

**NARTS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2024 AT 10:30 AM; APPROVED MARCH 21, 2024**

ENTITY	MEMBER	PRESENT	PROXY
AVOCA	ROBERT WHITEHORN		
BELLA VISTA	DOUG TAPP	X	
BENTON COUNTY	JUDGE BARRY MOEHRING JOSH BEAM JAY FRASIER	X	
BENTONVILLE	DENNIS BIRGE DAN WEESE TYLER OVERSTREET	X X X	
CAVE SPRINGS	MAYOR RANDALL NOBLETT	X	David Keck
CENTERTON	MAYOR BILL EDWARDS LORENE BURNS	X X	
DECATUR	MAYOR BOB THARP		
ELKINS	MAYOR TROY REED		
ELM SPRINGS	MATT CASEY	X	
FARMINGTON	MELISSA McCARVILLE	X	
FAYETTEVILLE	JONATHAN CURTH CHRIS BROWN PAUL LIBERTINI	X X X	
GENTRY	MAYOR KEVIN JOHNSTON	X	
GRAVETTE	KURT MADDOX		
GREENLAND	MAYOR JIM RENFROW		
HIGHFILL	JEREMY JOHNSON		
JOHNSON	MAYOR CHRIS KEENEY	X	
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	JOHN MCCURDY QUINTON HARRIS LANCE JOBE	X X	
SILOAM SPRINGS	BEN RHOADS ( <b>VICE CHAIR</b> ) KEVIN MOORE	X	
SPRINGDALE	PATSY CHRISTIE ( <b>CHAIR</b> ) RYAN CARR	X X	
TONTITOWN	MAYOR ANGELA RUSSELL	X	Zak Johnson
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	Anthony Hunter Will Ward

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

**OTHERS:** Taylor Robertson and Chris Bracket (Bella Vista); Brandi Holt (Huntsville); Nicola Hoofard (Centerton); Kent Laughlin (Rogers); Jared Draper, John Paul Schaffer, Nathan Boone and Henry Cohen (Toole Design); Andy Brewer (Olsson); Michael Stengel and Julia Ryan (Michael Baker); AJ Cook (CEI); Greg Weeks (Jacobs); Aaron Boehmler (Burns & McDonald); Elizabeth Bowen; and Doug Thompson (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 in-person and virtual NWARPC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting was called to order by Tim Conklin at 10:33 a.m. Patsy Christie (Chair) was absent at Call to Order. Once Patsy Christie (Chair) joined the meeting virtually, she requested that Conklin continue to run the meeting in-person as Acting Chair.

**(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 NOVEMBER 16, 2023, 2023 TAC MEETING MINUTES**

Tim Conklin asked the Committee whether there were any additions or corrections to the meeting minutes and hearing none, requested a motion to approve the November 16, 2023, TAC Meeting Minutes.

**MOTION: Doug Tapp made a motion to approve the November 16, 2023, TAC Meeting Minutes, seconded by Ryan Carr. The motion passed unanimously.**

**(4) NWARPC TITLE VI PROGRAM UPDATE**

Tim Conklin introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs explained various profiles and products contained within the Regional Planning Commission's Title VI Program. She said the program is federally required and described how the NWARPC works to accomplish nondiscrimination in the delivery of its federally assisted programs, services, and activities. She mentioned the program includes a demographic profile, including recent census data, a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan, and inventory of language-related resources located on site and throughout the region.

Tim Conklin asked whether there were any other questions or comments and hearing none, requested a motion to recommend the NWARPC Title VI Program to the RPC/Policy Committee.

**MOTION: Ryan Carr made a motion to recommend the NWARPC Title VI Program to the RPC/Policy Committee, seconded by Paul Libertini. The motion passed unanimously.**

**(5) NARTS FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR (FFY) 2023-2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT #5 – FTA-5339 CHANGES – Recommendation to RPC/Policy Committee**

Tim Conklin introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs explained that the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a federally required document. She said this amendment was made at the request of Ozark Regional Transit (ORT) to modify their programmed FTA Section 5339 funding amounts, to

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include FTA 5339 funding apportioned in federal fiscal years (FFY) 2021, 2022, and 2023, but are being applied for, or obligated, in FFY 2024.

Tim Conklin asked whether there were any other questions or comments and hearing none, requested a motion to recommend the Federal Fiscal Year 2023-2026 transportation improvement program (TIP) amendment #5 to the RPC/Policy Committee.

