

Metroplan Board of Directors Meeting

January 24, 2024

AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of December 20, 2023
2. Approval of Financial Statements for December 2023
3. Metroplan Report & Metroplan Schedule
4. Agency Reports
5. Energy and Environment Innovation Plan

TRANSPORTATION AGENDA

6. Long-Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan
7. Safe Streets and Roads for All
8. Metroplan Board Announcements
9. Citizen Communications
10. Adjourn

Following the Board meeting a workshop will be held to review applications for 2024 Transportation Alternatives Program and CARTS Infrastructure Exchange.



ITEM 1. MINUTES OF DECEMBER 20, 2023

The minutes of the December 20, 2023 Metroplan Board meeting are attached for review and adoption.

ACTION NEEDED: Motion to adopt minutes from December 20, 2023.

Metroplan Board of Directors Meeting

December 20, 2023

Attending:

Mayor Bernadette Chamberlain, City of Austin
Mayor Rhonda Sanders, City of Bryant
Mayor Ken Kincade, City of Cabot
Mayor Jeff Elmore, City of Jacksonville
Mayor Caleb Norris, City of Maumelle
Mayor Mike Kemp, City of Shannon Hills
Mayor Mary Jo Heye-Townsell, City of Sherwood
Mayor Charles Gastineau, City of Ward
Mayor Derrick Rainey, City of Wrightsville
Judge Allan Dodson, Faulkner County
Judge Matt Brumley, Saline County
Mr. Bryan Day, Little Rock Port Authority
Mr. David Siskowski, Arkansas Department of Transportation
Mr. Keith Keck, Hot Springs Village
Mr. Justin Avery, Rock Region METRO
*Ms. Suzanne Peyton, Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport
*Mr. Jon Honeywell, City of Little Rock
*David Cook, City of North Little Rock
*Mr. Brady Zweifel, City of Vilonia
*Ms. Robbie Alberson, City of Conway

*Indicates Proxy

Metroplan

Casey Covington
Tammy Gillis
Sydney Dozier
Allen Skaggs
Lynn Bell
Bernadette Rhodes
Daniel Holland

Hans Haustein
Jonathan Lupton
Jeff Runder

Guest

Mike Watson, Halff
Sunny Farmahan, ARDOT
Chris Nelson, City of Austin
Matthew Breckenridge, Pulaski County
Tab Townsell, Pulaski County
Mark Asher, Jacobs
Grant Cox, Little Rock Public Works
Gene Higginbotham, Congressman Crawford's Office
Jimmy Harris, Senator's Boozman Office
Manesh Krishman, City of Little Rock Public Works
Susan Dumas, Crews & Associates
Jim Templeton, Crews & Associates
Taylor Clark, MCE
Jeremy Watts, MCE

I. Approval of the Minutes of November 15, 2023

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mayor Norris, seconded by Mayor Chamberlain, and passed by the Board.

II. Financial Statement for November 2023

Mr. Covington gave a brief summary of the financial statement. He stated that the balance sheet of the financial statement was sent to the Board prior to the meeting. Since then, there was a minor change in the "cash in" due to the receipt of \$440,000 from state funding toward the Energy and Innovation Plan.

A motion to approve the financial statement was made by Mayor Norris, seconded by Mayor Chamberlain, and passed by the Board.

III. Metroplan Report

Mr. Covington gave a brief overview of Metroplan 2023 in review.

Mr. Covington stated that the first part of the year focused on partnerships. Metroplan worked closely with Central Arkansas Planning and Development District (CAPDD) grants team, which became beneficial to all of our member entities. Also, staff has been collaborating with the Arkansas Municipal League, attending commission meetings at ARDOT to develop partnerships with regional stakeholders.

Mr. Covington added that in January Metroplan received its Safe Streets for All Grants for the development of a regional safety action plan.

In mid-summer – Metroplan agreed to participate with the state on the development of the Energy and Environment Innovation Plan. The City of Fort Smith and Northwest Arkansas MPO is also partners on the grant.

