pyrolysis facility.
- Provide incentives for anaerobic digester facilities for landfills and wastewater treatment.
- Provide incentives for cardboard recycling.
- Provide incentives or a voucher system to improve waste management for rural populations.
- Materials Recovery Facility with end-market transparency.



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## PRIORITY ACTION PLAN MEASURES

### ✓ TRANSPORTATION SECTOR

Reduce automobile trips and incentivize more efficient and lower/no emission modes of transportation by:

- Expanding infrastructure such as bicycle facilities, transit stops, sidewalks, and other active transportation supporting infrastructure.
- Developing and implementing low/no emission ridesharing and e-bike programs, with priority given to LIDAC communities.
- Update/adopt building and zoning codes to encourage walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented development.
- Upgrade vehicle fleets by replacing internal combustion engine vehicles with low/no emission vehicles.
- Incentivize eligible agencies and individual automobile owners to purchase low/no emission vehicles and associated infrastructure, with priority given to LIDAC communities.
- Expand supporting infrastructure for electric vehicles.



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## PRIORITY ACTION PLAN MEASURES



### ✓ CARBON REMOVAL MEASURES

Develop and implement a program to improve or increase carbon sequestration on city-owned lands and using a program of land conservation and acquisition, including:

- Plant native tree and plant species that provide optimal carbon sequestration benefits in City-owned parks, trails, and rights-of-way.
- Restore degraded forests, prairies, and wetlands in parks, trails, and rights-of-ways.
- Identify and acquire lands with high carbon sequestration value for conservation, restoration, and for the development of new parks or recreation areas. Consider co-benefits.
- Develop conservation plans for new parks and recreation areas that include measures to improve or preserve areas with high carbon sequestration value.



Conklin said to keep in mind that we are required to submit at least three measures to the state that they will roll up into their statewide Priority Action Plan (PAP). He said, again, we must submit our regional priorities to the state by December 1, 2023 and at the same time, the Implementation Grant applications are due April 1, 2024. Nicole Gibbs said the proposed regional measures were designed to have a broad overall measure, with more specific sub-bullets to enable as many potential projects to be eligible for the Implementation Grant funding as possible. She reiterated that if there is language that needs to be tweaked based on project ideas, we need to know this week, or next week at the very latest.

Conklin further summarized the timeline as follows:

## NEXT STEPS

EVENT/DELIVERABLE	DATE/DUE DATE
Public Engagement Meetings	October 23 & October 26
Stakeholder Meeting #2	November 2, 2023
<b>Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting</b>	<b>November 16, 2023</b>
NWARPC Priority Plan Supplement to ADEE	December 1, 2023
<b>RPC/Policy Committee Meeting</b>	<b>December 6, 2023</b>
ADEE Priority Plan to EPA	March 1, 2024
CPRG Implementation Grant Applications	April 1, 2024
Comprehensive Plan Supplement	February 28, 2025
Status Report Supplements	March 1, 2027



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He said as part of the contract with Olsson, we do have a stand-alone Priority Action Plan that will be completed for the region that we will bring back to TAC and the Board for adoption. He said the timeframe is very tight on this first phase and we are trying to move as fast as possible to meet the federal deadlines.

There was discussion regarding possible projects, including waste management, creating a green network to protect riparian areas, and active transportation and mode shift projects. There was discussion regarding the process to build coalitions and the role of eligible entities to act on the implementation grant. Conklin said Regional Planning has offered to convene discussions. He said we have an Open Space Plan and a Bike Ped Plan that can be implemented using this funding program.

There was further discussion regarding the NOFO and strategies to be competitive, including applying as a coalition rather than as individuals, and the need to coordinate with others throughout the state interested in applying for the same or similar measures. There was discussion regarding the ability to roll multiple measures into one grant application. There was discussion regarding beginning to facilitate discussions in the region to get projects and program ideas on the table and begin to decide amounts and logistics to apply. There was discussion regarding whether the state intends to apply for an implementation grant, which is currently unknown.

