

# Small Cities Council

January 29, 2020

## Summary

*as approved on September 30, 2020*

### Attending:

- |                                   |                       |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Mayor Bernie Chamberlain       | City of Austin        |
| 2. Mayor Charles Gastineau        | City of Ward          |
| 3. Mayor Sammy Hartwick, Chairman | City of Greenbrier    |
| 4. Mayor Sam Higdon               | City of Guy           |
| 5. Ms. Jennifer Hill              | City of Haskell       |
| 6. Mayor Randy Holland            | City of Mayflower     |
| 7. Mayor Mike Kemp, Vice-chairman | City of Shannon Hills |
| 8. Mayor Terry Don Robinson       | City of Wooster       |

### Metroplan Staff:

- |                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 9. Casey Covington | Deputy Director           |
| 10. Susan Markman  | Senior Planner for Policy |
| 11. Tab Townsell   | Executive Director        |

### Guests:

- |                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| 12. Mike Watson | Halff |
|-----------------|-------|

### 1. Call to Order

Mayor Hartwick called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

### 2. Summary of Previous Meeting

The summary of November 20, 2019 was previously emailed to the Council.

**MOTION** by Mayor Holland, second by Ms. Hill

“To approve the Summary of November 2019, as prepared.”

**PASSED**

### 3. Report on TAP and STP Applications

Mr. Covington reported that Metroplan received 19 applications for 2020-21 TAP funding, including several submitted by members of the Small Cities Council. The total amount requested is \$2.7 million; about \$1.5 million is available for this cycle. A selection committee was appointed by Mayor Joe Smith at the December Board meeting; that

committee is evaluating proposals and will recommend a slate of projects for funding at the February Board meeting.

Metroplan received eight applications requesting \$8.4 million in STP funding. Approximately \$6 million is available. Applications included proposals for intersection improvements and signalization, multimodal corridor improvements, road reconstruction, and a partnering project for the Southeast Trail.

Mr. Townsell added that projects funded through the STP program must be obligated within this fiscal year. Therefore, applications will be especially scrutinized for their ability to obligate the project in a timely manner.

#### **4. Ten-year Funding Objectives for Metroplan STP Grants**

Metroplan receives about \$11 million in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds, which it has historically awarded to projects throughout the four-county study area. Although Metroplan has funded or partially funded many worthy projects, the level of funding available to Metroplan is insufficient to adequately address street transportation needs in a regionally significant way.

Instead of continuing to allocate the region's limited resources the way we always have, Mr. Townsell proposed targeting a significant portion of the MPO's funds to creating a region-wide multi-use trail network for cyclists and pedestrians. Over a ten-year period, those dedicated funds would forge a major regional footprint with lasting positive results.

As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization, Metroplan is charged with the responsibility of developing and administering a region-wide transportation plan. A region-wide multi-use network would be integrated into local and sub-regional trails, paths, and sidewalk systems supplemental to and integrated with the street and transit networks, thereby providing a more seamless intermodal transportation solution for CARTS region.

Mr. Townsell pointed out that a multi-use network would provide a variety of benefits to the region beyond transportation. Some of those benefits include:

- quality of life and quality of place enhancements
- environmental benefits through the provision of transportation alternatives to sole dependence on automobiles
- economic development through employee lifestyle enhancements, which attract a variety of businesses and workforce
- public health and wellness benefits, which also have economic implications

Mr. Covington added that this may also free up TAP money to be spent on local pedestrian and bike transportation projects.

Discussion among the Council members was positive. Several people mentioned Greenville, South Carolina's Swamp Rabbit Trail and the lessons gained from that experience.

## **5. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Development – Public Outreach**

### **(a) Regional Advisory Council (RAC)**

The people appointed by jurisdictions to serve on the RAC represent the interests of their communities. RAC members have the potential to be a valuable tool as a voice of smaller communities. RAC members should regularly check in with their mayors to discuss plan development and matters of importance to their cities.

### **(b) Overall Approach**

Ms. Stewart presented staff ideas for public engagement on plan development. She emphasized that an array of engagement techniques will be used, because “one size does *not* fit all.”

Mayor Hartwick mentioned that his city hosts a quarterly get-together between elected and the Chamber of Commerce, called “Coffee with the Council.”

Ms. Hill said that most residents of Haskell make use of social media. Additionally, there is a small coffee shop where people routinely gather. Ms. Hill suggested that could be a place for a small outreach conversation.

### **(c) *What do you want this plan to do for your city?***

Ms. Markman said that this question is not really meant to be answered right away but will be focal point in plan development. Emphasis will be placed on implementation of the MTP. Its application will differ among jurisdictions.

## **6. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Small Cities Council is set for 9:00 AM, Wednesday, March 25, 2020. Agenda and any additional information will be sent out prior to the meeting.

As a reminder, the March meeting will likely be held in another location than Metroplan. Ms. Markman will let everyone know as soon as the information becomes available.

## **7. Adjourn**

The meeting concluded at 11:00 AM.