

metroplan ANNUAL REPORT

Colorado

PROJECTS

METRO CONNECT
TRANSPORTATION

Central Arkansas
Regional Greenways Plan

Progress

2022



METROPLAN

SMART PLANNING MAKES SMART PLACES.



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All photos are by Metroplan staff except where noted.

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This notice is available from the ADA/504/Title VI Coordinator in large print, audiotape or braille.



Letter from Leadership

Dear Reader,

I have been honored to serve as President of the Metroplan Board over the 2021-2022 term. I led Metroplan during a time of continued excellence and sustained progress. Let me highlight a few accomplishments during the year 2022.

In September our Board took a fact-finding trip to Fort Collins, Colorado. As always, it was a time for absorbing new ideas and networking among the many mayors and judges who serve on the Metroplan Board. Board members viewed the renewal of its downtown, how a regional active transportation system contributes to its economy and mobility, and the regional collaboration among its many jurisdictions.

During 2022, Metroplan officially adopted its Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), a set of voluntary guideline codes for assisting our member cities with local planning. Several cities are adopting parts of the UDO already. The Arkansas Planning Association recognized this work for its unique contribution to planning.

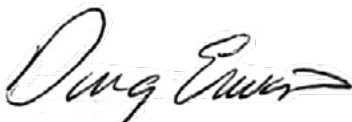
Another milestone during 2022 was Metroplan's progress in developing the Regional Greenways Plan. By the end of 2022, working with the Crafton Tull consulting firm, Metroplan was nearing completion of this plan to build 222 miles of trail across our region.

We are also thrilled to celebrate the City of Conway's successful \$25 Million RAISE Grant for the Connect Conway Project, that will add 15 miles of active transportation within the city.

Busily keeping track of grant opportunities, Metroplan staff made an application for a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant, which was awarded to Metroplan in early 2023. This \$700,000 grant will be used for the development of a Regional Safety Action Plan that will contribute to a safer transportation network to benefit pedestrians, bikers and drivers alike. We look forward to applying for implementation grants in 2024 for projects to reduce serious injury and fatal crashes.



Judge Doug Erwin
Lonoke County
Metroplan President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Erwin". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Judge Doug Erwin, Lonoke County
Metroplan President

Central Arkansas Regional Greenways Plan

The Regional Greenways Plan is a trail-map for Metroplan's investment in safer, more accessible multimodal mobility in Central Arkansas. After the Board's year 2020 decision to commit half of its Surface Transportation Block Grant funding over the next decade to multiuse trails, Metroplan selected Crafton Tull to manage the study and guide investment. With the consultant's help, Metroplan mapped five routes through its major cities and several small jurisdictions to develop active region-wide corridors.

The region's leaders collaborated extensively to chart the routes through Faulkner, Lonoke, Pulaski, and Saline Counties. After reaffirming the routes in public meetings, the Board adopted them in December 2022.



In April, 2022 stakeholders attended an event that focused on design principles for the trail, which includes context sensitive pathways, roadway crossings, materials, signage and other amenities.

This workshop was a combination of in-person presentations and an afternoon walk audit to explore some of these concepts in practice.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Central Arkansas Regional Greenway Network Will Be...



TRANSPORTATION FOCUSED

A viable transportation option.



PHYSICALLY SEPARATED

Separated from traffic.



INCLUSIVE

All ages and abilities can use it.



CONSISTENT

Easily recognized systemwide.



SAFE

Accommodates user visibility and access to emergency service.



CONTEXT SENSITIVE

Adjusted to challenges of the landscape.



HIGH QUALITY

Designed to the highest standards.