Chair Christie asked the Committee whether there were any other questions or comments and hearing none, requested a motion to support sending the Energy & Environment Innovation (EEI) Regional Priority Action Plan Measures to the State.

**MOTION: Shawn Grindstaff made a motion to support sending the Energy & Environment Innovation (EEI) Regional Priority Action Plan Measures to the State. Chris Brown provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.**

**(6) PROJECTS AND OTHER UPDATES**

**A. FY 2024 STBGP-A/TAP/CRP – Project Development**

Patsy Christie introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs explained that the NWARPC Policy Committee awarded \$14 million in August through these funding programs. She said award letters were sent in August and we are actively receiving grant agreements from ARDOT. Conklin thanked David Siskowski and his team for getting the agreements out faster, saying they expect to have all the agreements out within two-months from when the award letters were distributed. Gibbs said there is a very specific process you must follow with federal funding and asked awardees to review ARDOT’s Local Public Agency (LPA) Manual to ensure they meet the requirements.

Gibbs said we are moving up our FFY 2025 Funding Programs cycle. She said in December we will ask the Board to authorize a call for projects to go out in January 2024 with applications due in March 2024 and project selection in April 2024. She said we are trying this approach to better accommodate the obligation of funds that happens in the fall, and hope this will give us more flexibility with that juggling act.

**FFY 2025 Programs Proposed Timeline:**

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| • Call for Projects                             | Jan 2024  |
| • Application Deadline (Resolution Required)    | Mar 2024  |
| • Project Sponsor Presentation to TAC Committee | Mar 2024  |
| • Selection Committee Site Visits/Scoring/Rec   | Mar/April |

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- Selection Committee Recommendation to TAC April 2024
- TAC Recommendation to RPC/Policy April 2024

Conklin said ARDOT provided our FFY 2024 apportionment of federal funds. He said we estimated and awarded \$14 million back in August. He said the actual apportionment came out using 2020 Urban Area numbers at \$14.4 million, assuming 100% obligation limitation (OL), however, right now the OL is currently at around 84.5%. He said we will continue to assume we will get to use 100% of our funds.

**B. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Implementation Grants Update**

Conklin said we adopted the NWA Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) and regional Vision Zero Policy in June, the final draft of the Huntsville Plan has been completed, and we are actively looking at a Phase 2 scope of work. He said we have multiple cities that have adopted Vision Zero goals and said he highly recommends that you look into adopting a vision zero target for fatal and serious injuries if you are applying for implementation grants. He said by adopting the plan, we enabled three communities to apply for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Implementation Grants in July 2023. He said we now have approval to use the \$300,000 SS4A Planning Grant to complete the scope of work with Toole Design Group. He said this will free up about \$130,000 of STBGP-A. He summarized the following:

- SS4A CSAP USDOT Planning Grant Agreement Received – NWARPC signed
- Phase 2 Scope of Work:
  - Street Design Principles and Types
  - Complete Streets Design Guidelines
  - Individual Community Comprehensive Safety Action Plans
  - Systemic Safety Webinars (2)
  - Compelling Video and Storytelling on Safety
  - Safety Demonstration Projects (2)
  - Local Community Engagement Strategies
  - Develop Action Plan Communication Materials

Conklin said Phase 2 will be rolling out soon and we will reconvene everyone to complete that overall work on safety planning in the region. He thanked Valera McDaniel and Amy Heflin at FHWA for their work to help us get the grant that was awarded back in February, approved this fall.

Benton County said they have several projects they plan to apply for with their road department in the next round of applications. He said if others are interested in partnering to package a regional or multijurisdictional application, it may be more competitive. He said the next NOFO should open in February. He said they are considering work zone safety technology with their road department; however, the application does not need to be isolated to the construction side.

