

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting**August 4th, 2026, at 10:00 am****Action Items****I. Call To Order**

- ◆ Emmily called the meeting to order at approximately 10:01 am.

II. Introductions

- ◆ TAC Voting Members (Quorum 51% of 16 = 8.16 ~ 8, including four different jurisdictions/organizations)

The following voting members and proxies were present:

1. Mr. Donald Rowlett - City of Hot Springs (CHS) - Airport Director
2. Mr. Gary Carnahan - City of Hot Springs - City Engineer - *Virtually*
3. Mr. James Patton - Hot Springs Village (HSV) - Board Member
4. Mr. Jesse Konstanzer - Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) - Resident Engineer
5. Mr. Karl Lowry - Town of Fountain Lake - Alderman
6. Ms. Kathy Sellman - City of Hot Springs - Planning Director
7. Mr. Ron Sievwright - City of Hot Springs - Public Works Director
8. Mr. Ryan Richardson - Arkansas Midland Railroad - General Manager
9. Mr. Sunny Farmahan - ARDOT - Local Support Section Head - *Proxy for Mr. Anthony Hunter*

- ◆ Non-Voting Members & Guests

The following non-voting members and guests were present:

1. Ms. Emmily Tiampati - West Central Arkansas Planning & Development District - TLMPO Coordinator
2. Mr. John Spears - Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) - Community Planner

III. Minutes

- ◆ Ms. Sellman made the motion to approve the minutes of the May 5th, 2026, TAC meeting; Mr. Patton seconded the motion; There were no comments or discussion on this item. The minutes passed unanimously.

IV. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- ◆ Emmily gave a brief overview of the TIP, which she mentioned that it had been availed for a 21-day public comment period; but no public comments were received. However, she mentioned that she did receive comments from the City of Hot Springs (CHS) Assistant City Engineer (Mr. Hill), in regard to adding the Belding St extension project to Malvern Ave (U.S. 270B) in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the TIP, and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). She mentioned that this local project is programmed in the current MTP, under the unfunded (illustrative) projects list (pages 57, 92 & 93). CHS has also received some federal funds to fund the planning phase of this project. However, in consultation with ARDOT, Emmily advised that it may not be ideal to add the

project to the current TIP and STIP drafts, since we haven't yet established the funding sources or current construction cost estimates for the project.

- ◆ Mr. Farmahan mentioned that there will be a revised version of projects sent to the MPO's, but the revised list will not change any of the jobs in our Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). However, ARDOT has received guidance from FHWA to add discretionary grants to the planning and programming documents. He therefore requested for a motion that would adopt the draft TIP as presented, with the contingency that there could be changes to statewide projects that could be incorporated into the TIP, without needing to present them to the Policy Board (PB) for approval.
- ◆ Therefore, Emmily reiterated the information and requested for a motion for the TAC to recommend the current draft TIP to the Policy Board, contingent upon some changes that may come up. Hence, Mr. Lowry made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Sievwright.
- ◆ Mr. Carnahan commented that it would be a big accomplishment if we can get the three main projects (061737, 061755, 061831) affecting CHS accomplished within the next 3 years; in addition to other statewide generic projects such as pavement preservation projects that include the Central Ave resurfacing project (A60063) from Grand Ave to the Lake Hamilton Bridge, which just got started. He added that there are other things that we hope we can get started on, but we can always add them later.
- ◆ In regard to the Belding St extension project, Mr. Carnahan mentioned that CHS was awarded a federal grant(s) to plan, survey and design this project, amongst other projects. However, they don't have construction funds yet, but they do plan to pursue additional grants to get construction dollars after the design work is complete.
- ◆ Mr. Patton mentioned that he hoped that the Highway 7 widening at Desoto Blvd would be programmed as well, since the Hot Springs Village (HSV) area population is growing tremendously, thereby making that intersection a dangerous one due to backups.
- ◆ Mr. Farmahan clarified that although the TIP is a 4-year project, we will revisit it in two years; which will give the region another opportunity to submit projects. He also clarified that although Mr. Carnahan pointed out that we do not have pavement preservation projects listed in the TIP, that information usually comes from our District offices; Central office staff is usually aware of when these projects will be let, but District staff, such as the Resident Engineer, are more informed on these projects.
- ◆ Mr. Sievwright enquired whether the safety improvements that are going to occur on Central Ave from Oaklawn to Whittington Ave should be included in the TIP; which will include installation of three hawk systems. Mr. Farmahan responded that as long as the projects are in our planning documents, that's the most important part; and then when the next cycle comes in, if those jobs get funded then they will automatically show up in the projects list. Mr. Sievwright mentioned that his understanding is that these safety projects will go out to bid next year. Mr. Farmahan mentioned that if we need to come back and revise the TIP in order to add these projects, we can come back and do so.
- ◆ The motion passed unanimously.