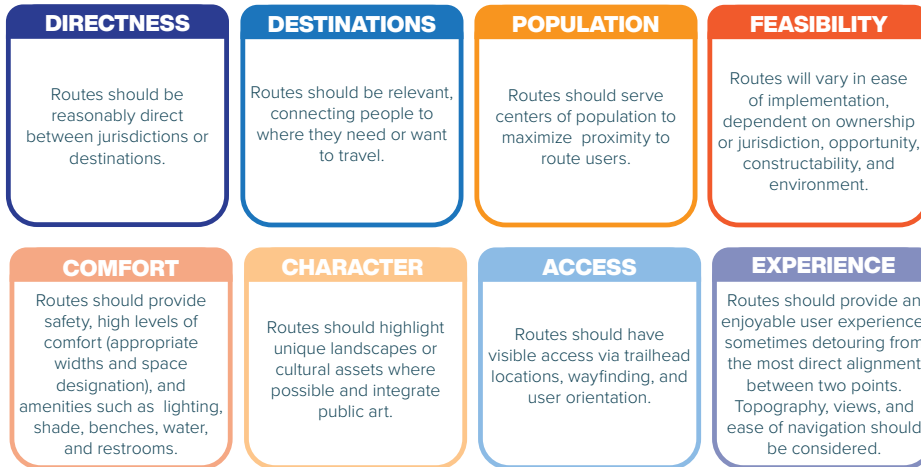


WELL-CONNECTED

Population centers and major destinations linked.



