

**Policy Board****May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026, at 10:00 am****Action Items:****I. Call To Order**

- Chairman Lipton called the meeting to order at approximately 10:02 am.

**II. Introductions/Quorum**

The following voting members or proxies were present:

1. Mr. Bruce Caverly - Hot Springs Village - Vice-President - Policy Board Voting Member
2. Mr. Karl Lowry - Town of Fountain Lake - Alderman - Proxy for Mayor Jack Fields - Policy Board Voting Member
3. Mr. Keith Goff - ARDOT - District Construction Engineer - Proxy for Mr. Hunter Lake - Policy Board Voting Member
4. Mr. Mike Lipton - Hot Springs Metro Partnership - Transportation Committee Chair, and TLMPO Policy Board Voting Member & Chair
5. Mr. Pat McCabe - City of Hot Springs - Mayor - Policy Board Voting Member
6. Mr. Pat McCabe - City of Hot Springs - Mayor - Proxy for Mr. Darryl Mahoney (Garland County Judge) - Policy Board Voting Member
7. Mr. Sunny Farmahan - Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) - Local Support Section Head - Policy Board Voting Member

The following guests or non-voting members were present:

1. Mr. Bo Robertson - Garland County - County Judge Elect - Guest
2. Mr. Bob Pettey - Hot Springs Village - Member of Government Affairs Committee - Ex-Officio
3. Mr. Dwayne Pratt - West Central Arkansas Planning & Development District (WCAPDD) - Executive Director - Ex-Officio
4. Ms. Emmily Tiampati - WCAPDD - TLMPO Coordinator - Staff
5. Mr. Gary Troutman - Chamber of Commerce (Greater Hot Springs) - President - Ex-Officio
6. Mr. Keith Jones - City of Hot Springs - Intracity Transit Resident Advisor - Guest

### **III. Minutes**

- Alderman Lowry made the motion to approve minutes of the February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Policy Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Caverly. There were no comments or discussion on this item. The motion passed unanimously.

### **IV. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - SFY 2027**

- Mr. Farmahan made the motion to approve the July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026 - June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2027 (SFY 2027) UPWP. The motion was seconded by Mayor McCabe.
- Emmily explained that the UPWP is one of the required key planning documents in the metropolitan transportation planning process; which basically details the activities that the MPO and its planning partners will carry out during the said fiscal year. It also includes a budget estimate associated with those activities. She also mentioned that the UPWP was publicized for a 21-day public comment period, but no public comments were received. She added that the UPWP was also presented to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC); who also had no comments, and they recommended it to the Policy Board for consideration and approval.
- Mr. Farmahan explained how the Metropolitan Planning Funds (PL) work, just for informational purposes. He said that the PL funds listed in the UPWP are from both the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). However, the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) takes the FHWA funds and gives them to FTA for administration of all MPO's. He added that although the Federal funding apportionments are out and the exact amounts are known, the grant itself doesn't get awarded until later in the year or early the following year. However, that shouldn't stop us from continuing with business. He also mentioned that the official funding letters should go out soon, in about a week or two. This will include the set aside amounts separated, which will be 100% reimbursable to facilitate tracking.
- The motion passed unanimously.

### **V. AOU and Bylaws Revisions**

- Mr. Farmahan made the motion to approve the revised Agreement of Understanding (AOU) and Bylaws administrative modifications. Mr. Caverly seconded the motion.
- Chairman Lipton informed the Policy Board that he and Mr. Pratt had been working together on the Bylaws before the last staff turnover, to update the antiquated bylaws. He also mentioned that all the Policy Board members should've received the revised drafts including the red-lined version of the Bylaws. He added that a legal team from the Wright, Lindsey & Jennings law firm had assisted with the revisions to ensure that the documents are legally sound.
- Emmily mentioned that only one comment was received and that was from Mr. Caverly, who wanted us to ensure that the Bylaws adhere to the Executive Sessions requirements as

mandated by the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Mr. Caverly clarified that his comments pertained to matters of personnel and legal type of stuff; which staff confirmed that these requirements were incorporated into the final draft of the bylaws.

- The motion passed unanimously.

