



Small Cities Council Meeting Summary

Wednesday, September 28, 2022 | 9:00 AM
Jacksonville Community Center
Approved November 16, 2022

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

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. Ms. Jennifer Hill | City of Haskell |
| 5. Mayor Allan Loring | City of Wrightsville |
| 6. Mayor Trae Reed | City of Lonoke |
| 7. Ms. Nicci Rummel | City of Ward City Clerk |
| 8. Mayor Stephanie White | City of Keo |

Metroplan Staff

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| 9. Mr. Casey Covington | Deputy Director/CARTS Study Director |
| 10. Mr. Daniel Holland | Transportation Planner/Program Manager |
| 11. Ms. Bernadette Rhodes | Community Planner |
| 12. Ms. Cindy Segebarth | CFO/Administrator/HR Representative |
| 13. Mr. Allen Skaggs | Planning Technician |
| 14. Mr. Tab Townsell | Executive Director |

I. Call to Order & Welcome

Mayor Hartwick called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. He welcomed participants, and acknowledged Metroplan's newest board member, Mayor Stephanie White of the City of Keo. He asked Mayor White to introduce herself. Mayor White expressed appreciation for Keo's inclusion in Metroplan and the resources available to members. She shared that Keo has a population of 207 with a dwindling population. Her aim is to take initiatives that will keep Keo viable and sustainable in the future.

Mayor Hartwick asked all the remaining participants to introduce themselves.

2. Introductions & Announcements

All participants introduced themselves, then Mayor Hartwick asked for any announcements.

Mayor Gastineau announced the ribbon cutting for Ward's first-ever traffic signal on Friday at 9:00 AM.

Mayor Loring shared that he had received a text asking about the Wrightsville's short-term rental (STR) policy from an individual outside the country. The individual stated they were interested in buying property in the city for the purpose of turning it into short-term rentals. Many other cities stated they had received the same inquiry. No other cities present had yet responded to the inquiry. Ms. Hill indicated that Haskell did not have a STR policy. Mayor Hartwick stated the City of Little Rock is currently considering an STR ordinance but has not acted on it so far. Mayor Gastineau said there are two STRs in Ward and that there is language regulating STRs in the UDO. Without a policy in place, the City of Ward currently receives no revenue from the rentals, nor can it inspect the properties. Mayor Loring mentioned Fayetteville's STR policy being fairly restrictive. Mayor Gastineau said the UDO's regulations are restrictive, as well, and need to be. He stated that Hot Springs Village has also adopted a STR policy.

Mayor White asked for guidance on regulating cell towers and negotiating with providers for installation on city property, possibly the city water tower. Mayor Gastineau advised caution and to consider aesthetics. Tab advised having the city attorney closely review the contract and ensure the city will be protected if the tower is installed on city property and that the city will receive revenue from any future collocations.

3. Summary of Previous Meeting

Ms. Hill made a motion to approve the summary of the July 27, 2022 meeting. Mayor Loring seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Metroplan Updates

Conflict of Interest Statement: Mr. Townsell shared that since the Metroplan Board recently passed new conflict of interest provisions in its bylaws and handbook, all Board members must now fill out a Conflict of Interest statement. Any potential conflict should be stated, and it will be determined whether an actual conflict of interest exists. If so, the conflict can be mitigated by methods such as recusal from voting on certain agenda items.

SS4A Grant: Mr. Covington gave an overview of the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant, a federal program under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) that provides funding for comprehensive regional or local safety action plans and safety-improving construction. With the Metroplan Board's support, Metroplan's application for a regional safety action plan was submitted earlier in September. Award notifications are expected in late 2022 or early 2023. Once a safety plan is completed, local jurisdictions will be able to apply for SS4A construction funding.

TIP: Mr. Covington also gave an update on the draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which had been emailed to Board members the day before. The TIP outlines any federal- or state-funded transportation projects that are slated to begin construction in the next 4 years. The new TIP needs to be released for a 30-day public comment period. Central Arkansas' Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) needs to be amended to reflect the updated TIP. Metroplan's Executive Committee will be voting on releasing the documents for public comment, and their adoption will be on the November Board agenda. Mr. Covington encouraged cities to contact him with questions on projects in their area.

STBG Call for Projects: Mr. Covington stated that Metroplan receives \$15 million annually for Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) projects in Central Arkansas. Projects for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2023 were awarded in June. That round of funding did not include many requests for project engineering, so Metroplan still has approximately \$2.5 million available to fund the design of additional projects that would then be eligible for construction funding in FFY 2024. Mr. Covington shared the Call for Projects document with the Council and will be asking the Executive Committee to approve it for release. Once approved, the call for projects is anticipated to be released on October 10 with a November 4 due date. Applications will be evaluated in November and December and awards announced in December. Eligible projects must be on the federally classified system, not residential streets. Metroplan can provide a map of eligible roadways. The recommended maximum award is \$400,000 federal funds, with a required 20% local cash match. Recently each jurisdiction has been limited to one application per round. If any funds remain after awards are made, they could be used to complete the JP Wright Loop project or other projects in the pipeline that need additional funding. Mr. Covington encouraged members to call him with questions.

