

**RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024, AT 1:30 PM; APPROVED APRIL 24, 2024**

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	
BENTONVILLE	MAYOR STEPHANIE ORMAN SHELLI KERR	X	
CAVE SPRINGS	MAYOR RANDALL NOBLETT		
CENTERTON	MAYOR BILL EDWARDS (SEC'Y) LORENE BURNS	X	Nicola Hoofard
DECATUR	MAYOR BOB THARP	X	
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	Lacie Lawson
GRAVETTE	MAYOR KURT MADDOX	X	Ami Murray
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	
LOWELL	MAYOR CHRIS MOORE	X	
PEA RIDGE	MAYOR NATHAN SEE		
PRAIRIE GROVE	MAYOR DAVID FAULK	X	
ROGERS	LANCE JOBE JOHN McCURDY SHAWN GRISNDSTAFF	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 X	Bridget Russell
WEST FORK	MAYOR HEITH CAUDLE		
WINSLOW	ANN MALKIE		
ARDOT PLANNING + DISTRICTS	BRAD McCALEB JASON HUGHEY (DISTRICT 4)	X	X Sunny Farmahan
BEAVER H2O DISTRICT	LANE CRIDER	X	
McDONALD COUNTY	COMMISSIONER BRIAN HALL		
MoDOT	DAVE TAYLOR (BRITNI O'CONNOR)		
NAT. AIRPORT AUTH.	AARON BURKES		
PINEVILLE, MO	MAYOR GREG SWEETEN		
RAZORBACK TRANSIT	GARY K. SMITH (ADAM WADDELL)	X	
U OF A	SCOTT TURLEY (JAY HUNEYCUTT)		
OZARK REG. TRANSIT	JOEL GARDNER (NON-VOTING)	X	
ARDOT TRANSIT	GREG NATION (NON-VOTING)		
HWY COMMISSION	PHILLIP TALDO (NON-VOTING)		

**RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024, AT 1:30 PM; APPROVED APRIL 24, 2024**

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

OTHERS: Catherine Baker (Washington County); Whitnee Bullerwell (ARDOT); Truett Smith (FHWA); Jessica Omoregie (AEDI); Phillip Patterson & Jackie Crabtree (ARML); and Lydia Fletcher (NWADG)

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 Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn (Acting Chair) 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 JANUARY 24, 2024, RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn introduced the item and asked whether there were any additions or corrections to the January 24, 2024, RPC/Policy Committee Meeting Minutes and hearing none, requested a motion to approve the minutes.

MOTION: Mayor Doug Sprouse made a motion to approve the January 24, 2024, RPC/Policy Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. Mayor John Flynn provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

(4) DIRECTOR'S REPORT/CLEARINGHOUSE REPORT

Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn introduced the item and Tim Conklin summarized the Clearinghouse Report. He began by introducing a new staff member, Luke Aitken, Associate Planner and said Luke would be working with Nicole Gibbs to support plan development, the Active Transportation Committee, Open Space Coalition, and federal suballocated funding awards process.

Conklin gave an update on the commission's efforts to apply for the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) as part of a Tri-Region Coalition of the state's three largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA), including, NWARPC, Metroplan of Little Rock, and the City of Fort Smith. He thanked our project partners at Metroplan, the Watershed Conservation Resource Center (WCRC), the City of Fayetteville Sustainability and Resilience Department staff, Crafton Tull, and NWARPC staff, who have all worked tirelessly to coordinate the timely submission of this application for the April 1, 2024 deadline.

Conklin said that the federal government passed a full spending package for federal fiscal year 2024, which will fund the commissions programs through September 30 of this year. He mentioned that NWARPC staff continues to attend meetings of the Western Benton County Partnership with ARDOT regarding progress on Highway 59 and Highway 72 corridor studies. He said ARDOT has hired Alliance Transportation to complete those studies. He provided an overview of the regional clearinghouse report and said NWARPC is the designated clearinghouse for the region. He stated no action is required by the board for these clearinghouse reviews.

RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024, AT 1:30 PM; APPROVED APRIL 24, 2024

A. 2023 NWARPC Audit

Conklin said the 2023 NWARPC Audit has been completed by Eric Harris, CPA of Harris CPA's LLC and was sent to the chief elected officials in Benton and Washington County, as well as the Federal Audit Clearinghouse. He said the audit reports that NWARPC schedule of expenditures of federal awards is fairly stated in all material respects and in relation to financial statements as a whole.

Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn asked whether there were any questions and hearing none requested a motion by the Board to accept the 2023 NWARPC Audit.

MOTION: Mayor Chris Keeny made a motion to accept the NWARPC 2023 Audit. Mayor Doug Sprouse provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

B. RESOLUTION #2024-07 – Approving Signers for NWARPC Certificate of Deposit Accounts

Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn introduced the item and Tim Conklin summarized his recent work with Arvest Bank to understand their documentation needs prior to establishing Certificate of Deposit Accounts for the short and long term. He said these accounts would more than double the current interest earned on the commission's funds, but that the Board needs to approve two designated signatories for the accounts before they can be established. He said he had discussed this with Chair Judge Barry Moehring, Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn, and Treasurer Mayor Chris Keeny, and that the accounts would be opened in the name of Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission with himself and Mayor Keeny having signing authority for the accounts.

MOTION: Jim Ulmer made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-07 Approving Signers for NWARPC Certificate of Deposit Accounts. Mayor John Flynn provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

(5) NARTS FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR (FFY) 2023-2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT #6 – INCLUDING SS4A GRANTS, MoDOT PROJECTS, AND FTA-5307 CHANGES

Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs explained the proposed amendments were made at the request of the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), Razorback Transit, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and that the required public comment period was held from March 11, 2024 to March 25, 2024. She said that the amendment was considered by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and they made a recommendation for approval on March 21, 2024.

Gibbs stated there are four changes proposed to the TIP with this amendment, including recently awarded Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant funding – a \$25 million Implementation Grant awarded to the City of Fayetteville and a \$300,000 Planning Grant awarded to NWARPC; the addition of Missouri DOT (MoDOT) projects that are now within the recently amended Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA); changes to the programmed FTA Section 5307 MPO funds to include the update to the Transportation Demand Model and a Transit Alternatives Study, in accordance with the 2024 UPWP amendment, approved by the Board in January 2024; and changes to the FTA Section 5307 Razorback Transit funds in accordance with the amended FY2021 and 2022 Programs of Projects (POP), approved by the Board in October 2023.

MOTION: Jonathan Curth made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-04 Amending the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) FFY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Sunny Farmahan provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

(6) EPA CLIMATE POLLUTION REDUCTION GRANT (CPRG) IMPLEMENTATION GRANT – TRI-REGIONAL APPLICATION SUPPORT

Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs provided an overview of recent efforts to apply for this grant program in the hopes of maximizing the statewide impact of funding, if awarded. She highlighted aspects of the program’s structure that incentivize coalition-building and said NWARPC partnered with Metroplan, the Little Rock MPO, and the City of Fort Smith to prepare a Tri-Region Coalition application, representing over 50% of the state’s total population. She said Metroplan will be the lead applicant and NWARPC will be a coalition member. She said the NWA region programmed \$36.25 million for 18 individual projects proposed and developed by communities and partner agencies. She said the projects are in alignment with the NWA Open Space Plan and NWA Bike and Pedestrian Plan and include the restoration and preservation of natural cores and corridors, the construction of active transportation facilities, e-bike incentive programs, and workforce development programs, targeting low-income and disadvantages communities (LIDAC). Tim Conklin thanked all our regional partners that have worked hard to support this application effort and Gibbs thanked City of Fayetteville Sustainability staff, the Watershed Conservation Resource Center (WCRC) staff, and Metroplan staff for all their time and tireless effort on the application.

A. RESOLUTION #2024-05 Supporting a Tri-Region Coalition Application to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Implementation Program.

Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn asked if there were any questions on the item, and hearing none, requested a motion by the board to approve Resolution #2024-05 Supporting a Tri-Region Coalition Application to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Implementation Program.

