

Policy Board (PB) Meeting**August 20th, 2026, at 10:00 AM****Action Items****I. Call To Order**

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

II. Introductions

- ◆ Policy Board Voting Members (Quorum 51% of 11 = 5.61 ~ 6, including 3 elected officials)

The following voting members and proxies were present at the meeting:

1. Mr. Anthony Hunter - Proxy for Mr. Sunny Farmahan - Arkansas Department of Transportation - Local Support Section Head
2. Mr. Darryl Mahoney - Garland County - County Judge
3. Mr. Hunter Lake - Arkansas Department of Transportation - Engineer, District 6
4. Mr. Jack Fields - Town of Fountain Lake - Mayor
5. Ms. Karen Garcia - City of Hot Springs - Director, District 5
6. Mr. Keith Keck - Proxy for Mr. Bruce Caverly - Hot Springs Village (HSV) - Board Director
7. Mr. Mike Lipton - Hot Springs Metro Partnership - Transportation Committee Chair - *PB Chairman*
8. Mr. Pat McCabe - City of Hot Springs - Mayor

- ◆ Non-Voting Members & Guests

The following non-voting members and guests were present at the meeting:

1. Mr. Bill Burrough - City of Hot Springs - City Manager
2. Mr. Cole McCaskill - Hot Springs Metro Partnership - President/C.E.O
3. Mr. Dwayne Pratt - West Central Arkansas Planning & Development District (WCAPDD) - Executive Director
4. Ms. Emmily Tiampati - WCAPDD - TLMPO Coordinator

III. Minutes

- ◆ *Action - Consider approval of the May 21st, 2026, Policy Board meeting minutes draft.*
- ◆ Director Garcia made the motion to approve the draft minutes of the May 21st, 2026, Policy Board meeting; Mayor Fields seconded the motion. There was no discussion on this item. The minutes passed unanimously.

IV. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- ◆ *Action - Consider approval of the 2027 - 2030 FFY TIP draft.*
- ◆ Emmily presented the TIP Draft. She mentioned that the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), TIP, and other MPO planning documents are typically developed in coordination with our Local, State, and Federal planning partners. She mentioned that the TIP had been availed for a 21-day public comment period, but there were no public comments that were received. However, she mentioned that she did receive a comment from Mr. Hill, the City of Hot Spring's Assistant City Engineer; who recommended that we include the Belding St project in our planning documents. She mentioned that this project is already in our MTP under the illustrative (non-fiscally constrained) projects list. She also mentioned that the City has received a Federal grant to plan and study this potential project. In coordination with the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT), Emmily mentioned that we thought that it's best to keep it in the MTP, instead of adding it to the current TIP and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), because the project is still under study. Also, per Federal regulations, the TIP/STIP projects have to be fiscally constrained by year. Hence the reason why the project wasn't added to the current TIP/STIP drafts as a fiscally unconstrained project.
- ◆ Mayor McCabe made the motion to approve the draft FFY 2027 - 2030 TIP. Judge Mahoney seconded the motion. The following was the discussion on this item. Director Garcia mentioned that she had heard from members of the public that the MLK Expressway (Bypass) interchange project at Higdon Ferry Rd was still our priority. She noted that it looks like the project won't be fully funded until 2031-2040, per the current 2050 MTP projects list (Page 93). She also mentioned that now we have a new store (Home Depot), that's slated to open on Higdon Ferry Rd. Also, emergency vehicles are not currently able to get through that intersection. She mentioned that in consultation with LifeNet (emergency service providers), the queue is not long enough for cars turning to the Bypass going East or West, because there's only one lane and there's nowhere for cars to pullover for emergency vehicles to pull through. Some of the Policy Board members in attendance verbalized their agreement to her remarks.
- ◆ Mr. Lake mentioned that he had not heard anything recently as far as that project was concerned; but he would relay those concerns to his colleagues at ARDOT. Mr. McCaskill chimed in that the entrance to the area's largest hospital is within that vicinity as well. Judge Mahoney remarked that his recollection pertaining to the interchange projects was that the Airport Rd and the Higdon Ferry Rd interchanges were to be programmed in the TIP for FFY 2027. Director Garcia noted that in the 2050 MTP \$100,000 for a study was programmed in FFY 2026-2030, and the rest of it (\$23,900,000) was programmed in 2031-2040 (Page 93). She mentioned that the people she had spoken to felt that the Higdon Ferry Rd interchange project was a higher priority than the Airport Rd interchange project. Judge Mahoney mentioned that although he thinks that both intersections are quite close in terms of priority, he believes that the new store would make Higdon Ferry Rd a higher priority. However, he mentioned that per his recollection, the biggest issue with Higdon Ferry Rd is that they (ARDOT) will try and incorporate the Central Ave interchange with it as well. The last he had was that they could not incorporate the 'Texas turnaround' into the T.V. Hill Rd, the way they'd envisioned it would operate on both the Central Ave and the Higdon Ferry Rd intersections; but either way, he thought that those projects need to be programmed well before FFY 2031.
- ◆ Mr. Lake enquired whether the project number under discussion was 061832 (Higdon Ferry Rd). Emmily confirmed that that was correct, and also mentioned that it was currently programmed to be let for construction in FFY 2030 in our draft FFY 2027-2030 TIP (Page 39). Mr. Pratt chimed in and mentioned that per his recollection, all the intersections on the MLK Expressway are top priorities in our TIP. But, at some point, we had a discussion that Higdon Ferry Rd intersection and the Central Ave intersection are