Metroplan completed its Benchmarking Trip to Leigh Valley in October.

In addition, staff began using a new payroll system in November and a new financial system will begin January 1st.

Mr. Covington further stated that the Highway 89 overpass project was completed as a partnership between Metroplan, ARDOT, City of Mayflower and Faulkner County.

Mr. Covington stated that as we move into 2024, staff will be looking at partnerships to implement grant opportunities. To begin this process, he would be meeting with each of the members to develop a coalition to examine regional grant opportunities.

Mr. Covington added that the FHWA review process will be conducted, which occurs every four years to ensure that Metroplan is meeting all of the requirements according to federal guidelines.

In terms of documents to be developed, staff will be working on documents to support the Transportation Infrastructure Plan. Some of the documents that will be a part of the plan are the Congestion Management Plan (CMP), the Bridge Report, and the partnership with ARDOT. Staff will work on several plans and end the year working on the Strategic Plan.

IV. Agency Reports

A. Arkansas Department of Transportation

Mr. David Siskowski stated that there was no report for ARDOT.

B. Rock Region METRO

Mr. Avery stated Rock Region METRO has a couple of projects that are coming up in 2024. The Zero Emissions Initiative will examine what it will take to convert the bus fleet's gas-powered vehicles to alternative fuel sources. The plan will span 20 – 40 years. Also, Rock Region is looking at installation of solar power panels on the administration building. A grant application is out to do a planning study for Phase I

of this project. Furthermore, Rock Region will be doing some planning work on the Micro-transit project for Sherwood and Jacksonville.

C. Little Rock Port Authority

Mr. Day stated to the Board that the Port announced a new prospect, Elopak a Norwegian Company that makes naturally sustainable containers for food products that are an alternative to plastic containers.

Mr. Day added that the Port continues to pursue prospects to bring in new markets to the region.

Mr. Day further noted that in cooperation with Mayor Rainey, the Port has been working on the development of certification of the Woodson Levy. It was brought to the attention of the Port that it could lose its certification if the levy does not gain certification. Therefore, the Port will work to make this happen.

D. Bill & Hillary Clinton National Airport

Ms. Peyton stated to the Board that the Airport has completed its new 50-year lease agreement with Falcon Jet. This agreement will potentially ensure 800 new jobs for the region.

Last week there was a 7460 form notice of construction that was filed with the FAA. There was a notice of potential hazard that was proposed. A meeting was held with the City of Little Rock on this issue to discuss concerns and appropriate actions.

Ms. Peyton also noted that the Airport is working on sustainability initiatives and addressing parking development.

E. Federal Highway Administration

There was no report given by FHWA.

F. Federal Congressional Offices

Mr. Higginbotham stated that the Government has held extended talks and will resume on January 9th. This year calendars for the House and the Senate will be similar and therefore meetings will coincide.

G. Central Arkansas Planning and Development District

There was no report by CAPDD.

H. Arkansas Department of Economic Development

There was no report by ADED.

V. 2024 Metroplan Office Lease

Mr. Covington stated to the Board that Metroplan had signed a 1-year extension of the lease with Pulaski County for office space.

A motion to approve the extension of the lease was made by Mayor Norris, seconded by Mayor Rainey, and passed by the Board.

VI. Energy and Environment Innovation Plan

Mr. Covington stated to the Board that Ms. Rhodes and staff from the City of Little Rock developed the Energy and Environment Innovation Plan for Metroplan.

Mr. Covington noted that the plan will be looking for opportunities for implementation in early January. There will be a couple of meetings held with the coalitions that are looking at grant opportunities.

Mr. Covington stated that staff will make a recommendation to the Board in January on full grant opportunities.

The plan was included in the packet for review.

VII. Long-Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Mr. Holland gave a brief presentation to the Board on the Long-Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Mr. Holland stated that a draft document was developed of the plan, which is expected to be adopted in the first part of 2024.