**MOTION: Patsy Christie made a motion to recommend to the RPC/Policy Committee the NARTS Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #5 FTA-5339 CHANGES, seconded by Doug Tapp. The motion passed unanimously.**

- (6) NARTS FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) AMENDMENT #2 –** Tim Conklin introduced the item and Tim Reavis explained that the 2024 UPWP includes the tasks of updating the regional Travel Demand Model (TDM) and Transit Alternatives Study (TAS), however the amendment is to include dollar amounts to cover this work. He said updates to the travel demand model will feed into the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update, which will begin this year. He said the proposed amendment does not add program costs, but simply assigns already programmed Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 funding to the project in the 2024 UPWP. Reavis stated he expects this to be a two-year project, utilizing \$400,000 in FTA 5307 funding, and local match of \$100,000. He said this funding was previously programmed and approved in the Program of Projects, from federal fiscal years (FFY) 2020-2023.

Tim Conklin explained that a consultant will be procured for this project. There was discussion about how the growth scenarios for the travel demand model are locally informed using the individual communities' future land use plans. Conklin explained that the region is expected to reach over one million people by 2050, according to newly released population projections for Benton and Washington Counties. He said the consultant will update the travel demand model, run the model with three different growth scenarios, and will also verify the accuracy of the model's outputs. He said the project will also allow us to evaluate land use and growth scenarios for the region to see if travel demand may meet thresholds to qualify for federal funding. He said our region has not met thresholds in the past to qualify for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Investment Grants.

Tim Conklin asked whether there were any other questions or comments and hearing none, requested a motion to recommend the NARTS Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment #2 to the RPC/Policy Committee.

**MOTION: Jonathan Curth made a motion to recommend the NARTS Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment #2 to the RPC/Policy Committee, seconded by Paul Libertini. The motion passed unanimously.**

- (7) SAFE STREETS & ROADS FOR ALL (SS4A) PHASE 2 KICK-OFF – Toole Design Group** Tim Conklin introduced the item and Jared Draper with Toole Design Group. Conklin congratulated the City of Fayetteville on their recently awarded \$25 million Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Implementation Grant, explaining it was the second highest award in the nation, behind New York City. Draper recapped the region's efforts during Phase 1, completed last year. He stated Phase 2 of the SS4A program will be focused on digging deeper within each community and developing tools for outreach and communications, including local resources for implementation. He said this phase will include the creation of community specific Comprehensive Safety Action Plans (CSAP) using city-level

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High Injury Network (HIN) analyses for Bentonville, Centerton, Fayetteville, Rogers, and Springdale. He said Toole Design will create webinars on systemic safety in NWA to be presented and published as a community resource and two quick-build safety projects will be developed in the region. Nathan Boone from Toole Design outlined another main deliverable of phase 2, the Regional Complete Streets Design Guide. He said this guide will show street design criteria based on street type & context and produce processes and guidance for implementation and maintenance. He said that the Policy Committee (RPC) will support decision making, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will provide project oversight, and a working group in combination with the consultant team will direct the development of the design guidelines. He stated the established working group will meet in four sessions to develop guidelines that match policy gaps and modal priorities, and the NWARPC TAC will provide input at two meetings before the guidelines are presented to the Policy Committee. Draper outlined a timeline for the next year to develop and adopt a Regional Complete Streets Design Guide.

Conklin thanked member organizations for attending meetings related to SS4A and working together to support the phase 2 SS4A efforts curated by Toole Design. He asked whether there were any other questions or comments and there were none.

**(8) PUBLIC FHWA ADJUSTED URBANIZED AREA (UZA) BOUNDARY**

Tim Conklin introduced the item and stated the 2020 Census facilitated the creation of a new Urban Area Boundary. He explained the FHWA adjusts, or smooths, the Census-delineated boundary for consistency in transportation planning purposes. He said this boundary map is used by ARDOT for reporting to USDOT and has impacts on the Functional Classification Map (FCM), determining which projects are classified as urban or rural. He mentioned the next step will be to complete a comprehensive update of the FCM.

**(9) CPRG IMPLEMENTATION GRANT – NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI) TO APPLY**

Tim Conklin introduced the item and explained Arkansas received an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) planning grant for carbon reduction planning, and suballocated a portion to NWARPC. He said NWARPC collaborated with consultant Olsson to submit a regional Energy & Environment Innovation (EEI) Priority Action Plan (PAP) supplement to the state by the December 1, 2023 deadline. He said that NWARPC members have requested the facilitation of a larger coalition to apply for an EPA CPRG Implementation Grant, a program with \$4.6 billion in competitive funding available nationally (deadline April 1, 2024).

Conklin invited cities to join the coalition if they have appropriate projects that could reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and are ready to be implemented. He stated the NWARPC is using board-adopted plans for project selection, including the NWA Open Space Plan, for its discussion regarding riparian corridors and emphasis on the benefits of environmental conservation and restoration; and the NWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, for its focus on active transportation infrastructure. He said there is also a proposal by the NWA Trailblazers to set up an e-bike incentive program with priority for low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDAC), showing potential for reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) regionally.

