



Small Cities Council Meeting Summary

Wednesday, September 29, 2021 | 9:00 AM

Via Zoom

Approved January 26, 2022

Meeting PowerPoint slides are available at <https://metroplan.org/small-cities-council/>

Meeting recording may be viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/Metroplan/videos/229298552590255>

SCC Members Attending:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Mayor Sammy Hartwick, President | City of Greenbrier |
| 2. Mayor Mike Kemp, Vice President | City of Shannon Hills |
| 3. Mayor Bernie Chamberlain | City of Austin |
| 4. Mayor Charles Gastineau | City of Ward |
| 5. Ms. Jennifer Hill | City of Haskell |
| 6. Mayor Randy Holland | City of Mayflower |
| 7. Mayor Butch House | City of England |
| 8. Mayor Trae Reed | City of Lonoke |

Guests:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 9. Mr. Randall Green | Little Rock Air Force Base |
| 10. Mr. Randy McKenzie | City of Austin, Staff |
| 11. Ms. Deborah Staley | City of Ward, Staff |
| 12. Mr. Mike Stinnett | City of Austin, Planning Commission |

Metroplan Staff:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 13. Ms. Lynn Bell | Graphics Specialist |
| 14. Mr. Casey Covington | CARTS Study Director |
| 15. Ms. Bernadette Rhodes | Community Planner |
| 16. Ms. La'Keshia Stewart | Planner/Public Outreach |
| 17. 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.

2. Summary of Previous Meeting

The summary of the July 28, 2021 meeting was previously emailed to the Council. Ms. Rhodes

asked for comments or corrections. There were none.

MOTION by Jennifer Hill, **SECONDED** by Mayor Kemp, to approve the summary of the July 28, 2021 meeting as presented.

PASSED

3. Introductions and Announcements

Ms. Rhodes asked attendees to share announcements and any recent decisions about spending their American Rescue Plan funding.

Ward: Mayor Hartwick offered his best wishes to Mayor Gastineau for the Ward police officer who was injured while assisting with a car accident. Mayor Gastineau reported that the officer was recovering in a rehab center in Lonoke. He also shared that Ward had lost a Councilmember, Steve Rummel, to Covid, and that another Councilmember had recently resigned.

Lonoke: Mayor Reed asked whether any other cities were considering using American Rescue Plan funding for premium pay for workers, and what type of formula other cities are using to calculate premium pay. Lonoke is currently exploring options and seeking advice from the Arkansas Municipal League on guidelines for using ARPA funds for premium pay. Lonoke is a past ARC grant recipient and has already invested heavily in its water, sewer and broadband infrastructure.

Shannon Hills: Mayor Kemp indicated that Shannon Hills is not planning premium pay.

4. Census Briefing

Metroplan Senior Planner, Jonathan Lupton, provided a briefing on the 2020 Census results with a focus on small cities in central Arkansas.

As usual for this region, the small cities grew faster than the regional average, though the growth rate slowed to less than half its past growth rate in the past decade. Mr. Lupton highlighted 12 cities: Alexander, Austin, Greenbrier, Guy, Haskell, Lonoke, Mayflower, Shannon Hills, Vilonia, Ward, Wooster, and Wrightsville.

Many of these cities are along the outside edges of the region and share similar demographics. Three notable exceptions are Alexander, Shannon Hills, and Mayflower, which are each located between two larger cities within the region and also share similar demographics that are different from the outer-edge cities.

The average population size of these 12 cities is 3,400, with Ward being the largest and Guy the smallest. Most are gaining population, but not all. The cities with highest population gains were Ward, Austin, Shannon Hills, and Greenbrier. Haskell, Mayflower, and Wrightsville lost population since the 2010 Census. Mr. Lupton noted that some of the communities that lost population have significant institutional populations. He also noted that population change is

not equal to housing change. In some cities, housing is added but individuals per household could go down. That national average is 2.6 people per household. The central Arkansas average is 2.4, Small cities have above average household size at 2.7 people per household.

A large change in the past decade has occurred in the racial and ethnic demographics of small cities. They are still less diverse than the Little Rock MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area) as a whole, with small cities' Black populations coming in under the national average at 12.3%, while the Little Rock MSA's Black population exceeds the national average at 23.2%. The percentage of people identifying as 2 or more races grew rapidly across the MSA, including in small cities. There was a 27% growth in small cities' Black populations compared to the 2010 Census. Shannon Hills had the largest percentage growth in its Black population. Alexander and Wrightsville are majority minority communities, with Alexander having a high Latino population.