going to be considered as one project because it is such a complex fix and it is going to be so expensive, hence the Department (ARDOT) moved that below the Hwy 70 west intersection. Director Garcia responded that per her recollection, she understood that due to the complexity, that the Central Ave project was going to be a separate project on its own.

- ◆ Mr. Burrough chimed in and mentioned that he recalls that several years ago, they actually voted on a priority list; whereby Higdon Ferry Rd was first, but he couldn't remember the exact order of the others, but basically Carpenter Dam Rd was last. That list floated around for several years and then got submitted. Then we had a Commissioner (ARDOT), pledge about \$40,000,000 for the interchange project(s); but Higdon Ferry Rd did not get funded, but Airport Rd did, and that's why it was moved higher on the priority list for ARDOT. Mr. Pratt mentioned that he did not remember any money being committed, but he also thinks that that's how the projects got swapped in the prioritization process. Director Garcia chimed in and said that the highest priority project (Higdon Ferry Rd Interchange) was dropped in the priority ranking list, but it is a problem all day long. She added that although Airport Rd gets backed up in the afternoons, there's a place for cars to pullover if emergency vehicles need to get by; which isn't the case for Higdon Ferry Rd. Mr. Burrough mentioned that he didn't realize that they (ARDOT) were trying to combine those two intersections/interchange projects (that is Higdon Ferry Rd and Central Ave). The last thing he recalls was that it was going to be like a divergent diamond interchange.
- ◆ Director Garcia made a motion to move the two projects (Higdon Ferry Rd and Airport Rd interchanges) up in priority of the FFY 2027- 2030 TIP. Mayor McCabe seconded the motion. Judge Mahoney asked for a confirmation on whether the concurrence was to move projects 061831 (Airport Rd) and 061832 (Higdon Ferry Rd) up the TIP's priority list. Emmily checked with Director Garcia who confirmed that that was correct. Judge Mahoney concurred that he thought both of these projects should be moved up the list. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Hunter wanted to make a clarification on the motion. He stated that this will be a comment to ARDOT to change over the priority list; however, he stated that it's ultimately going to be up to the Commission when they approve the STIP, on whether or not that actually gets incorporated.

V. 2027 MPO Meeting Calendar

- ◆ *Action - Consider approval of the 2027 MPO meeting calendar draft.*
- ◆ Emmily presented the 2027 MPO meeting calendar. She mentioned that our Public Participation Plan (PPP) requires us to meet four times a year, that is every quarter. She mentioned that the next meeting for this year is scheduled in November; however, she doesn't have any key agenda items anticipated for this year's November Policy Board or Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings. Therefore, we may not end up meeting in November 2026. She also requested for agreement/approval of the 2027 MPO meeting dates, which she said are subject to change in case something comes up. Judge Mahoney made the motion to approve the 2027 MPO meeting calendar. Mayor Fields seconded the motion. There was no discussion on this item. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Logo Update

