



# Small Cities Council Meeting Summary

Wednesday, August 23, 2023 | 9:00 AM  
Pulaski County Regional Center | Little Rock  
*Approved January 24, 2024*

Meeting PowerPoint slides available at [www.metroplan.org/small-cities-council](http://www.metroplan.org/small-cities-council)

## SCC Members Attending

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Mayor Mike Kemp, Chair              | City of Shannon Hills |
| 2. Mayor Charles Gastineau, Vice Chair | City of Ward          |
| 3. Mayor Bernie Chamberlain            | City of Austin        |
| 4. Mayor Sammy Hartwick                | City of Greenbrier    |
| 5. Mayor Danny Hester                  | City of Mayflower     |
| 6. Mayor Butch House                   | City of England       |
| 7. Mr. Keith Keck                      | Hot Springs Village   |
| 8. Mayor Terry Don Robinson            | City of Wooster       |
| 9. Mr. Brady Zweifel                   | City of Vilonia       |

## Additional Attendees

- |                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| 10. Ms. Nicci Rummel | City of Ward |
| 11. Mr. Brad McCaleb | ARDOT        |

## Metroplan Staff

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 12. Ms. Lynn Bell         | Graphics Specialist                      |
| 13. Mr. Casey Covington   | Executive Director                       |
| 14. Mr. Jonathan Lupton   | Senior Planner for Publications          |
| 15. Ms. Bernadette Rhodes | Senior Regional Planner for Partnerships |

## I. Call to Order

Mayor Kemp called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. He welcomed participants and asked participants to introduce themselves.

## 2. Introductions & Announcements

Participants introduced themselves. Mr. Zweifel shared that Vilonia is finishing its Community Catalyst on August 29<sup>th</sup>. The survey is being administered by UCA. It will identify projects and needs in the city. So far, priorities identified were youth services, trails, accessibility, and downtown revitalization. Vilonia was one of two communities selected for the Community Catalyst Program from among 60 applicants. Mayor Kemp emphasized the benefits of participating in UCA's Community Development Institute (CDI) program and encouraged other city leaders to attend and offer it to staff. Vilonia also had a new go kart track open on Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **3. Summary of Previous Meeting**

Mayor Hartwick made a motion to approve the summary of the June 28th, 2023 meeting. Mayor Chamberlain seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **4. Metroplan Update**

Mr. Covington gave a brief update on the Central Arkansas Safety Action Plan, funded by the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) planning grant. There will be a full report at the board meeting. Metroplan will be forming a Safety Action Plan Advisory Committee (SAPAC) and is looking for at least 2 representatives from each county to serve on the committee. Additional SS4A updates will be provided at the board meeting to follow at 10:00 AM.

Ms. Rhodes provided an update on the Central Arkansas Energy and Environment Innovation (EEI) Plan development. At its July meeting, the Metroplan board approved its agreement with the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment to provide regional planning services in support of the statewide EEI plan, which will be submitted to EPA on March 1, 2024. The EEI plan will make governmental entities throughout Arkansas eligible to apply for Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) implementation funding. The next step in the planning process is to launch a statewide online community input survey. All Metroplan members and partners are encouraged to distribute and take the survey to ensure Central Arkansas' priorities are represented in the statewide plan. The survey will be launched in September. Regional action measures are due to the state December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Rhodes shared an update on the Arkansas Energy and Environment Innovation Plan, for which Metroplan is providing regional planning support. The Memorandum of Agreement with the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment is being vetted by the state's attorneys and will be returned for signature upon completion of the legal review.

### **5. Eclipse Planning Update**

Mr. Brad McCaleb gave an overview of ARDOT's planning process for the April 8, 2024 solar eclipse. Garver and its subconsultant, Alliance Transportation Group, have been modeling traffic demand for the week surrounding the eclipse. ARDOT's eclipse traffic management plan with the final model will be completed September 1<sup>st</sup>. Preliminary models show significant increases in traffic delays across the path of totality, likely disrupting Arkansans regular commuting patterns. A committee of state agencies meets monthly. Mr. McCaleb shared that Eclipse Day is projected to be the single most economically beneficial day in Arkansas' history. The state and cities are planning for accommodations, food, viewing glasses, viewing locations, emergency management, fuel supplies, and portable toilets.

Mayor Gastineau shared Ward's plans for a temporary RV park, to be available from April 1-12, 2024. The City Council approved an ordinance allowing residents to temporarily park an RV in their front yards for a \$25-50 per slot permit cost. The City is hiring volunteer firefighters to staff 2 fire stations 24 hours per day during that time, and is coordinating with police chiefs and sheriffs on law enforcement. The City has purchased 25 IBAN radios and an upgraded repeater due to concerns about the Arkansas Wireless Information Network (AWIN) and cell phones working during the eclipse.

Mayor Hartwick shared Greenbrier's eclipse plans, which will include a Merry Eclipsmas ice rink, "Blackout over Brier" events, "Total Eclipse of the Art" Art Jam programming with crafts and food

starting on Friday, and a “Circus under the Stars.” The City is also facilitating RV parking and tent camping. More information is available at [www.gogreenbrier.com/eclipse](http://www.gogreenbrier.com/eclipse).

The state department of Parks and Tourism has purchased viewing glasses, which it is offering to cities for \$0.33 per pair. Bryant has purchased 10,000 and Austin has purchased 5,000.

The Bryant School District and Saline County have closed school on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

## 6. Preview of Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Covington gave attendees the option to cancel September’s Small Cities Council meeting due to the benchmarking trip taking place shortly thereafter. Mayor Chamberlain made a motion to cancel the September SCC meeting. Mayor Hartwick seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Covington informed members of ARDOT’s Transportation Planning Conference, taking place September 19-21 in North Little Rock. Metroplan will pay for registration for board members interested in attending.

Ms. Rhodes shared information included in the Small Cities Council Meeting packet:

- Information from the Arkansas Municipal League’s attorney, which included a sample noise ordinance addressing industrial noise.
- The City of Ward’s RV park ordinance.
- Link to a YouTube video: Why Bad Street Design is Both Costly and Deadly [www.tinyurl.com/dangerdesign](http://www.tinyurl.com/dangerdesign)
  - 2021 had highest number of pedestrian fatalities in 40 years.
  - High speeds are incompatible with safe streets. 90% of people die who are hit by a driver going 40mph.
  - It’s about design, not enforcing a lower speed limit. “Don’t promise safety and deliver a raceway.”
  - Adding complexity to streets makes drivers pay attention.
  - Create streets where people dominate and cars are accommodated.
  - Tactical urbanism: Fast, cheap, and easy pilot projects to demonstrate the effect of traffic calming measures on a community. Resource: [www.betterblock.org](http://www.betterblock.org)

Mayor Gastineau shared a resource for budget-neutral energy efficiency upgrades for cities through the Arkansas Energy Office: Arkansas Energy Performance Contracting. Can help cities access low-interest loans for upgrades. [www.adeq.state.ar.us/energy/initiatives/performance.aspx](http://www.adeq.state.ar.us/energy/initiatives/performance.aspx)

## 7. Adjourn

Mayor Gastineau made a motion to adjourn. Mayor Hartwick seconded. Mayor Kemp adjourned the Small Cities Council meeting at 9:48 AM.