Mr. Holland added that comments from Rock Region METRO and ARDOT were received in early December. Staff asked that the Board approve release of the document for public comment. Any edits from comments will be made in late January and adopted in February.

A motion to approve the release of the plan for 30-day public comment was made by Mayor Gastineau, seconded by Mayor Kincade, and passed by the Board.

VIII. Safe Streets and Roads for All

Mr. Haustein gave an update to the Board on Safe Streets and Roads for All.

Mr. Haustein stated to the Board that the plan document is out for public comment until mid-January. There are a couple of meetings scheduled for the second week in January to discuss the first round of public involvement. The next step will be to examine the network and to review the items that take top priority and will be competitive in the next round of implementation grants.

The last part of the process will be to develop a plan for implementation of zero crash reduction and to determine how to get there.

IX. Call for Projects 2024 Transportation Alternatives and CARTS Infrastructure Exchange

Mr. Holland stated to the Board that applications have been prepared for Transportation Alternatives and the CARTS Infrastructure Exchange. With this round, jurisdictions can apply for one or the other, but not for both grant processes as they are both oriented toward transportation alternatives. The application deadline is February 9th. Applications will be reviewed in February by a committee that will be selected. In the Call for Projects there will be five grants awarded for \$320,000 each and require an \$80,000 match in local funds and be able to obligate in 2024.

There will be ten grants awarded for the CARTS Infrastructure Exchange at \$120,000 each with a match of \$30,000 in local funds and be fully obligated in 2024.

The application is anticipated to be released January 15th or 24th.

A motion to approve Resolution 23-19 to approve the Call for Projects was made by Mayor Kemp, seconded by Mayor Gastineau, and passed by the Board.

A motion to release the Call for Projects was made by Mayor Farmer, seconded by Mayor Heye-Townsell, and passed by the Board.

X. Performance Measures Adoption

Mr. Haustein gave a brief update on the Safety Performance Measures.

Mr. Haustein stated to the Board that support of Safety Performance Measures are due by February 28th. Therefore, staff asked that the Board approve support of the Safety Performance Measures.

Mr. Covington noted that the Board must support either the State's Performance Measures or those that have been developed by the MPO. These measures were included in the Board packet for review. A short discussion ensued regarding the targets, their connection to the Safety Action Pla, and relationship to current rates.

A motion to approve support of the Safety Performance Measures was made by Mayor Kincade, seconded by Mayor Gastineau, and passed by the Board.

A motion to adopt Resolution 23-21 was made by Mayor Elmore, seconded by Mayor Kincade, and passed by the Board.

XI. *Best Practices* Newsletter

Mr. Lupton gave a brief presentation on the Best Practices Newsletter.

Mr. Lupton stated to the Board that the newsletter has been published for the last four years on various transportation topics. This year the focus was on intersections.

Mr. Lupton gave information on the importance of intersections as a safety measure in the road system.

A copy of the newsletter was provided at the meeting and sent out in a bulk mailing.

XII. Other Business

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

ITEM 2. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS DECEMBER 2023

The December Financial Statement is being prepared at the time of the initial Board packet distribution. An updated packet will be provided before the Board meeting.

ITEM 3. METROPLAN REPORT

SUMMARY

Casey Covington will provide a report on Metroplan activities for January and February. Metroplan will also review the Metroplan 2024 Calander (attached).

ACTION NEEDED: Information only.

2024 METROPLAN BOARD MEETINGS/EVENTS

January 24 Metroplan Board meeting 10:00 am (Small Cities at 9:00 am)

March 13 Metroplan Board meeting 10:00 am (Small Cities at 9:00 am)

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan adoption
- CRPG application
- TAP and CIE project awards

*April 13 to April 16—National American Planning Association
Conference – Minneapolis*

April 24 Metroplan Board meeting 10:00 am (Small Cities at 9:00 am)

May **Metroplan Audit**

*May 21 to May 23— Arkansas Transportation Research Conference –
Hot Springs*

May 22 Metroplan Board meeting 10:00 am (Small Cities at 9:00 am)