- ◆ *Action - Consider approval of the new TLMPO logo draft.*
- ◆ Mr. Pratt presented the TLMPO logo update. He mentioned that we're in the process of updating all of our websites across the West Central Arkansas Planning and Development (WCAPDD), which includes

the MPO and the Solid Waste District; and so, we (staff) thought that it would be an ideal time to update the MPO logo as well, since looking at the current one, most people don't know what Metropolitan Planning Organizations do. So, we tried to come up with a logo that when anybody looks at it, it at least tells that we do transportation work at the MPO. He added that we're not proposing to change the name of the organization as previously brought up at the TAC meeting. However, he clarified that it is within the purview of the Policy Board to do that if it so wishes; but our (staff) intent was to just update the logo so that people can see that we do transportation work.

- ◆ Chairman Lipton commented that he thought that we would get in trouble if we went past the logo, therefore, he saw no sense in creating a problem for us. However, since the MPO has been going on for a long time, we've been trying to make some adjustments and get everything up-to-date including the recent Bylaws update, and now the logo update. Mr. Pratt further explained that the designer came up with two design options, both showing multimodal (pedestrian, bicycle, bus and automobile) transportation elements; but distinguished by one having the State of Arkansas outline, and the other one not having the State outline. He mentioned that the TAC's recommendation was the logo design with the Arkansas State outline and the transportation icons on it. However, he mentioned that it was completely up to the Policy Board to choose whichever one they wanted. Judge Mahoney made the motion to go with the TAC recommendation on the logo change. Mr. Lake seconded the motion. Mr. McCaskill commented that he thought the logo looked great. The motion passed unanimously.

Informational Items

I. APER - Annual Performance and Expenditure Report - 2026 State Fiscal Year (SFY)

- ◆ Emmily presented the APER. She mentioned that it is a Federally required document. She mentioned that every year, we adopt the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); which basically talks about the activities that the MPO and its planning partners are going to conduct with the associated budget; and so, at the end of every SFY, the Feds require that we document our activities and the budget that we spent or carried over to the next SFY. Notably, however, she mentioned that the APER per Federal Regulations does not require Policy Board approval, and thus it's just an FYI of the activities that we did and the budget that's associated with them. She mentioned that the APER is posted on the MPO's website.

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

- ◆ Emmily briefed the Policy Board that ARDOT had reached out to the MPO requesting for a letter of support for a Federal funding application for a bridge improvement project number 061611, in Hot Spring County. Therefore, she reminded the local agencies that if they needed an MPO letter of support to let us know; since she believes that those letters of support give the potential projects a competitive edge by showing that the project has a regional impact.

III. MPO Intro Pamphlet

- ◆ Emmily mentioned that the last time there was a Policy Board meeting, Chairman Lipton had requested Emmily to give a quick MPO 101 update to some of our new MPO members. Therefore, she prepared an MPO 101 pamphlet which she included in the agenda; which would not only be useful to the new members, but also as a refresher to existing members. She added that she's happy to make any

changes to it that might make it more user friendly. Mr. Hunter enquired whether that was something that we could add on to the MPO website, so that the public can have a better idea of what an MPO does. Emmily confirmed that this was something that the MPO staff was planning to do, but she was waiting on the new website update so that she can add it and other items like acronyms to the website as well.