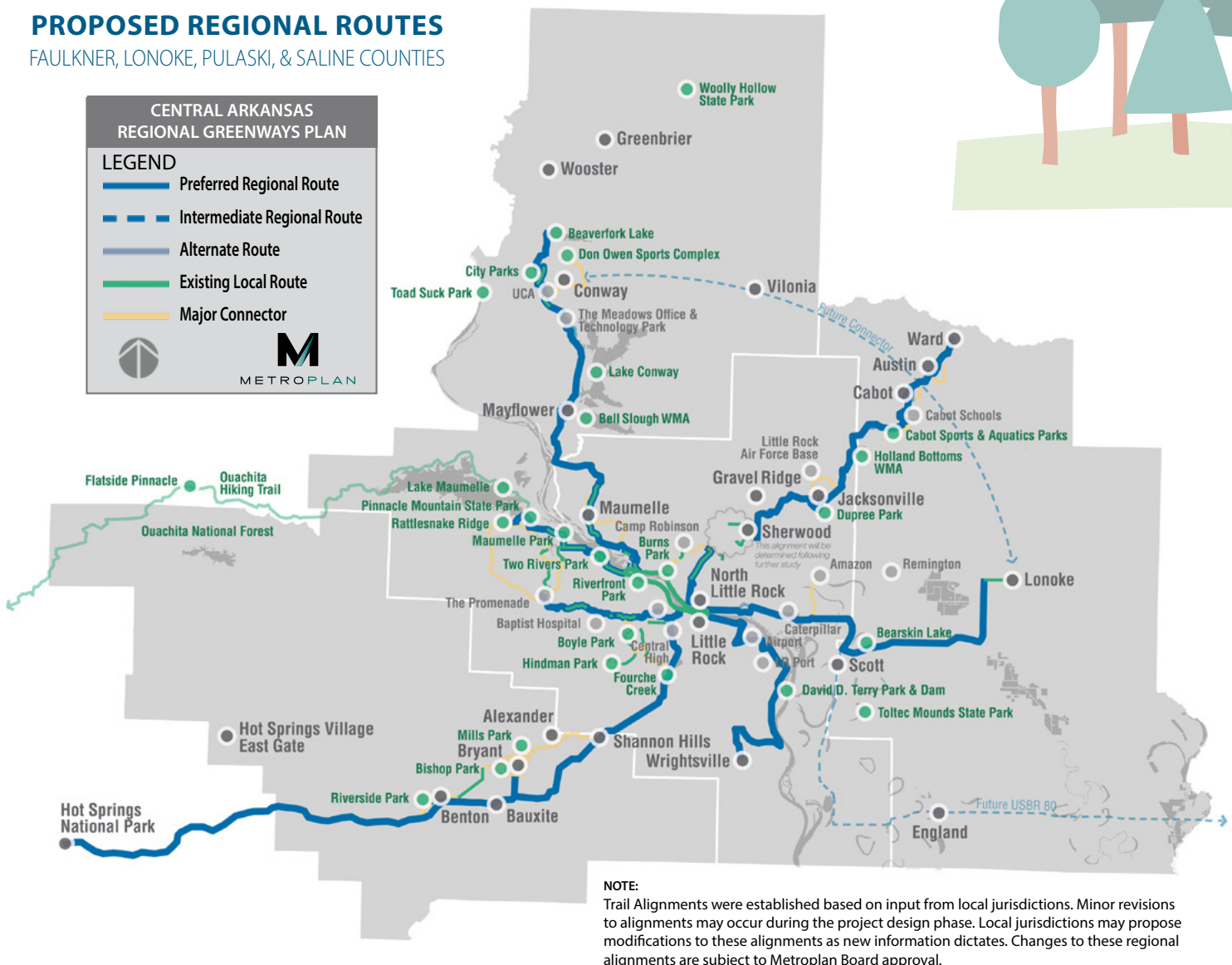
GOALS AND CHALLENGES OF THE PROJECT



Source: Crafton Tull

PROPOSED REGIONAL ROUTES

FAULKNER, LONOKE, PULASKI, & SALINE COUNTIES



Metroplan Board Visits Northern Colorado

In August of 2022 the Metroplan Board visited Fort Collins, Colorado. The Board picked the Fort Collins region for its success with developing bike-pedestrian infrastructure, as well as for beautification and economic development in Fort Collins, Severance and Windsor. The cities have done successful downtown economic development, as well as creating bike- and pedestrian-friendly environments along the Cache la Poudre River. The trip included an 8-mile e-bike ride in Fort Collins. This ride followed bike lanes, separated bike paths, and even a bike roundabout at the CSU campus. Other features included discussions about transit development, downtown redevelopment, local arts, and philanthropy.

The meeting introduced some new concepts and gave board members plenty of time for the kind of informal, creative communication that boosts planning in Central Arkansas.



The historic Poudre Valley Bank building in Fort Collins' Old Town inspired the design of Main Street, USA at Disney parks around the world.



What's this? A bicycle roundabout on the campus of Colorado State University, of course!

WHAT PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

"I am so thankful for everyone at Metroplan who made this trip possible. The ability to spend a week with people who believe in my ability to serve my city. Being able to listen to different pros and cons of being in office. I am lucky to be a part of this organization. Thank you for everything!"

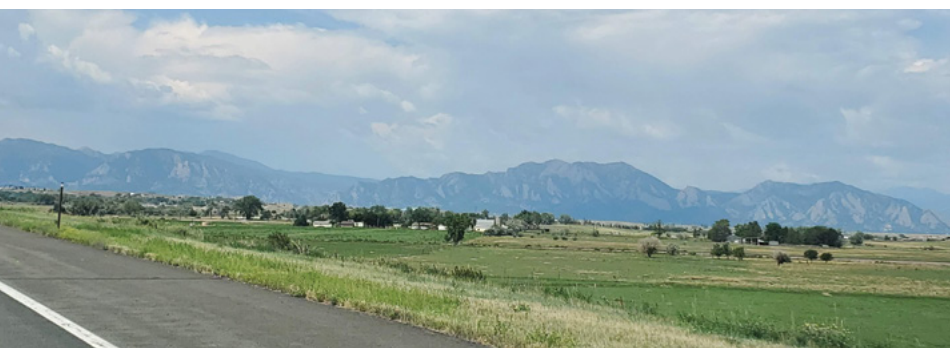
"I felt Metroplan did a great job. Thank you for allowing me to learn about bike-ped infrastructure."

"Very informative and well planned. Evident that many hours were dedicated in preparation. Thanks!"

"The attention to detail was incredible. There was a perfect mix of information, entertainment, sight-seeing, and free time. I'm so grateful I was able to experience it."

TOP TAKEAWAY

"Cooperation between municipalities and as a region. Cities can work together to improve each other. Partner with as many groups as possible to maintain support."



View of the North Front Range of the Rocky Mountains while driving back from our visit to the small communities of Severance and Windsor.



Group ride on Spin electric bikes along the Spring Creek Trail, which featured wayfinding, tunnels under busy roads, and led us to a beautiful city-owned botanical garden, the Gardens on Spring Creek.



Walking tour of Old Town Fort Collins. The Downtown Development Authority has invested in alley beautification. Enhancements include lighting, flowerpots, murals, and small storefronts, which enliven and integrate the alleys into the downtown streetscape.



A happy busload on the way to Severance for a small cities program.



REGIONAL GOALS

"Coordination of pieces of capital projects to create connectivity. Keep working towards bike and trail connections."