V. 2027 MPO Meeting Calendar

- ◆ Emmily presented the 2027 MPO meeting calendar, after which she requested for a motion to recommend the 2027 TAC and Policy Board (PB) meeting dates (calendar) to the PB for adoption. Ms. Sellman made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Lowry. Mr. Farmahan mentioned that in the event that we have conflicting meeting dates or can't find a quorum, we can always come back and find a new date(s). But other than that, he thought the calendar was good. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Logo Update

- ◆ Emmily presented the logo update. She mentioned that the TLMPO was designated in the year 2003, and she believes that the current logo is the original logo that hasn't been changed since. She added that we're (TLMPO) part of the West Central Arkansas Planning & Development District (WCAPDD); which changed its logo sometime back around 2019/2020. So, we (staff) thought that it's best since the MPO is housed at the WCAPDD, to ensure that our logo and other public facing items like the website color schemes kind-of match those of the WCAPDD. Therefore, the reason why staff is proposing to update our MPO logo. She also added that whenever someone says they are going to an MPO meeting or that they work at an MPO or a Metropolitan Planning Organization, most people don't even know what it means. So, she proposed that we add the word 'Transportation' to the logo, and to also depict some transportation modes (pedestrian, bicycle, bus & car) in the logo, in order to help the public to quickly comprehend that an MPO deals with transportation planning. She mentioned that the orange dashes signified a roadway, while the mountains honor the Ouachita Mountain range that define our regional landscape, including the orange sunrise/sunset. She added that in honor of the original TLMPO logo, the lighter blue color (signifying the lakes) was kept. She mentioned that there were two alternatives to choose from/vote on, each with a set of three different design sizes, whose use would depend on the medium (e.g. business card, letter head, clothing or banner) in which they were to be used for. She highlighted that the difference between the first option and the second option is that the latter had an Arkansas State geographic outline, that would enable one to quickly identify that TLMPO is in Arkansas.
- ◆ Ms. Sellman had a question about the middle logo, which only had TLMPO initials instead of TLTPPO or TLMTPPO. Emmily explained that although that was a good point for us to consider, we typically use the TLMPO initials for Tri-Lakes Metropolitan Planning Organization, and so even though the T for Transportation was missing in the middle logo initials, the modal images still portrayed the transportation function of the MPO. Ms. Sellman however pointed out that the initials in the middle logo didn't seem consistent with the others.
- ◆ Mr. Farmahan commented that he agreed with the consistency remark, but the real Federal definition is MPO, there's no transportation. He cautioned that we should not want to make changes that are inconsistent with the existing legal documents, since those changes will not be reflected in the legal documents. Ms. Sellman countered that point of view and asked why it seemed okay for us to use the word transportation in the first and third logo names, but not adding the T for transportation in the middle logo's initials. Mr. Farmahan clarified that on the legal side of things, they would still refer to our MPO as the Tri-Lakes MPO not the Tri-Lakes MTPO. Emmily mentioned that Mr. Farmahan was right in regard to the fact that we are legally an MPO, but also Ms. Sellman was right that if we're spelling out the name Tri-Lakes Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization in both the first and third logos, then we should also consider adding the five letter initials in the middle logo. However, Emmily mentioned that saying TLMPO sounds like a mouthful. She added that nowadays when she sends out public meeting notices in the newspaper, she uses Tri-Lakes Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization, so that somebody can quickly understand that the meeting is transportation related.
- ◆ Emmily stated that the new logo examples would also be presented to the Policy Board, and if they feel like it would be important for us to call ourselves the Tri-Lakes Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization, then she thinks that would be considered official, thereby enabling us to legally use that

