



Small Cities Council Meeting Summary

Wednesday, July 28, 2021 | 9:00 AM
Metroplan | Pulaski County Regional Building
Approved on September 29, 2021

Meeting PowerPoint slides are available at <https://metroplan.org/small-cities-council/>
Meeting recording may be viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/Metroplan/videos/780600239285445>

SCC Members Attending:

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| 1. Mayor Sammy Hartwick, President | City of Greenbrier |
| 2. Mayor Bernie Chamberlain | City of Austin |
| 3. Mayor Charles Gastineau | City of Ward |
| 4. Mayor Sam Higdon | City of Guy |
| 5. Mayor Randy Holland | City of Mayflower |
| 6. Mayor Terry Mizer | City of Wrightsville |
| 7. Mayor Trae Reed | City of Lonoke |

Metroplan Staff:

- | | |
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| 8. Mr. Casey Covington | CARTS Study Director |
| 9. Ms. Bernadette Rhodes | Community Planner |
| 10. Ms. La'Keshia Stewart | Planner/Public Outreach |
| 11. Mr. Tab Townsell | Executive Director |

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Mayor Hartwick called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. He welcomed the attendees and asked Ms. Rhodes to proceed with the agenda. Ms. Rhodes asked attendees to share announcements and any recent decisions about spending their American Rescue Plan funding.

2. Introductions and Announcements

All attendees reported their cities have received half of their American Rescue Plan allocation.

Lonoke: Mayor Reed shared that Lonoke had previously completed water, sewer, and broadband upgrades, and that the city did not have any lost revenue due to Covid. The city is still weighing options for spending the ARP funding.

Ward: Mayor Gastineau stated that its Parks and Recreation department lost approximately \$4,000 in revenue due to Covid. The City of Ward is planning to install radio read meetings with AMR (Automatic Meter Read) technology to allow drive-by water meter reading.

For those cities still considering options for spending their ARP funds, Ms. Rhodes shared funds could also be spent on residents or businesses that were adversely impacted by the pandemic, and on premium pay for workers who had to report to work in-person throughout the pandemic, such as first responders, healthcare workers, and city personnel. She reminded attendees to take advantage of the Arkansas Municipal League's guidance.

Austin: Mayor Chamberlain is using ARP funding on sewer upgrades, removing pump stations and performing smoke tests to determine where water is infiltrating the system.

Wrightsville: Mayor Mizer shared that the City is receiving \$270,000 worth of street overlays through the Street Aid program, including Gannaway Rd (which runs parallel to the railroad), Zip Ln, and others. He met with the project manager and is waiting for work to begin.

Northwest Arkansas Study Tour Report: Mayor Reed shared his takeaways from the study tour along the Razorback Greenway, led by Lane Shift and paid for by Metroplan for the benefit of the Central Arkansas Regional Greenways steering committee members. The tour included the Railyard pump track in Rogers and the bicycling culture that has developed in the NWA region over the last 2-3 decades. The Razorback Greenway accommodates all modes – bicycles, pedestrians, scooters, and others. Mayor Reed's major takeaways were:

- The importance of wayfinding, including the use of colors, signage, and textures.
- At street crossings, the street names were embedded in the concrete.
- The Razorback Greenway made creative connections through alleyways, behind buildings, adding new pavement and planters to made the space more welcoming.
- Importance of cultivating a bike culture through education and promotion to increase buy-in for the greenway.
- Greenways address the 4 pillars of health: physical, social, emotional, and spiritual.
- Don't forget about the element of fun.

Mr. Townsell added that the Executive Committee will be exploring the idea of funding individual counties/municipalities to go take local elected officials, commissioners, and stakeholders on their own study tours in NWA. Metroplan's unspent travel budget could be used to fund the tours. Tour cost is \$10,600 for 12 participants, plus the cost of meals and hotel.

3. Summary of Previous Meeting

The summary of the May 26, 2021 meeting was previously emailed to the Council. Ms. Rhodes asked for comments or corrections. There were none.

MOTION by Mayor Gastineau, **SECONDED** by Mayor Reed, to approve the summary of the May 26, 2021 meeting as presented.

PASSED

4. Community Spotlight – City of Ward

Mayor Gastineau shared several of Ward's recent projects and accomplishments. Presentation slides are included in this meeting's PowerPoint presentation, posted at <https://metroplan.org/small-cities-council/>.