### **Informational Items:**

#### **I. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FFY 2025 - 2028**

- Emmily informed the Policy Board that the rest of the agenda items were simply informational items that didn't require voting. In regard to the current FFY 2025-2028 TIP, she mentioned that the MPO had been coordinating with the City of Hot Springs (CHS) and ARDOT to revise the TIP and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) thru an administrative modification; which doesn't require a public comment period or Policy Board voting, since the funds already went thru a public review period as part of the previous TIP & STIP development processes. She added that this administrative modification (Add FFY 2024 HSIT 01 and HSIT 02 funds to FFY 2026 TIP/STIP) was needed in order for the Hot Springs Intracity Transit (HSIT) to be able to apply and get reimbursed for the transit funds; by ensuring that the funds (FFY 2024 - 5307 - Operating Assistance and Capital Preventative Maintenance) are reflected in the current FFY 2026 TIP and STIP, as required by FTA.
- She added that she had also recently received additional past HSIT funding info that needed to be reflected in the current TIP and STIP, in order for CHS to be able to apply for those funds. However, this info wasn't included in the current Policy Board agenda because the TIP/STIP revision process for these particular funds was still under ARDOT review. She mentioned that FTA regs do allow a few years for funds to remain available to transit agencies, before they lapse; hence the reason why we're seeing funds from previous fiscal years being brought for inclusion now.
- Chairman Lipton requested Emmily to explain some of the common language used in the MPO planning process, such as TIP & STIP, for the sake of new members that may not be familiar with it. Emmily mentioned that in the past, she had an MPO 101 flyer that she had drafted and would provide at MPO meetings. She said that she'll draft one and make available at future MPO meetings. She also informed the Policy Board meeting attendees that there are several key documents required by federal regulations for MPO's to prepare, in order for member agencies, be it local or state, to obtain federal funding approval for projects. These include UPWP, TIP, and MTP. For anything to be in the TIP, it has to first be in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which is the MPO's long-range transportation plan that has a planning horizon of at least 20 years. The Tri-Lakes Metropolitan Planning Organization (TLMPO) updates its MTP every 5 years because it is in an air-quality attainment area; meaning we meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The current 2050 MTP was adopted in September of 2025. Then we have the TIP which has a planning horizon of just 4 years. Most MPO planning processes usually follow the federal fiscal year (FFY), i.e. October -

September. Finally, she stated that our current TIP is programmed for FFY 2025 - 2028, and we are in the process of formulating our next TIP for FFY 2027 - 2030.

- Mr. Farmahan added that amounts contained in the MTP are only planning level estimates; while the TIP contains actual programmed amounts. He also added that ARDOT produces the STIP every two years.

## **II. West Central Arkansas Planning & Development District (WCAPDD) SFY 2025 Audit Report**

- Mr. Pratt mentioned that the Chair and Vice-Chair had requested that the WCAPDD audit be included in the agenda, since the MPO operates under the WCAPDD. He also added that a complete audit report had been emailed to the members, and that only an excerpt of the report which particularly relates to the MPO was included in the agenda packet.
- Mr. Farmahan added that because WCAPDD is a fiscal agent, ARDOT's fiscal personnel do get the audit report sent to them separately. Mr. Pratt added that it's also sent to the legislature and the Federal audit clearing house.

## **III. Safe Streets For All (SS4A) FFY 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

- Emmily reminded the meeting attendees that the Federal SS4A NOFO is basically a grant for doing planning studies or implementing projects that are geared towards improving the safety of all road users including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, and motorists. She added that the application period for the 2026 SS4A grant will close on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026. She informed the Policy Board that if any of the agencies are interested in applying for this grant, they should let us know and the MPO or the WCAPDD staff can help with filling the application.

## **IV. Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) Announcements**

- Mr. Farmahan and Mr. Goff stated that they did not have any project related announcements. However, Mr. Farmahan said that a good resource for Emmily would be the ARDOT District 6 website, which has a lot of information on current jobs. However, info on projects that have already been let or are under construction might not be there. He also mentioned that there is a GIS based ARDOT job status website. He mentioned that these resources are probably better than ARDOT staff presenting one page that is very standard and kind of gets stale very quickly.
- Conversely, Mr. Farmahan mentioned that ARDOT's transportation summit will be held in Northwest Arkansas, in Rogers; during the first week of November, after elections.