- Call for projects – 2025 STBG
- SS4A Regional Safety Action Plan adoption

July 10 Metroplan Board meeting 10:00 am (Small Cities at 9:00 am)

August 28 Metroplan Board meeting 10:00 am (Small Cities at 9:00 am)

- STBG projects selected

**No
September
Meetings**

*September 23 to September 27— Association of Metropolitan Planning
Organizations – Salt Lake City*

October 9 Metroplan Board meeting 10:00 am (Small Cities at 9:00 am)

November 20 Metroplan Board meeting 10:00 am (Small Cities at 9:00 am)

December 18 Metroplan Board Meeting 10:00 am (Small Cities at 9:00 am)

ITEM 4. AGENCY REPORTS

A. Metroplan Executive Director's Report

B. Arkansas Department of Transportation

C. Rock Region METRO

D. Little Rock Port Authority

E. Bill & Hillary Clinton National Airport

F. Federal Highway Administration

I. Arkansas Department of Economic Development

H. Central Arkansas Planning and Development District

ITEM 5. ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT INNOVATION PLAN

SUMMARY

The Arkansas Energy and Environment Innovation Plan (EEI) is a statewide carbon reduction planning effort funded by the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) and led by the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment, Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Metroplan, along with NWARPC and the City of Fort Smith, was selected as a subrecipient of the planning grant to contribute regional plans to the statewide EEI plan, which is due to EPA by March 1, 2024. After much analysis, public outreach, and stakeholder engagement, Metroplan outlined regional greenhouse gas reduction priorities in its Central Arkansas EEI Priority Action Plan (PAP) Supplement and submitted it to DEQ on December 1, 2023. Link to Central Arkansas EEI PAP: www.tinyurl.com/CentralArkEEI

The state's EEI plan will position eligible entities in Arkansas to apply for grants, including \$4.3 billion in federal CPRG Implementation Grants (100% federal money, no local match requirement), which is due April 1, 2024. The EPA is requesting Notices of Intent (NOI) to Apply by February 1, 2024.

As a Metropolitan Planning Organization, Metroplan is eligible to apply on behalf of the region. Staff have drafted an NOI outlining an anticipated scope of projects and will work with member jurisdictions over the next month to identify a list of projects representative of the entire region. Each proposed project will require in-depth greenhouse gas reduction estimates and technical/cost benefit analysis to be competitive for funding. Staff will rely on partners to contribute to the analysis.

ACTION NEEDED: Motion to approve submission of the Notice of Intent to Apply to EPA by February 1, 2024.



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LEAD APPLICANT:	Metroplan, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway MSA
TITLE:	Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program (CPRG): Implementation Grants General Competition
SUBJECT:	Informal Notice of Intent (NOI) to Apply
DEADLINE:	February 1, 2024

Metroplan intends to apply for a CPRG Implementation Grant by the April 1, 2024 deadline. This informal, non-binding NOI to Apply will allow EPA to anticipate the resources required for efficient evaluation of submitted applications.

ANTICIPATED FUNDING REQUEST: \$150 million

SCOPE AND SECTOR(S):

Transportation Sector: Increase share of the population using active, low-, and no-emissions modes of transportation and decrease transportation-related GHG emissions by:

- Constructing sections of the Central Arkansas Regional Greenway system and connecting paths that improve residents' access to transit, jobs, school, and services via a bike-ped network.
- Adding complete street elements (road diets, street trees, transit stops/shelters, bike-ped facilities) to transportation infrastructure.
- Incentivizing fleet electrification for public organizations.
- Installing EV charging infrastructure according to a regional EV charging infrastructure placement strategy.
- Providing pass-through funding for conversion of streetlights to LED, with a minimum of 80% of pass-through funding to be spent in LIDAC Census tracts.
- Developing and implementing low/no emission ridesharing and e-bike programs.

Buildings Sector: Reduce GHG emissions from buildings serving a public or non-profit purpose by:

- Incentivizing energy efficiency upgrades.
- Funding a well field for a geothermal HVAC facility at the Little Rock National Airport.
- Incentivizing solar panel installation on public/non-profit property, including the Port of Little Rock.