name. Mr. Farmahan mentioned that if we're changing just the logo, then it means that we're going back and changing all the legal documents to a new name, which is a huge undertaking than just changing a logo. He added that in regard to appealing to the public, he totally agreed with that point of making it clear that the MPO is about transportation, because sometimes people think it deals with parks and etc. Ms. Sellman agreed with that point, but reiterated about the need for consistency.

- ◆ Mr. Lowry commented that, to him, the one logo that has the State in it (option two, middle logo) says it all, without adding the verbiage of transportation to it, and without going thru the legal entanglements just to add one name; and it aligns with something people are familiar with, which is MPO. They may not know what the MPO is, but they've heard of it. He added that if we rebrand with a new name, people may think that this is a new committee of some sort, and wouldn't align it with the fact that we've been doing this for a long period of time.
- ◆ However, Ms. Sellman disagreed with this point of view because the top images on the logos looked like parks and trails, from her point of view. She also disagreed with the assumption that everybody knows what an MPO is. She expressed that adding the word transportation to the MPO name and associated logo's has a lot of value. As Ms. Sellman and Mr. Lowry debated their different opinions, Mr. Farmahan interjected and stated that name of the MPO is Tri-Lakes, which can be changed. But the name Metropolitan Planning Organization can't be changed. MPO is not the name, Tri-Lakes is the name.
- ◆ Mr. Spears joined the conversation and stated that there's always going to be a disconnect within the public in regard to what these organizations do. He gave an example of a recent interview where he saw some members of the public being a bit confused on what ARDOT does, although it was established many years ago. Therefore, he recommended that maybe we need to do better marketing in order to get the word out to the public in regard to what an MPO is. Conversely, he added that planning is a lengthy process that takes time, whose implementation maybe seen by future generations. Therefore, he understands that there could be friction sometimes at MPO meetings due to differing points of view; but it is imperative to remain respectful. In regard to the logo design, he mentioned that he liked the multi-modal depiction, but maybe we can redesign it to lessen the appearance of a trail per Ms. Sellman's earlier remarks.
- ◆ Mr. Patton enquired whether we should have rail and air modes of transportation depicted in the logos as well. Mr. Richardson mentioned that he had also thought about that, but he acknowledged that the bigger the logo is, the harder it is to squeeze it in some mediums, e.g. on clothing. Emmily clarified that she had brought up the same point with the logo designer who suggested that adding many images would make the logo look too busy, thereby losing its essence; however, if the TAC wants us to try and add them all, we can always do that. However, Mr. Richardson reiterated that he was okay with the depicted modes, due to the fact that it's hard to get everything displayed in the logo.
- ◆ Mr. Farmahan questioned whether office staff had the desire to change the Tri-Lakes name, which Emmily confirmed that staff did not want to change the Tri-Lakes name. Therefore, he mentioned the other part of the name, that is Metropolitan Planning Organization, is a federally designated name/organization that cannot be changed. He suggested an option to come up with a mission statement or a messaging that states and describes what the Tri-Lakes MPO does.
- ◆ Emmily mentioned that when she used to work at the Jonesboro MPO many years ago as an Assistant MPO Coordinator, they actually changed the logo and the MPO name, to what it is now called, the Northeast Arkansas Regional Transportation Planning Commission; which serves as the MPO for the Jonesboro area in Craighead County. While for us, we're actually keeping the name MPO, we're just adding the word transportation to it. Therefore, Emmily mentioned that if our Policy Board agreed, we could actually be able to change our name to Tri-Lakes Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization, which would still be legal. Mr. Farmahan clarified that that would absolutely be fine, as long as the Policy Board votes on it, and we have a resolution, then they would not have a problem

changing documents on their end in the future; however, the issue according to him is not changing Tri-Lakes but changing the bottom part from Metropolitan Planning Organization to Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization.