Trip participants heard from government and nonprofit leaders about topics ranging from bicycle infrastructure to philanthropy and economic development. At this presentation, Tom Jones discusses the Great Western Trail, a regional bike/ped path connecting the small cities of Eaton, Severance, and Windsor. The Great Western Trail will ultimately connect to the Poudre River Trail, which will lead west to Fort Collins, passing under I-25 thanks to a new interstate bridge currently under construction. The Great Western and Poudre River Trail improvements emphasize the importance of regional collaboration and partnership with the state Department of Transportation.

Rock Region's METRO Connect

Need a ride in Conway? Beginning in 2022, the city provides its new METRO Connect, with ride-hailing, ride-sharing service to and from most points in Conway. It has an easy-to-use ride-booking interface with real-time vehicle information, reasonable wait times, and affordable fares. It is a form of micro-transit service designed for small, low-density urban areas. The fare is currently an affordable \$2 per trip, and can be paid via the free Token Transit app or with exact change.

Metroplan worked with Rock Region METRO and the City of Conway to get METRO Connect Service for the city. It happened after Conway passed the 50,000 population mark and became eligible for federal public transit funding. The

service benefits from Rock Region Metro's experience as the state's largest public transit agency. Rock Region Metro has operated microtransit service for over three years, beginning with the Little Rock METRO Connect John Barrow Road Zone in 2019.

METRO Connect in Conway operates two vehicles during service hours, Monday through Saturday from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. The service can move about 100 passengers per day. Although anyone can use it, the service is particularly important for people who need access to medical services, education, and shopping needs and who may lack an automobile of their own.



Mayor Bart Castleberry, Rock Region METRO CEO Justin Avery, Conway city council members, city and METRO staff members and community advocates celebrated the pending Oct. 24, 2022 METRO Connect Conway microtransit service kickoff last fall. The on-demand ride-sharing program is the first public transit service in the city and operates six days a week.



Metro Connect introduces ride-hailing transit to Conway.

"After a lot of hard work and planning, we are thrilled to be offering this service to Conway residents. Employing microtransit service, which is a relatively low-cost transit service, allows us to maximize federal funding to improve mobility options for all of our residents, helping to connect them to health appointments, educational opportunities, jobs and more."

—Mayor Bart Castleberry

Jump Start

2022 ushered in more Jump Start successes. Conway's Markham Street phase one was completed and phase two was bid. The next phase will complete the roadway overhaul from Walnut Street to Harkrider Street, accommodating pedestrian and bicycle riders while enhancing corridor aesthetics.

Little Rock's Cedar Street and Pine Street improvements were completed along the 12th Street Corridor. Now, sidewalks run uninterrupted between 14th Street and I-630 improving connectivity for pedestrians. Streetlights and enhanced crosswalks were installed to improve safety as well.

North Little Rock's Park Hill project began construction. JFK's east sidewalk was widened, leveled, improved aesthetically, and buffered from the street with greenspace. Work to revamp the median began at year's end, with plans to complete the west sidewalks and overlay the roadway in 2023.

Markham Street



Markham Street's road diet supports multimodal accessibility in Conway. Photo: Garver.

12th Street Corridor



The project adds sidewalks and lighting, and directly connects the neighborhood to UAMS, a major employer. (before and after) Photos: Crafton Tull.



Park Hill



On July 20 a groundbreaking was held in Park Hill, with the goal of improving the walkability of the commercial corridor. Left to right: David Cook (NLR Engineer), Charles Cullen (Garver), Tab Townsell, Bernadette Rhodes, Robert Birch (City of North Little Rock), Kent Walker (Head of Park Hill Business Association), Mayor Terry Hartwick, Lindy Lanford (Owner, The Bridal Cottage), John Gregan (Park Hill Neighborhood Association), David Foote-(Shields and Assoc.), Derrell Hartwick (CEO, NLR Chamber), Nathan Hamilton (NLR City Council), Debi Ross (NLR City Council).

Metroplan Funded Projects



Cutting the ribbon for a new signalized intersection in Ward, September 30, 2022. Left to right: AR Representative Jim Wooten, Mayor Charles Gastineau, ARDOT Chief Engineer—Operations Rex Vines, Judge Doug Erwin, AR Senator Ricky Hill, Art Brooke, ARDOT District 6 Engineer Tony Evans.

"The Highway 89 overpass will increase our emergency response capabilities to the west side of our city and community. It will also open up possibilities for future economic growth."