Ward is the second largest and second fastest growing city in Lonoke County. Compared to the rest of the county, Ward has relatively high income and low average age. Its young demographic necessitates planning for future needs, such as technology, parks facilities, and recreation programs.

Ward's largest completed infrastructure project is its new 1.56 MGD wastewater treatment plant, which replaced a 300k GPD plant constructed in 1993, which had been operating over capacity and was subject to a consent order.

Ward's largest upcoming project is the new \$1.6M intersection with turn lanes and traffic lights at the intersection of Highways 367 and 319 and the railroad crossing. The projected construction start date is September 2021. The current intersection is considered the 8th worst intersection in the state.

Ward also has streets being overlaid through the Street Aid program and is in Phase 3 of its Safe Routes to School (SRTS)/Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) sidewalk project. Both projects are anticipated to begin in August 2021.

Sewer upgrades are underway via a grant from the Arkansas Economic Development Council (AEDC) to fix a problem during heavy rains when the vacuum goes out and sewage backs up into residents' homes. The City is installing a new grinder pump on a forced main, and has a goal to get another 44 homes off the vacuum system soon. That will leave 60 homes on the vacuum system. The vacuum system takes a lot of manpower to maintain. It was installed in the 1980s and works well for the mobile home park, but not for homes that are spread farther apart. The mayor is considering funding the entire second half of the project with American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds.

Ward continues to grow with new subdivisions, with over 300 new homes being built soon in approved subdivisions. The City's new Master Street Plan is preparing for potential growth in the east of the City. Ward's population is expected to get close to 6,000 in the 2020 Census.

5. Metroplan Update

STBG funding

- Ms. Rhodes gave an overview of the Surface Transportation Block Grant (see presentation for details).
- Metroplan staff is available to help plan STBG proposals and determine which tract projects fall under.
- Mr. Townsell emphasized that the designation of arterials and collectors must meet federal criteria for those roadway classifications. Metroplan will work with cities to ensure their proposed projects are on eligible roadways.

TAP funding

- Ms. Rhodes gave an overview of the Transportation Alternatives Program (see presentation for details).
- Metroplan issues a call for TAP proposals in the fall of odd-numbered years (next call: Fall 2021).
- Cities can combine funding from both ARDOT's and Metroplan's TAP funding to meet project funding goals.
- Mayor Gastineau commented that it would benefit small cities to be able to apply for extra funding to cover engineering costs so that the full \$100,000 maximum from TAP could be used for construction.
- Ms. Rhodes emphasized that ARDOT's TAP funding can NOT be used for engineering costs, but Metroplan's can for small cities.

Board trip

- Ms. Rhodes gave an overview of the plans for Metroplan's next board trip (see presentation for details).
- Mr. Townsell stated that a destination will be selected, if possible, that includes a nearby small city that can be used for benchmarking by SCC members. He encouraged attendees to provide suggestions.

Redistricting

- Ms. Rhodes asked cities requesting assistance with redistricting to provide Metroplan staff with their current ward map on file at City Hall.
- Redistricting is required for cities in which the new Census block data shows that any wards are 5% or more off the mean.
- Mr. Covington encouraged all SCC members to send ward maps to Metroplan so staff can check whether redistricting is required.
- Ward maps should be emailed to Hans Haustein and Bernadette Rhodes.

6. Model Code Update

- Ms. Rhodes gave an update on the model code development (see presentation for details) and encouraged members to attend the 10:00 AM model code review meeting

directly following the SCC meeting.

7. Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Rhodes outlined future meeting dates:

- July Model Code Adoption Meeting – Wednesday, July 28, 10:00 AM, Metroplan office
- August Model Code Adoption Meeting – Wednesday, August 25, 9:00 AM
- Small Cities Council – Wednesday, September 29th, 9:00 AM, with the Model Code Adoption Meeting immediately following at 10:00 AM.
- The model code adoption meetings are open to elected and appointed officials and key personnel/stakeholders.
- Model code meetings are also being held individually with cities' Planning Commissions and other stakeholders.

Mr. Covington informed attendees that meetings will be held via Zoom or in Jacksonville until further notice.

Mayor Holland announced that ARDOT would be attending Mayflower's City Council meeting on August 24th to discuss the new Hwy. 89 overpass. He invited the group to attend.

8. Adjourn

MOTION to adjourn by Mayor Holland was **SECONDED** by Mayor Gastineau.

Mayor Hartwick thanked members for their attendance. The Small Cities Council meeting was adjourned at 9:55 AM.