- ◆ Someone asked whether changing the name to Tri-Lakes Transportation Metropolitan Planning Organization would still be an issue. Emmily responded that it would still be the same concern that Mr. Farmahan has on the name change at the bottom of the logo. Mr. Farmahan clarified that changing the name is not an issue per say, it can be changed. He also recommended creation of a small subcommittee with some members from the TAC and some from the Policy Board to discuss this logo update; since it looked like the TAC was thrown into being asked to make a decision. He mentioned that he's usually not in the TAC, but in the Policy Board, and so usually his TAC counterpart usually briefs him on what's expected to be brought to the Policy Board. He wondered whether this logo update info had been presented in the previous TAC meeting, since the information seemed very new; and he didn't think that making a decision on something presented today made him feel comfortable.
- ◆ Mr. Patton responded that he and some of the other TAC members are recommending adding the word transportation. Ms. Sellman added that she didn't think that adding the name transportation to Tri-Lakes Metropolitan Planning Organization, makes it not an MPO. Mr. Lowry chimed in that Mr. Farmahan is talking about the legalities which should not be ignored. He also inquired whether MPO is a federally designated title, which Mr. Farmahan confirmed that it is. Emmily reiterated that there's another MPO which has changed its name from Jonesboro MPO to Northeast Arkansas Regional Transportation Planning Commission, of which we are not trying to do by removing the words Metropolitan Planning Organization from our name.
- ◆ Emmily also mentioned that staff was working on the logo prior to the meeting, because before we bring it up to the TAC and Policy Board, we have to show them what we had in mind in regard to aligning it with the WCAPDD's colors, and design theme. She mentioned that luckily, the designer was able to prepare the two draft sets of alternatives prior to this TAC meeting and the upcoming Policy Board meeting. She also mentioned that staff is working with another consultant to update the WCAPDD's website, which means colors and themes on the website would change, and it would make sense if we timed the MPO's new logo to match the new website theme.
- ◆ Mr. Sievwright interjected with a suggestion that if we leave the Tri-Lakes and the MPO on the logo, and we just put in quotes down below, "A metropolitan transportation planning organization", it will not change anything; it would just describe what we do; without messing with the actual initials of TLMPO. Emmily mentioned that she appreciated everyone's divergent views, and asked if anyone else had anything else to say. Mr. Farmahan commented that since we are basing our MPO logo design based on the mother organization, that is the WCAPDD, he enquired whether the WCAPDD Board had made a decision on the two sets of logo options that Emmily presented to the TAC. Mr. Patton chimed in and stated that all we're (TAC) doing is recommending, which Emmily confirmed that that's what we do as the TAC, make recommendations to the Policy Board.
- ◆ Emmily added that yes, the parent organization is the WCAPDD, which has its own Board; however, the MPO per federal regulations is a standalone organization that has its own Policy Board, and it's just housed in the PDD. She further mentioned that she had consulted with the WCAPDD Executive Director, who is her supervisor, and they agreed to present the two draft sets of the logo options to the MPO. Therefore, in her view, she didn't think that the PDD's Board needs to decide on the MPO's logo design, because the MPO Board can be considered an independent organization from the PDD Board. Mr. Farmahan clarified that since we had the two sets of design options to choose from, what he was trying to find out is if for example we chose the logo design with the State outline, would the PDD be okay with that, yet maybe they've decided on the one without an outline? Emmily responded that she thought that they would be okay with that since she had consulted with the Executive Director of the PDD, who is aware of the two sets of the draft logos; so whichever we go with, he is okay with.