MOTION: John McCurdy made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-05 Supporting a Tri-Region Coalition Application to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Implementation Program. Mayor John Flynn provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

(7) REMIX TRANSIT PLANNING SOFTWARE CONTRACT RENEWAL

Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn introduced the item and Tim Reavis provided an overview of the contract, 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. Reavis said that the software would be funded 80% with the Commission’s federal funds and the 20% local match would be shared among Razorback Transit, ORT, and NWARPC at a cost of \$1,542 each, per year. He said the total contract cost is \$69,420.

A. RESOLUTION #2024-06 – 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.

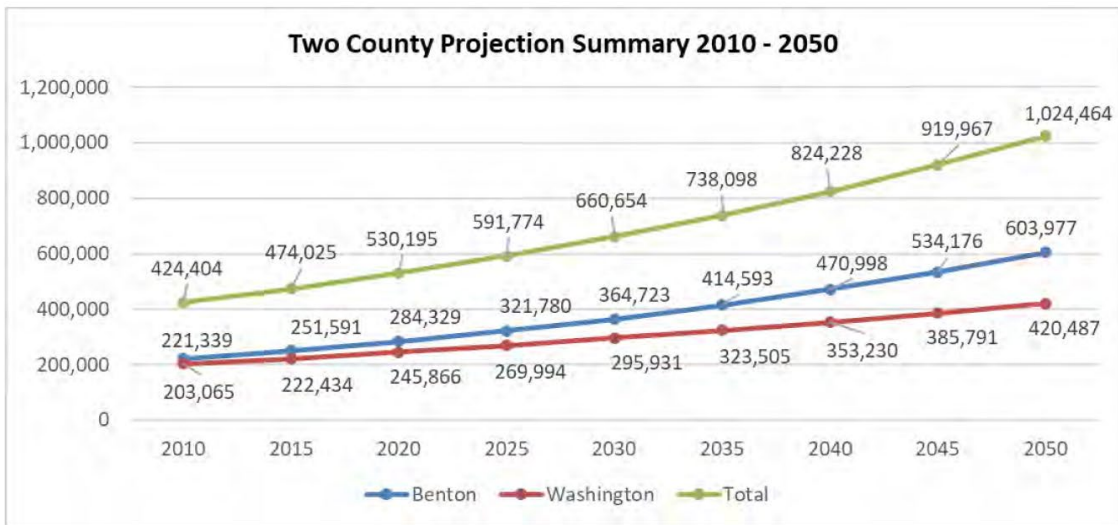
Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn asked if there were any questions and hearing none called for a motion to approve Resolution #2024-06 Authorizing NWARPC to Enter into a Three-Year Contract for the Purchase of REMIX Transit Planning Software for Use by Razorback Transit, Ozark Regional Transit, and the NWARPC.

MOTION: Jim Ulmer made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-06 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. John McCurdy provided the second. Motion passed unanimously.

(8) 2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn introduced the item and Tim Conklin explained that Dr. Jessica Omoregie with the Arkansas Economic Development Institute (AEDI) has been working with NWARPC staff on these projections. He said these projections are a regular part of the Commission’s work, to help develop the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which is updated every five (5) years. He said the region will continue to grow rapidly according to Dr. Omoregie’s projections, with 1.024 million people projected to reside in Washington and Benton Counties by 2050. He showed and summarized the following, stating that approximately 60% of total population is projected to reside in Benton County and 40% of the population is projected to reside in Washington County:

AEDI Population Projections for NWA - Cohort Component Model									
Year	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Benton	221,339	251,591	284,329	321,780	364,723	414,593	470,998	534,176	603,977
Washington	203,065	222,434	245,866	269,994	295,931	323,505	353,230	385,791	420,487
Total	424,404	474,025	530,195	591,774	660,654	738,098	824,228	919,967	1,024,464