—Mayor Randy Holland

It was a year of continuing progress on regional projects. The City of Ward welcomed its first traffic signal that included intersection improvements and coordination with a nearby railroad crossing. The City of Ward, Lonoke County, Metroplan and ARDOT all contributed to the projects. The Highway 89 overpass at Mayflower, a rail grade separation that will improve both access and safety, was nearing completion. Groundbreaking was held for the new Bryant Parkway extension, with Metroplan providing \$7 Million to the new road that serves as an alternative to Hwy 183.



The long-awaited Highway 89 Overpass, spanning I-40 and the UPRR tracks, May 5, 2022. Left to right: Casey Covington, Judge Jim Baker, Mayor Randy Holland, ARDOT District 8 Maintenance Engineer David Ross, ARDOT Staff Engineer Seth Parish, ARDOT Senior Engineer Nathan Zimmerman.



A new segment of the Bryant Parkway gets going. Left to right: (Garver) Matt Mitchell, Richard Corbyn, Todd Mueller, (Metroplan) Casey Covington, Senator Kim Hammer, ARDOT District 6 Engineer Tony Evans, Mayor Allen Scott, Representative Lanny Fite, (McGeorge) Brian McMillian, (Saline County Airport) Brandon Guillot, Lance Penfield, Shane Broadway, (Greater Bryant Chamber of Commerce) Jason Brown.



A new trail head branching out from the Big Dam Bridge in North Little Rock. (Left to right) Charles Mobley of the Major Taylor Cycling Club of Little Rock, Mayor Terry Hartwick, Judge Barry Hyde, Bert Parker with Big Dam Bridge Foundation, North Little Rock Parks Director Steve Shields, Metroplan Deputy Director Casey Covington. Photo credit: Pulaski County.

"The Big Dam Bridge North Plaza is an exciting accomplishment for Pulaski County and all Big Dam Bridge visitors. The improved trailhead will provide a space for visitors to congregate away from bike traffic. Among its many features, it will offer a bicycle repair station, benches, and a drinking fountain with a bottle filler."

—Judge Barry Hyde, Pulaski County

Transportation Alternatives Program Projects

In February, 2022 Metroplan awarded eleven jurisdictions around Central Arkansas a total of \$1,970,000 of 2022–2023 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds.

The TAP is a Federal-aid program established in 2013 that allows eligible sponsors to apply for funding to construct sidewalks, trails and other accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized forms of transportation, create systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers (children, older adults and individuals with disabilities) or other similar activities. The TAP requires a minimum 20% local match.

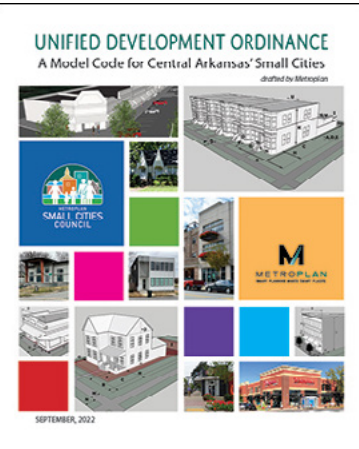
2022 TAP Projects

Project Sponsor	Project	Federal Funding Amount
Benton	Saline River Greenway	\$200,000
Bryant	Alcoa to Mills Park Trail	\$200,000
Cabot	Downtown Streetscape/Cycle Track	\$200,000
Conway	College Avenue Shared Use Path	\$200,000
Jacksonville	General Samuels Sidewalks	\$200,000
Little Rock	Jonesboro Children's Trail Phase 2	\$200,000
North Little Rock	14 th Street Pedestrian Bridge	\$200,000
Pulaski County	Southwest Trail Baseline Road to 65 th Street	\$200,000
Rock Region METRO	Super Shelters at Willow House	\$200,000
Mayflower	Highway 89 Sidewalks	\$100,000
Shannon Hills	Sardis Road Trail	\$100,000
Vilonia	Church Street Sidewalks	\$100,000
Ward	WArD Safe Routes to Schools	\$100,000
England	Highway 165 Sidewalk /Crosswalk	\$70,000
Engineering for Small Cities Projects		\$120,000

Metroplan Wins an APA Award

Metroplan's staff was honored to receive the award for Unique Contribution to Planning at the Arkansas Chapter of the American Planning Association's Fall 2022 Conference. The award recognized Metroplan's *Unified Development Ordinance*—*A Model Code for Central Arkansas' Small Cities* ("UDO"). The model zoning and subdivision code was created as a service to small cities in Central Arkansas that wish to update their regulations with consistent language and best planning practices.