Conklin said a working group has been developing a list of priority projects in the region and emphasized that the development of NWA “Green Networks” can address transportation and carbon removal together within urban environments, by building out our greenways within riparian corridors. He also mentioned these projects could be paired with e-bike incentives and land conservation to produce economic, environmental, and public health co-benefits. He said these

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regional efforts could address an emerging issue of regional ground level ozone approaching thresholds for air quality requirements, especially as NWA is planning for a population of one million by 2050.

Conklin thanked the Water Conservation Resources Center (WCRC) whose staff stepped up to help coordinate the effort and will continue to collaborate with member agencies on the final coalition application. Conklin stated that the EPA requested a non-mandatory Notice of Intent (NOI) to apply from potential applicants. He said we all need to work together in looking for opportunities to apply these EPA funds around the region, and mentioned staff will be bringing the region's NOI for Board approval to proceed this coming Wednesday, January 24, 2024.

Conklin mentioned there is ongoing dialogue with Metroplan (Little Rock MPO) around the potential to build a multi-metro coalition for wider CPRG application. He said in addition the state may apply and/or individual communities may apply as well. He clarified that the NWARPC will continue to move forward independently until we can determine a symbiotic relationship with all CPRG partners but is aware of the possibility of state-level collaboration.

**(10) PROJECT AND OTHER UPDATES**

**A. FY 2025 Funding Programs**

Nicole Gibbs shared that the FFY 2025 NWARPC Funding Programs Call for Projects was sent out on January 8, 2024. She stated this year's timeline moved up, with the deadline being April 4, 2024, to accommodate the obligation of funds that must occur in the fall. She mentioned an estimated \$15 million worth of funding potential is available this round across the three funding programs. She said there has been discussion around proposed changes to the Local Public Agency (LPA) project management processes for ARDOT. She also covered recent changes made to the federal aid sample resolution available to member agencies.

**B. FY 2024 STBGP-A/TAP/CRP**

Tim Conklin provided an overview of the program's status and stated that the potential limit for project funding is estimated at \$15 million for FFY 2025, based on levels of funding awarded in 2024.

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

Tim Reavis reported that FTA awarded NWARPC \$180,000 for engineering activities to be applied to area bus stop improvements, including shelters, benches, sidewalk gaps, bike parking etc. He said there is a complimentary one-to-one grant opportunity that cities can pursue to maximize the awarded FTA funding. He said the Razorback Transit Bus Stop Enhancement plan is coming soon, and shared that the procurement process is now underway, with the request for Letters of Intent (LOI) having been sent out in December. He said LOI responses will be getting scored next week, and the Request for Proposals (RFP) process will follow.

**D. Other Grant Opportunity Updates**

Tim Conklin provided a reminder that RAISE grant applications are due February 28, 2024, strongly encouraging member agencies outside of urban areas to explore applying. He stated the funding awarded to agencies outside of urban areas could be 100% federal, with no match requirement.

Conklin updated members on the Highway 112 MPDG application, which was not awarded, and also mentioned that Highway 612 awards have not yet been announced. He noted the recently received Walton Family Foundation grant for Strategic Communications Plan development, stating this grant

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will be increasing the capacity of NWARPC to better communicate the work products produced and provide consistent messaging for mobility messaging as the region grows to one million in population by 2050. He said the LOI for this work has been advertised and we are now awaiting responses from qualified communications firms, which will be reviewed and selected by a local committee.

**(11) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES**

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

This afternoon:

**Discussion Items**

- Hwy 112 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
- Subcommittee NWA BikePed Plan
- Agency / Organization Updates

**(12) PUBLIC COMMENT**

Nicole Gibbs confirmed that no public comments were received prior to the meeting.

**(13) OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Future Meeting Dates:**

Tim Conklin reviewed the following upcoming meetings:

- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, January 24, 2024 @ 1:30 PM
- **TAC Meeting** – Thursday, February 15, 2024 @ 10:30 AM

Conklin said the APAC Planning Official Training series is starting up again in March and the next round of courses will be released soon, featuring planning instructors from around the state.

Conklin provided an update from Arkansas GIS regarding updates to our Census boundaries. He shared a City Boundary and Annexation Survey request from the AR GIS Office, urging cities to check that recent annexations are reflected in their boundary changes for 2024, as state law now requires ARGIS to map city boundary changes. He said the survey deadline is March 1, 2024 and asked members to ensure their designated ARGIS contact is correct, verify their city’s map is correct on the AR GIS “CheckMyCity” webapp, and finally, contact Shelby Johnson at ARGIS if your city boundaries are shown incorrectly on the webapp.

Tim Conklin asked whether there was any other business for the committee.

**(14) ADJOURNMENT**

Tim Conklin adjourned the meeting at 11:41 am.