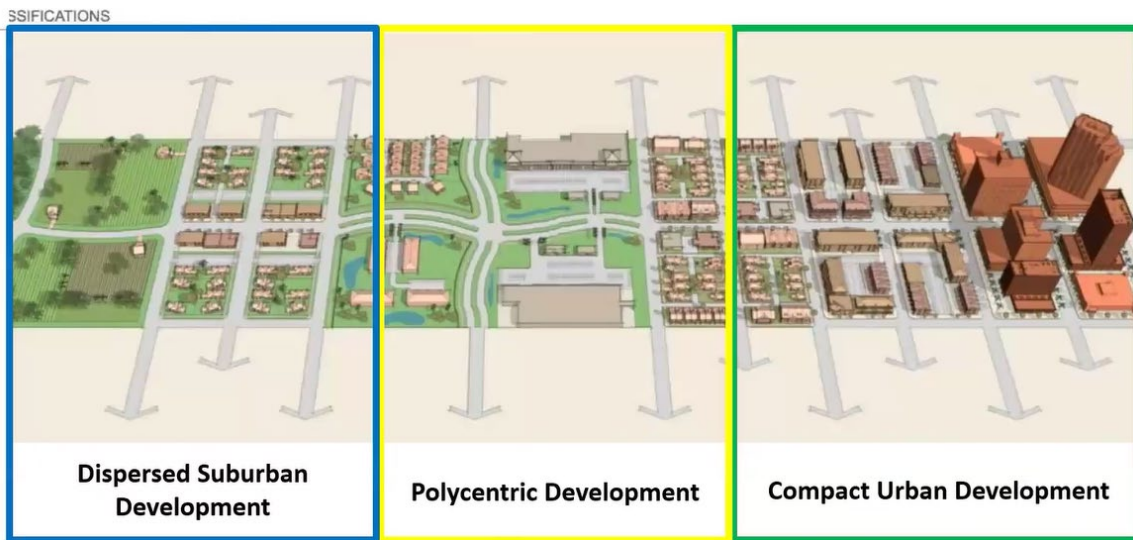
Conklin showed a comparison of past projections for the two-county region (from 2001-2020) to the actual population numbers recorded during past census counts. He said the regional growth rate through 2050 is projected to be about 2.2% which is realistic compared to other fast-growing metros across the country and aligns with the past population projections made for NWA. He stated the importance of projecting population growth as it relates to planning for transportation infrastructure in the region and emphasized the need of the Commission to work with its members to update the MTP in the coming months.

Conklin introduced Dr. Jessica Omoregie, from the Arkansas Economic Development Institute (AEDI),

**RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024, AT 1:30 PM; APPROVED APRIL 24, 2024**

to summarize the cohort component method she used for the NWA population projections. Dr. Omoregie stated that this method is one of the most reliable to project population anywhere from 10 to 40 years into the future, but explained the model does not consider economic growth, forecasting or other outside factors or anomalies such as companies relocating to the region or growing their workforces. She said this method combines fertility rates, mortality rates, and migration rates to achieve an accurate projection. She noted that Benton County continues to grow at a faster rate compared to Washington County.

Conklin said the slides from Dr. Omoregie will be distributed to attendees after the meeting and thanked her for preparing the projections. He said that the commission will be developing three growth scenarios for the 2050 MTP update and summarized the three scenarios being considered for 2050, shown below:



Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn asked whether there were any questions and there were none.

(9) PROJECT AND OTHER UPDATES

A. FFY 2025 Funding Programs – Call for Projects – Deadline: April 4, 2024 at 11:59PM, CDT

Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn 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:

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	April/May
Selection Committee Recommendation to TAC	Thursday, May 16, 2024
TAC Recommendation to RPC/Policy	Wednesday, May 22, 2024

Gibbs reminded attendees that adopted resolutions are required with the applications, and for existing projects requesting additional funding, to review the original resolution to ensure the new request does not exceed any amount referenced in the original resolution. She also reminded everyone that this year, the timeline for project selection has been moved up to May instead of

RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024, AT 1:30 PM; APPROVED APRIL 24, 2024

occurring in August, to accommodate the federal funding obligation deadline at the end of September. She stated there is expected to be about \$15 million awarded by NWARPC in this funding cycle. Tim Conklin said the obligation process must be done carefully to avoid the region losing any of its apportioned federal funding.

Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn asked whether there were any questions or comments and there were none.

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

Nicole Gibbs thanked ARDOT staff again for a quick turnaround on the FFY 2024 Award Agreements and stressed the importance of communities remaining in touch with NWARPC and ARDOT in the coming months to accommodate the obligation process for the FY 2024 funds. She also stressed the importance of cities following the ARDOT LPA (Local Public Agency) manual when spending federal funding and paying particular attention to the stop points, which require specific ARDOT approval.

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

Tim Conklin 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.

- **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.

Conklin 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. He 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**

Conklin said the next Complete Streets Working Group meeting (#2), will be held the week of June 3, 2024. He said Toole Design will be in touch with the group prior that in-person meeting with other material and requests. He encouraged communities to attend and be on the lookout for more information.

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

Tim Reavis introduced the item and 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

RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024, AT 1:30 PM; APPROVED APRIL 24, 2024

commission has received proposals from three different firms and the selection committee will meet to decide on a consultant for the project soon.

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 will meet in April to interview firms and select a firm.

E. Other Grant Opportunity Updates

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, which seeks to fund spines and greenway networks that allow connected networks of active transportation to flourish in communities.

Conklin said NWARPC has reapplied for RAISE grant funding for the Highway 112 side path project, as it was designated a project of merit in the 2023 funding cycle but was not awarded. He also reminded attendees of the May 31, 2024 deadline for ARDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding and encouraged those applying for our NWARPC TAP funding to also apply for the state level grant funding.

(10) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES

In the interest of time, Tim Conklin briefly summarized the following:

- A. Active Transportation Committee (ACT)**
- B. NWA Open Space Coalition**
- C. MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group**
- D. NWA GIS User Group**

- **Active Transportation Committee (ACT)**
Last Met: March 21, 2024
Next Meeting Scheduled: May 16, 2024, at 1:30 PM, virtual.
- **NWA Open Space Coalition**
Last Met: March 13, 2024, on-site @ Lincoln Lake
Next Meeting: May 8, 2024, on-site @ WOKA
- **MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group** (previous agenda item)
Last Met: February 13, 2024
Next meeting scheduled: April 17, 2024 @ 10:30 am, virtual.
(every two months on the third Wednesday)
- **NWA GIS User Group**
Last Met: February 13, 2024
Next meeting scheduled: April 9, 2024, at 10:30am, virtual

Luke Aitken provided an update on recently awarded Bicycle Friendly Community designations, with Bentonville moving from Bronze to Silver level, Benton and Washington Counties retaining their silver level designation, and Springdale retaining their designation of bronze level through 2027.

**RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024, AT 1:30 PM; APPROVED APRIL 24, 2024**

(11) PUBLIC COMMENT

One public comment was submitted prior to the meeting and was distributed in meeting packets regarding a suggestion for a north-south corridor (Harmon/Little Elm Rd – Tontitown, Springdale, Fayetteville, Farmington).

Vice Chair Ernie Penn asked whether there were any additional public comments and there were none.

(12) OTHER BUSINESS

Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn provided an overview of the upcoming meeting dates below.

A. Future Meeting Dates:

- **TAC Meeting** – Thursday, April 18, 2024 @ 10:30AM
- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, April 24, 2024 @ 1:30PM
- **Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) Board Meeting** – Wednesday, April 24, 2024 @2:30PM

B. ARDOT Groundbreaking – NWA National Airport Access Road and US 612 Bypass –

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 @11:00AM, XNA Short Term Parking Lot

Tim Conklin said these projects are decades in the making and summarized the project backgrounds and locations.


Vice Chair Mayor Ernie Penn asked whether there was any other business, and hearing none, adjourned the meeting.

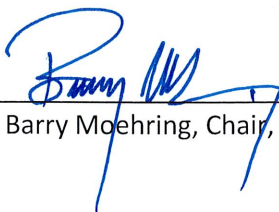
(13) ADJOURN

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:34 P.M.

PASSED AND APPROVED ON THIS 24TH DAY OF APRIL 2024.

ATTEST:





Judge Barry Moehring, Chair, NWARPC