This achievement did not occur in a vacuum. Many individuals, city codes, and national resources contributed advice and/or specific regulation language to the UDO. A full list of acknowledgments is included in the document, which is available at tinyurl.com/metroplanudo.



Project lead Bernadette Rhodes accepts the APA Award for the Unified Development Ordinance from James Walden, APA Board President (right). Also pictured: Jeff Runder and Daniel Holland. Other Metroplan staff who contributed to the project: Lynn Bell, Casey Covington, Tab Townsell and Hans Haustein.

"Metroplan's Model Codes are the perfect answer for small town leadership."

—Mayor Charles Gastineau
City of Ward

Tammy Gillis Joins the Team

We were delighted to welcome Tammy Gillis as Metroplan's Accounting Assistant in April 2022. Tammy brings 18 years of nonprofit experience and her upbeat personality to the office. She is the proud mom of Riley, a high school junior and competitive dancer. In her free time, Tammy enjoys live music, the beach, and roller skating (you might even glimpse a pair of skates in her office).

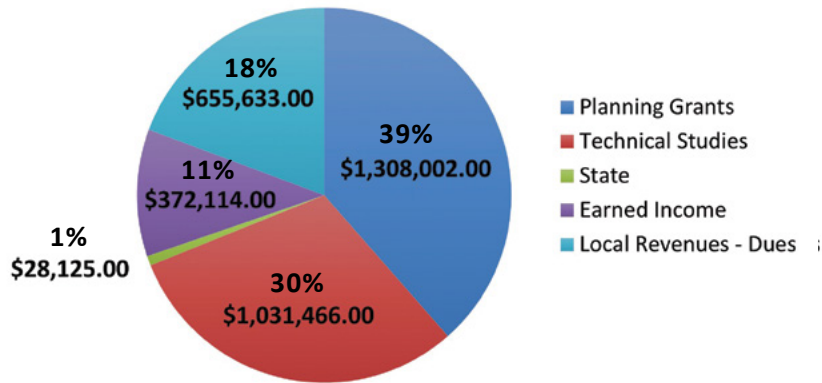
Tammy performs day to day accounting functions related to cash receipts, accounts payable, general journal entries, and payroll. She works closely with our Administrator, Cindy, to assist in providing accurate and up-to-date financial information.

Welcome to the Metroplan family, Tammy!

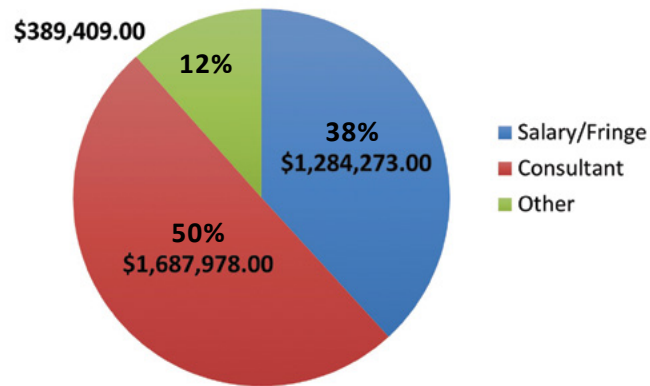


Metroplan 2022 Revenue and Expenditures

REVENUE



EXPENSES



Total Revenue	\$3,395,340.00
Total Expenses	\$3,361,660.00
Revenue over Expenses	\$33,680.00

2022 Metroplan Board of Directors

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Lonoke County

Mayor Paul Mitchell
City of Alexander

Mayor Bernadette Chamberlain
City of Austin

Mayor Eddie Jones
City of Bauxite

Mayor Tom Farmer
City of Benton

Mayor Ken Kincade
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Mayor David Graf
City of Cammack Village

Mayor Bart Castleberry
City of Conway

Mayor David “Butch” House
City of England

Mayor Sammy Hartwick
City of Greenbrier

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Saline County

Mr. Brad McCaleb
Arkansas Department
of Transportation

Mr. Justin Avery
Rock Region METRO

Mr. Bryan Day
Little Rock Port Authority

Mr. Bryan Malinowski
Clinton National Airport



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