## **V. Federal Agencies Announcements**

- There were no Federal agencies announcements.

## VI. Other Agencies Announcements

- Mayor McCabe inquired whether there was some funding issue going on tyre disposal. Mr. Farmahan responded that he had read some news that the Jefferson County facility is non-operational. Mr. Pratt mentioned that that's a program administered by the Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), which recently changed the boundaries of the tyre districts from about 10 to 4, throughout the State. He added that the administration is working towards privatizing the program by removing it from the realm of responsibilities of our solid waste management districts, and County Judges. He also mentioned that the State is looking to reduce the amount of per tyre reimbursement that these districts get in order to process and recycle those tyres; thereby reducing operations funding for the Upper Southwest Regional Solid Waste Management District (USRSWMD); which operates the tyre district that we're now located in.
- Mayor McCabe then requested for clarification on whether the tyre shops will have the ability to charge whatever they want to charge for tyre disposal. Mr. Pratt clarified that that's totally regulated. It's about \$2 per tyre that retailers pay to send used tyres to the tyre processing center; but with privatization, the prices will be based on whatever the market can bare. Mayor McCabe was concerned that we may end up with used tyres scattered everywhere. Mr. Pratt added that this would be likely if the prices for processing used tyres increased significantly.
- Mr. Caverly mentioned that Hot Springs Village (HSV) has been growing, and that the current strategic plan projects about 22,000 people by 2035. Annually, he said the Village grows by about 150 new homes right now. Therefore, one of transportation related challenges that they're facing currently are on AR 7 and AR 5; which have been programmed in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for major widening and a variety of changes. However, he thinks between now and 2030, we need to consider road preservation; for instance, AR 5 coming from the HSV East gate all the way down to the roundabout that's on AR 7 and AR 5; same for AR 7 particularly now with truck traffic coming in and out of the water plant, creates additional problems for the HSV area. Therefore, HSV is looking at a possible re-design of the HSV West gate on AR 7. In regard to trucks on AR 7, fully loaded truck traffic goes up the hill in the lowest gear possible, thereby causing traffic to back up all the way past the golf cart place. He further added that, if HSV is going to re-design the West gate which will be needed for ingress and egress, what do we need to do about the intersection of AR 7 at Desoto Blvd?
- Mr. Caverly also mentioned that he'd like to see ARDOT take a look at this intersection from an engineering standpoint, at least in the next couple of years; and give us some ideas of what they think could be done with that intersection. He stated that if it's going to be widened, some land would need to be obtained on both the left and right sides. He added that it's a quandary for HSV on how to re-design their gate, until they understand what the State wants to do. Therefore, he asked the State and the Policy Board for some forward thinking before 2030, if there could be some preliminary engineering studies on what they think could or should be done in that area, to give HSV some guidance on how they are going to do their work on the West gate. Mr. Farmahan recommended that the best place to start would be to write a letter to the Director on what the plan is going to be in order to kick-start the conversation. Mr.

Caverly responded that HSV had already sent him a letter. Mr. Farmahan also added that although we just adopted the MTP, we should keep in mind to add this intersection to the next MTP as one of the regional priorities.

- Mr. Troutman mentioned that he wanted to thank Mr. Farmahan, and for him to convey to Director Wiley, and the entire team at ARDOT that we're very appreciative of the passport center signage. He added that there are only two emergency passport centers of its kind in the whole country, the other being in Tucson; consequently, we get a lot of people coming here from various parts of the country. He also mentioned that the City was kind enough to put some wayfinding signs, but they could only do it on the exit. He mentioned that ARDOT has placed one sign on Airport Rd before you get to McCloud, and the other one is coming from Higdon Ferry to McCloud; which will be helpful to our tourists.

## **VII. Public Comments**

- There were no public comments.

## **VIII. Next Policy Board Meeting**

- Chairman Lipton reminded the meeting attendees that the next Policy Board meeting will be held on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 10:00 am.

### **Adjournment:**

- Mr. Farmahan made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Caverly seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:31 am.