Regional Greenways: Mr. Holland provided an update on the planned routes. Alternatives are being considered for sections in Sherwood, White Oak Bayou, Lonoke County, and others. Mr. Holland stated that 10% design plans are in progress for the Lonoke County segment. Mayor Chamberlain indicated that Austin's City Council was on board with the proposed route changes. Segment prioritization is the project team's main focus now. The team has packaged the routes into approximately 5-mile segments with logical termini to help jurisdictions prioritize segments for funding. The team is also considering branding, naming, and wayfinding ideas and will meet with the steering committee on October 25 to solicit ideas and feedback. Mayor Gastineau asked when the 10% plans for Lonoke County would be completed. Mr. Holland will follow up with the consultant and share the plans as soon as possible.

Best Practices Newsletter: Mr. Covington shared the latest copy of the Best Practices newsletter, which is focused on the UDO. Ms. Rhodes encouraged members to share it with other city stakeholders. She offered to meet with cities working toward UDO adoption to review questions and changes. Mayor Gastineau shared that Ward's Planning Commission has been asked to read the UDO and provide input at its next meeting, with the goal of adopting it in early 2023. Ms. Rhodes offered to touch base with cities after each of their UDO review workshops to discuss questions/comments or develop an FAQ.

5. Discussion of SCC's Direction & Topics Moving Forward

Ms. Rhodes stated that the UDO's development has been a large focus of the SCC for the past two years. Now that the UDO has been adopted by the Metroplan Board, Ms. Rhodes solicited feedback from SCC members on what structure and topics they wish to focus on going forward.

Mayor Gastineau stated a need for help staying on top of grant opportunities for small cities. He suggested a monthly overview of available grants and application processes. Mayor Loring emphasized that cash match requirements are prohibitive to cities with small budgets. He said small cities need help making themselves competitive for grants and suggested smaller match requirements. Mayor Reed added that it is also difficult for small cities to budget the entire project cost upfront and then request reimbursement. He suggested exploring options for helping cities manage this cash flow issue – perhaps a shared revolving fund. Mr. Covington shared that the 20% cash match is a federal requirement for Metroplan grants. Metroplan has an infrastructure account

and leadership could discuss using it to assist cities with project cash flow. He noted that cities can request reimbursement as individual invoices come in so the entire project's budget does not have to be paid upfront.

Ms. Rhodes asked if it would be helpful to review individual portions of the UDO more in-depth at each SCC meeting. Ms. Hill said it would be beneficial to prepare stakeholders for implementation. Ms. Rhodes addressed timing constraints with the meeting starting at 9:00 AM and transitioning directly into the Executive Committee meeting. Mayor Gastineau stated he was OK with the timing and expressed willingness to attend a special meeting when needed. Mr. Covington brought up the option of offering SCC meetings every month to cover additional topics. Another option is to hold SCC meetings before full board meetings. Ms. Rhodes suggested that SCC meetings before full board meetings begin at 8:30 AM. Ms. Hill suggested monthly SCC meetings. Mayor Gastineau agreed monthly meetings would be beneficial, especially as cities work towards UDO adoption. Mayor Hartwick asked if monthly meetings would begin immediately or in 2023, and the consensus was to begin them immediately.

Mayor Reed asked who was considering adopting the UDO. Mayors Gastineau and Chamberlain stated that Ward and Austin were in the process of reviewing it, and Ms. Hill recently shared the UDO with Haskell's Planning Commission for the first time. Mayor Reed shared that Lonoke already has a UDO and is willing to share the city's experience with it. He emphasized a challenge with requiring solar energy development permit applicants to apply in person, because many of the contactors are from out-of-state. These types of challenges can be shared so that the Small Cities Council could come up with best practices for more regional consistency and mutual support.

6. Shareworthy: How 3 cities are using public art for neighborhood revitalization

Ms. Rhodes shared a link to an article from Smart Cities Dive on implementing public art in cities, since many benchmarking trip attendees were interested in the public art in Fort Collins. Ms. Rhodes showed part of a video about public art in Fort Collins, but due to time restraints Ms. Rhodes opted to share the link to the video instead: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfFb-bFmH9M>.

7. Preview of Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Covington stated the next Metroplan Board meeting was scheduled for October 26, but due to its proximity to Election Day, it may be cancelled. The November meeting has been moved up by one week due to Thanksgiving, to Wednesday, November 16 and will be a full Board meeting. The December Board meeting will take place on December 14.

8. Adjourn

Ms. Hill made a motion to adjourn. Mayor Reed seconded. Mayor Hartwick adjourned the Small Cities Council meeting at 9:55 AM.