Population density, which plummeted between 1970 and 2000, has begun increasing again since the 2000 Census. Small cities' population density rose by 11.3% 2010-2020, much more than the region's overall increase of 5.8%. Mr. Lupton commented that the increase in population density may be a benefit to small cities because it decreases the cost of service delivery, such as roads, wastewater, and drainage. He referred to the metric of households per street-mile, which can be an indicator of a city's fiscal stability. Shannon Hills scored the highest in this metric with 70 households per street-mile.

Mr. Lupton referred attendees to Metroplan's Census fact sheets for each city, which are available on Metroplan's website at www.metroplan.org/census-data. The UALR State Data Center is another helpful resource. Mr. Lupton also welcomed questions via email to jlupton@metroplan.org.

The slides from this briefing are available within the meeting PowerPoint at https://metroplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SCC-Presentation_9-29-21.pdf

5. Metroplan Update

Redistricting Reminders

- Alexander, Guy, Lonoke, and Wrightsville received updated ward boundary maps from Metroplan
- Lonoke has the map on the November Council agenda for November. Mayor Reed expressed his gratitude
- Mayor Kemp reported that Shannon Hill's updated ward map was approved at the September Council meeting and was a smooth process. He said Metroplan was instrumental and encouraged other cities to use its services.
- Mayor Gastineau reported that Ward's map was adopted in September and it was a smooth process. He also expressed his gratitude.
- Ms. Rhodes encouraged cities to contact Metroplan if assistance is needed with redistricting. Metroplan's GIS staff is also working on school board zone maps for several districts which are required to divide the district into zones as a result of their

2020 Census numbers and increases in minority populations.

Northwest Arkansas Study Tours

- Mr. Townsell has been working with larger cities to put together entire 12-person tours by themselves and is now working with cities and counties to put together composite tours with combining several cities and counties, ideally from similar parts of the region.
- Tours will be scheduled for the spring of 2022.
- Metroplan will contribute \$5,000 towards each 12-person tour. The remaining per person cost (approx. \$600 per person, incl. hotel) will be the city's/other partners' responsibility.
- Cities are encouraged to contact Tab as soon as possible to reserve their spot.

Multi-Modal Infrastructure Guidelines

- Ms. Rhodes gave an overview of the Multi-Modal Infrastructure Guidelines document that has been developed with Metroplan funding.
- The goal of the guidelines is to take a new approach to street design that accommodates all types of users, creates regional consistency in street design and predictability in cost.
- Ms. Rhodes informed attendees that there would be a training on the guidelines after the October 27th, 2021 board meeting.
- The guidelines can act as a compendium to cities' Master Street Plans.
- Daniel Holland, Metroplan Transportation Planner, is the contact person for the Multi-Modal Guidelines: dholland@metroplan.org.

Model UDO (Unified Development Ordinance) Update

- Ms. Rhodes reported that the Metroplan staff is continuing its development of the Model UDO for small cities. A PDF of the most recent draft was emailed to SCC members prior to the meeting.
- Article 5 (Subdivision regulations) has been added to the document.
- Ms. Rhodes stated she would provide an overview of the Subdivision regulations at the Model UDO Review meeting following this meeting.

6. Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Rhodes outlined future meeting dates:

- September Model UDO Workshop – Wednesday, September 29, 10:00 AM, on same Zoom immediately following SCC meeting.
- October Model UDO Workshop – Wednesday, October 27, 9:00 AM before the full Metroplan Board Meeting.
- November Small Cities Council – Wednesday, November 17, 9:00 AM, with the Model UDO workshop immediately following at 10:00 AM. Date moved up one week due to Thanksgiving.

- The Model UDO Workshops are open to elected and appointed officials and key personnel/stakeholders.
- Model UDO Workshops are also being held individually with cities' Planning Commissions and other stakeholders.
- Ms. Rhodes offered to present to any city interested in the Model UDO.

7. Shareworthy

Ms. Rhodes shared links to an article and a video about “Safe System” infrastructure, which means infrastructure built to reduce the possibility and/or severity of traffic accidents due to human behavior. The topic has garnered heightened attention in the past year due to increased pedestrian and bike fatalities and motorist speeding problems since the beginning of the pandemic.

'Safe System' infrastructure approach could cut traffic deaths

www.smartcitiesdive.com/news/safe-system-infrastructure-approach-could-cut-traffic-deaths-experts-say/600235/

Systematic Safety: The Principles Behind Vision Zero

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aNtsWvNYKE>

Vision Zero will also be the subject of a new grant program in the 2021 federal infrastructure bill.

8. Adjourn

MOTION to adjourn by Jennifer Hill was **SECONDED** by Mayor Kemp.
The Small Cities Council meeting was adjourned at 9:35 AM.