- ◆ Emmily gave Mr. Carnahan, who was attending the meeting virtually, an opportunity to chime in. He therefore enquired whether the group had arrived to a preference of which logo to recommend, whether the one with the State outline or not. In response, Mr. Patton, Mr. Sievwright, and Ms. Sellman verbalized their support for the State outline logo design. After a short discussion amongst some of the meeting attendees to clarify Mr. Sievwright's previous comments in regard to using quotations as a tagline, Emmily asked the TAC whether they all agreed that we do need to update our MPO logo, which no one objected to in response. She then asked whether they all agreed that it was a good idea to show all the images in the logo, including the mountains, which were used to try and communicate that we are part of the Ouachita mountain range, and the natural State; and that hopefully the bus and the automobile would communicate that we're about more than just trails. Ms. Sellman responded that she had no issue with the arty part of the logo. Mr. Lowry mentioned that even if the logo points towards trails, it should be okay since we've already invested in a lot of money on trails anyway.
- ◆ Mr. Richardson enquired when the logo needs to be finalized by. Emmily responded that staff is working to update our WCAPDD website, and so we were hoping to have the new logo ready to go with the new website; but if the TAC felt like this logo was being presented too soon, we could always postpone making the decision on it today. Mr. Richardson chimed in and stated that he was thinking of whether the TAC could wait to make the decision two weeks from now or at the next TAC meeting, in order to get the opportunity to see what the revised logo design would look like, based on comments from today's meeting. Mr. Patton chimed in and showed Mr. Richardson a handwritten illustration of the proposed logo change based on Mr. Sievwright's quotation suggestions, "A Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization", which Mr. Richardson did not object.
- ◆ Emmily mentioned that what she usually presents to the TAC she also presents it to the Policy Board as well. Also, she mentioned that if we wait for the next TAC meeting which is scheduled in November 2026, we may not be able to finalize this discussion in November since right now, it looks like the meeting may need to be cancelled since we currently don't have any key agenda items for the November TAC and PB meetings, and so we may need to push this until February 2027, when our next TAC and PB meetings are scheduled. Therefore, she recommended that she requests for a motion to update the Tri-Lakes MPO logo based on the two options that were presented, in consideration of comments that were made at today's TAC meeting; for consideration by the Policy Board which can decide to table the entire logo discussion to a later date, or set up a committee as suggested by Mr. Farmahan, or change the entire recommended logo sets.
- ◆ Mr. Patton asked whether the TAC was in agreement that the State outline logo was the preferred option. Emmily asked if there was anyone who was opposed to the State outline logo design, but no one responded in objection. She clarified that the TAC preferred the State outline logo design with the quotations as recommended Mr. Sievwright.
- ◆ Mr. Sievwright made the motion to stick with the State outline logo, and add the quotation underneath that says, "A Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization". Ms. Sellman seconded the motion. Eight of the nine voting members present voted aye in favor of the motion, while one voting member, Mr. Lowry, voted nay because he thought the tagline was too long. He thought we had talked about just saying "A Transportation Organization" because everything was already encapsulated into the logo. The motion carried (passed), given that majority of the voting members present voted in its support.
- ◆ Ms. Sellman sought clarification on what the intended use was for the three logo examples that were provided in each set. Emmily clarified that sometimes, we use a different size logo on a different medium. For example, a business card, or a letterhead or a huge banner or a shirt might all use different logo sizes. However, she mentioned that if the TAC or the Policy Board wants just one logo, that is also an option; but, staff thought that it's good to have a set of three different logo versions that could be used at any one time, for separate purposes.

Informational Items**I. APER - 2026 State Fiscal Year (SFY) Annual Performance & Expenditure Report (APER)**

- ◆ Emmily presented the APER. She mentioned that it's one of the federally required documents that MPO's are required to prepare in relation to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). It basically describes the activities that the MPO and its planning partners performed, and the associated UPWP budget and expenditures. There was no additional discussion on this item. No voting is required, it is presented as an FYI item.

II. Job 061611 (Hot Spring County) - Bridge replacement project Bridge Investment Program (BIP) funding Letter of Support (LOS)

- ◆ Emmily mentioned that MPO staff had received a request from ARDOT to write a letter of support for job 061611 bridge replacement project grant application. Therefore, she reminded other MPO member jurisdictions that if they had a project that they were working on and needed an MPO LOS, that they should let the MPO staff know; since receiving an MPO LOS usually strengthens a grant application, since it signifies that the project is regionally significant or of regional importance.