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Carbon Removal Measures: Protect and increase the carbon sequestration potential of open space and riparian areas by:

- Targeting right-of-way acquisition and Central Arkansas Regional Greenway investments on sections along open space and riparian areas, especially those in LIDAC Census tracts and/or land likely to be developed unless protected.
- Adding carbon-sequestering vegetation to protected open space and riparian areas along greenways.

ANTICIPATED COALITION MEMBERS (ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS):

Lead Applicant: Metroplan

Eligible Entities/Coalition Members:

- Metroplan member cities and counties (see overview on p. 3)
- Rock Region METRO, regional transit authority
- Little Rock National Airport
- Port of Little Rock
- Central Arkansas Water

Note: Metroplan has partnered closely with the State of Arkansas, the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, and the City of Fort Smith on the development of Arkansas' CPRG Priority Action Plan. Metroplan will continue to coordinate with these eligible entities and will consider a joint application if there is significant alignment with other regions' implementation priorities.



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METROPLAN OVERVIEW

Metroplan is an association of local governments that has operated by inter-local agreement since 1955. Originally formed as the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission of Pulaski County, Metroplan now has members in Pulaski, Faulkner, Saline, Lonoke, and Grant Counties. Metroplan is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) under Title 23 of the United States Code.

Metroplan serves as the regional voice on issues affecting Central Arkansas, develops transportation plans required by federal law, convenes stakeholders to deal with common environmental issues, and provides information and staff resources to our member local governments, the business community, and the public.

Member Jurisdictions:

- Pulaski County
- Faulkner County
- Saline County
- Lonoke County
- Grant County
- City of Alexander
- City of Austin
- City of Bauxite
- City of Benton
- City of Bryant
- City of Cabot
- City of Cammack Village
- City of Conway
- City of England
- City of Greenbrier
- City of Guy
- City of Haskell
- Hot Springs Village
- City of Jacksonville
- City of Keo
- City of Little Rock
- City of Lonoke
- City of Maumelle
- City of Mayflower
- City of Mount Vernon
- City of North Little Rock
- City of Shannon Hills
- City of Sheridan
- City of Sherwood
- City of Traskwood
- City of Vilonia
- City of Ward
- City of Wooster
- City of Wrightsville
- Arkansas Department of Transportation
- Rock Region METRO
- Little Rock Port Authority
- Little Rock National Airport

TRANSPORTATION AGENDA

ITEM 6. Long-Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan

SUMMARY

Metroplan staff will continue its review of the Metroplan Transportation Plan, focusing the January review on Chapter 4 – The Financially Constrained Plan.

1. Introduction
2. Central Arkansas Snapshot
3. Transforming Mobility – Core Policies
4. Long-Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The plan can be viewed at <https://metroplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/MTP-DRAFT.pdf>

ACTION NEEDED: None (Board Vote to Approve will be Scheduled for March 20).

ITEM 7. SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL GRANT UPDATE

SUMMARY

Since the last project update, outreach meetings were held in Southwest Little Rock and Sherwood. The public comment period will end on January 22nd, the comments given by the public will be considered in the scoring criteria for project selection. The consultant, (Kimley-Horn) has developed the High Injury Network (HIN) and is working with the Safety Action Plan Advisory Committee (SAPAC) to develop the scoring metrics to rank the roadway segments. The website and survey for the project has been active during the public engagement process and has received a good response on the interactive map. The Metroplan board and SAPAC have been given the opportunity to provide input into how to set targets for the reduction of fatal and serious injury crashes for the region and the next step is to set the target language for the plan. Bi-Weekly meetings are scheduled with Metroplan staff to discuss the project's progress. The Notice of Funding Opportunity for the next round of grants is set to be released in February 2024. Metroplan staff and the consulting team will be available to answer any questions about the project.

ACTION NEEDED: Information Only.

[2023 SS4A NOFO](#)