IV. Local Public Agencies (LPA's) Updates

- ◆ *Garland County* - Judge Mahoney gave an update that the County has several bridge and other projects going on that they (Garland County) are working on in coordination with ARDOT. They have a couple of projects being worked on near the Hot Springs Village (HSV), one being the realignment of East and West Glazypeau intersections. The intersection has already been thru a study, whose findings concluded that a traffic signal is warranted. However, they are still working together to try and come up with a good realignment. Conversely, he mentioned that they have completed all the (land) acquisitions for the Southwest trail; and so, he hopes to get the Economic Development Agency's (EDA) approval soon, in order to be able to start the process. Other than that, he mentioned that they are in full speed right now in regard to paving, since the weather has been favorable for that. He added that he is still working with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in regard to reimbursement for a bridge that they (Garland County) lost during the 2025 flood. Chairman Lipton asked Judge Mahoney about how far out the Hwy 270 West project is slated to go in our plans. Judge Mahoney responded that it will be all the way out to the big bridge, and it'll be 5 lanes all the way. He also mentioned that utility relocation has already started for the Albert Pike Rd major widening project (061737) from Fleetwood Dr to Ouachita River.
- ◆ *City of Hot Springs (CHS)* - Mr. Burrough mentioned that he was on a project coordination call last week in regard to a pedestrian improvements project on Central Ave in front of Oaklawn. However, some of the people on the call did not seem to be aware that there was a paving/overlay project (A60063) scheduled on Central Ave. Therefore, they (CHS) asked them to get in touch with the General Manager at Oaklawn because he had some questions. That said, he said that it sounded that the paving project was going to get past Oaklawn prior to the opening day; however, the crosswalk safety work (061922) was going to be happening during the live racing season. He mentioned that he thought that they were going to try and work at night, but he was wondering if there was a way to get them (paving project group vs safety project group) connected on that project to avoid any inconsistencies. Mr. Lake mentioned that he actually has a call scheduled the following day to discuss all those concerns. He mentioned that they may be able to state in the contract when work should be done, in order to avoid conflict with the racing season. Mr. Burrough added that he believes one of the safety improvements would include about three hawk signals within City limits, one of them being at Oaklawn. He mentioned that that was a huge thing, and that they appreciate it, but he thinks there needs to be better coordination between the two groups. Mr. Lake agreed with this and mentioned that they (ARDOT) are more than willing to sit down and work with them and coordinate and figure out how best to schedule work to limit impacts on Oaklawn as much as possible.
- ◆ *Town of Fountain Lake* - Mayor Fields mentioned that ARDOT had gotten in touch with the Town in regard to the Street Aid Program, which will provide them with some funding to aide in paving some of the Town's roads. He also mentioned that the Town will have a fall festival on October 3rd from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm, where everybody is welcome to attend.

- ♦ *Hot Springs Village (HSV)* - Mr. Keck mentioned that HSV is finishing up its paving program. He also mentioned that they are still receiving visitors who go there to golf, while also spending time at Oaklawn.
- ♦ *Hot Springs Metro Partnership* - Mr. McCaskill introduced himself as the interim President/C.E.O of the Hot Springs Chamber and the Metro Partnership.

V. Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) Updates

- ♦ *Planning Division - Status of Upcoming Projects*: Mr. Hunter mentioned that upcoming job 061922 on Highway 7 (Central Ave) and Highway 70B (Grand Ave) pertaining to non-motorized safety improvements which might include Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements, crosswalks, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB's), and raised refuge islands. The job is scheduled to be let for construction in November of 2026. Mr. Hunter also mentioned that 061608 on Highway 192 (Strawberry Rd), pertaining to replacement of two bridges is scheduled to be let for construction in FFY 2029. He also mentioned that the Ouachita River to Fleetwood Dr widening project on Albert Pike Rd (061737) is scheduled to be let for construction in March of 2027.
- ♦ *Engineering Division, District 6 - Status of Construction Projects*: Mr. Lake mentioned that he had no updates.

VI. Federal Agencies Updates

- ♦ There was no Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) or National Park Service (NPS) representatives; therefore, there were no updates from Federal agencies.

VII. Public Comments

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

VIII. Any Other Business

- ♦ Judge Mahoney mentioned that he was glad to have Emmily back at the MPO. He commended her for providing thorough information in the emails. He added that it was always a pleasure to work with Emmily before when she was here at the MPO. He was thankful that she always reminds them (Policy Board) of the meetings and is very responsive whenever he reaches out to her, even if she doesn't have the information at the moment. He was also appreciative of her for helping open the door to some of the funding programs.

IX. Next Policy Board Meetings (2026 Calendar)

- ♦ Chairman Lipton mentioned that the next TLMPO Policy Board meeting is scheduled on November 19th, 2026, at 10:00 am. However, we probably will not meet because we currently do not have any key agenda items for that meeting; unless something comes up.

Adjournment

- ♦ Director Garcia made the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Lipton adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:35 am.