**C. Enhancing Equitable Transit Connections in NWA Project Update**

Chair Christie introduced the item with Tim Reavis explaining that NWARPC was awarded \$180,000 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Areas of Persistent Poverty (AoPP) Grant in July 2023 for design and engineering work for bus stop improvements. He said we originally applied for \$540,000, so the scope of the work had to be significantly reduced. He said the Walton Family Foundation (WFF) has proposed a challenge grant for up to \$200,000, which would require a one-to-one match with communities that wish to participate. He said we will be receiving the FTA funds and starting the



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improvement project regardless of the voluntary participation in the challenge grant.

He said additionally, the WFF is helping to fund a Razorback Transit Bus Stop Enhancement Plan, similar to the plan ORT adopted in October 2022, that will inventory existing bus stops, evaluate the feasibility of infrastructure improvements, and make recommendations for implementation. He said we will be taking a resolution to the Board in December to authorize that work and funding (\$108,800 WFF + \$27,200 City of Fayetteville = \$136,000 total project cost).

There was discussion regarding the AoPP and WFF matching grant being for design and environmental clearance only, with the idea that additional grants can be pursued for construction through FTA 5339, ARDOT or NWARPC TAP/STBGP-A, or other federal funding programs, and the project would already be environmentally cleared. Conklin said the project is also about access to the transit stops, including sidewalk connection.

**D. Other Grant Opportunity Updates**

Tim Conklin said we continue to monitor the USDOT Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) and there are a lot out there. He said the RAISE Grant program is supposed to be announced before the end of the year. He said there is potential in communities outside our Urban Area to receive 100% federal funding through this program. He congratulated Springdale for applying for \$1.2 million in Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Planning Grant for 71B/Thompson Street.

Conklin said we resubmitted the *Highway 112: Complete Streets. Connecting Communities.* project for a \$25 million Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) as well as \$160 million MPDG application for *Highway 612: Connecting a Region.* to extend Highway 612 from I-49 to Highway 265. He said USDOT contacted us asking for additional information, so they are looking at this grant application. He thanked ARDOT for helping us to quickly provide additional documentation to USDOT.

**(7) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES**

**A. Active Transportation Committee (ACT)**

Nicole Gibbs said the Active Transportation Committee (ACT) last met October 19, 2023. She said we did not convene the Subcommittee on the Bike Ped Plan update; they last met in August. She said both groups will reconvene in January 2024. She summarized the following:

**ACT Last Met:** October 19, 2023

Subcommittee for Regional BikePed Plan last met August 17, 2023

**Discussion Items:**

- Hwy 112/Heritage Springs Trail Update
- Bike Friendly Community Application(s)
- Funding Opportunities/Awards
- SS4A CSAP / Vision Zero Update (High Injury Network)
- EPA CPRG Energy & Environment Innovation (EEI) Plan Update
- ARDOT Complete Streets Policy Update
- Agency / Organization Updates

**Next Meetings** – ACT & Subcommittee NWA BikePed Plan –January 18, 2023 at 1:30 PM

**(8) PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Christie asked whether there were any public comments. There were none.

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**(9) OTHER BUSINESS**

Chair Patsy Christie went over the future meetings and events as follows:

**A. Future Meeting Dates:**

- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, December 6, 2023 @ 1:30 PM
- **TAC Meeting** – Thursday, January 18, 2024 @ 10:30 AM
- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, January 24, 2024 @ 1:30 PM

Nicole Gibbs said as a reminder for those who are also on the Policy Committee, we will be sending out the digital ballots today for the TIP amendment discussed earlier.

Conklin said he offered to share the Active Transportation Academy NWA Scholarship Opportunity through Lane Shift and the Trailblazers. He said the scholarship is only for communities with a population of 30,000 or less: <https://laneshift.net/active-transportation-academy-scholarship>

Chair Christie asked whether there was any other business.

**(10) ADJOURN**

The meeting was ended at 11:26 am.