III. MPO Intro Pamphlet

- ◆ Emmily mentioned that she had included a brief MPO 101 pamphlet in the agenda packet as an FYI for new members, and as a refresher for existing members.

IV. Local Public Agencies (LPA's) Updates

- ◆ Mr. Carnahan mentioned that paving of Central Ave will start soon.
- ◆ Mr. Patton congratulated Mr. Konstanzer (ARDOT) for doing a good job on Highway 5.
- ◆ Mr. Sievwright mentioned that one of the big problems that they are experiencing when they are doing upgrades of traffic signal cabinets along Central Ave and other routes is that there are inadequate conduits across the road. Where he came from, they put 3 inch conduits all the way around. However, now, they are finding one or two 1 inch conduits, which is inadequate with the new wiring for these signals. Therefore, he asked whether ARDOT has any funding to assist local agencies in upgrading traffic signals that are on State highways. He said he has enough to upgrade the electronic cabinets, but not enough to upgrade the other infrastructure such as the mast arms or the signal heads. Mr. Patton chimed in and asked whether ARDOT owns the signals, and then the City maintains them. Mr. Sievwright responded that from his understanding, ARDOT installs the signals, and then the City owns the signals after installation. However, he was wondering if there's a pot of money that could assist them to resolve the struggles that he had aforementioned. He mentioned that some of the signal infrastructure is outdated. Mr. Farmahan responded that he is aware of the ARDOT Intersection Improvement Program (IIP), but they will check if there are any other available funding sources out there in regard to Mr. Sievwright's comments. Mr. Spears also chimed in and said that they'll get together with Mr. Sievwright and see what options are out there. Mr. Farmahan added that any improvements to an intersection will warrant upgrades. Mr. Sievwright and Mr. Patton added that from their past experiences, they had a maintenance fund for signal improvements.

V. Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) Updates**◆ Planning Division - Upcoming Projects Status**

Mr. Farmahan mentioned that ARDOT is continuing to work on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). He also mentioned that project 061922, Highway 7 at Highway 70B

pedestrian improvement project, is currently scheduled to be let in November; Highway 192, two bridge projects, is scheduled to be let in late 2029; and project 061737, Highway 270 Ouachita River to Fleetwood Dr, is scheduled to be let in March of 2027.

♦ **Engineering Division (District 6) - Construction Projects Status**

Mr. Konstanzer reiterated what Mr. Carnahan had said that work will be starting soon on Central Ave.

VI. Federal Agencies Updates

♦ **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**

Mr. Spears mentioned that he's been reviewing some UPWP's in coordination with his Federal Transit Administration (FTA) counterpart; and then he'll get in touch with Mr. Farmahan on any comments that the Feds might have. He also mentioned that the FHWA AR Division recently hired a new Division Administrator, Mr. Justin Ham, who is also an Arkansas native.

♦ **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**

There was no FTA representative; therefore, there were no updates from FTA.

♦ **National Park Service (NPS)**

There was no NPS representative; therefore, there were no updates from NPS.

VII. Public Comments

- ♦ There were no members of the public; therefore, there were no public comments.

VIII. Any Other Business

- ♦ Ms. Sellman took this opportunity to apologize for any disrespectful comments that she may have made during the meeting. She mentioned that from her experience working with MPO's, what's been frustrating to her is the requirement that creates the appearance of a grassroots and upward plan for transportation improvements across multiple modes; that is then bigfooted by some other agency above us.

IX. Next TAC Meetings (2026 Calendar)

- ♦ Emmily reminded everyone that the next TAC meeting is slated for November 3rd, 2026, at 10:00 am. However, given that she currently doesn't have any key agenda items for that meeting, the meeting is tentative for now, meaning it may get cancelled. Mr. Patton mentioned that that day will be election day. Therefore, Emmily mentioned that we may end up cancelling the meeting or changing the date, but she'll keep everyone posted.

Adjournment

- ♦ The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:00 am.