



METROPLAN



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**SMALL CITIES  
COUNCIL**

**SMALL CITIES COUNCIL**

February 26, 2025 • 9:00 AM

# AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Introductions & Announcements
3. Summary of Previous Meeting
4. Community Spotlight: City of Austin
5. Metroplan Update
6. Grants & Capital Improvement Opportunities
7. Member Q&A
8. Preview of Upcoming Meetings
9. Adjourn

## SCC MEMBERS

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Alexander       | 10. Keo           |
| 2. Austin          | 11. Lonoke        |
| 3. Bauxite         | 12. Mayflower     |
| 4. Cammack Village | 13. Mount Vernon  |
| 5. England         | 14. Shannon Hills |
| 6. Greenbrier      | 15. Traskwood     |
| 7. Guy             | 16. Vilonia       |
| 8. Haskell         | 17. Ward          |
| 9. HSVillage       | 18. Wooster       |
|                    | 19. Wrightsville  |





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## INTRODUCTIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Projects
- Updates
- Successes
- Challenges



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# SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS MEETING

January 22, 2025



**Small Cities Council  
Meeting Summary**

Wednesday, January 22, 2025, | 9:00 AM  
Pulaski County Regional Center | Little Rock  
*DRAFT*

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
2. Mayor Charles Gastineau, Vice Chair
3. Mayor Bernadette Chamberlain
4. Mayor Derrick Rainey
5. Mr. Jeff Arey
6. Mayor Terry Don Robinson
7. Mr. Keith Keck

City of Shannon Hills  
City of Ward  
City of Austin  
City of Wrightsville  
City of Haskell  
City of Wooster  
Hot Springs Village

**Additional Attendees**

8. Ms. Caran Curry
9. Mr. Gene Higginbotham
10. Mayor Tom Farmer

Arkansas Municipal League  
Congressman Crawford's Office  
City of Benton



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## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- **Bill Number – Name of the Bill**
  - **What it means:** Brief explanation/context of the bill.
  - **Impact:** What will it cause/lead to.
  - **Current Status:** What the current situation is.
  - **Link:** Link to read the bill

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- **HB1510 – Repeal of Territorial Jurisdiction for Cities ("Planning Area Bill")**
  - **What it means:** This bill would end cities' ability to plan outside their limits.
  - **Impact:** No more Planning Areas beyond city boundaries.
  - **Current Status:** To be discussed in the House City, County, Local Affairs Committee.
  - **Action:** To be decided by the mayors as deemed fit.
  - **Link:** <https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=HB1510&chamber=House&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R>
- **HB1448 – Public Notification and Public Reservation Bill**
  - **What it means:** Addresses public notifications and street planning requirements.
  - **Impact:** May change notification procedures and master street plan rules.
  - **Current Status:** To be discussed in the House City, County, Local Affairs Committee.
  - **Action:** No action to be decided right now but mayors are requested to keep a watch for possible changes.
  - **Link:** <https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=HB1448&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R&Search=>

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- HBI503 – Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Preemption Bill
  - **What it means:** Would limit local regulations on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).
  - **Impact:** Would allow more ADUs by-right, reducing local control.
  - **Current Status:** To be discussed in the House City, County, Local Affairs Committee
  - **Action:** Encourage your mayor to ask for amendments.
  - **Link:** <https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=HB1503&chamber=House&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R>
- SB87 – County Planning Board Bill
  - **What it means:** Applies to Pulaski County for now.
  - **Impact:** Recent amendments may cause legal issues.
  - **Current Status:** Still in discussion.
  - **Action:** No immediate action needed.
  - **Link:** <https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=SB87&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R&Search=>

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- HBI330 – Housing Improvement Zone Bill

- **What it means:** Aims to create housing improvements.
- **Current Status:** Not currently active.
- **Action:** No action needed right now.
- **Link:**  
<https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=HB1130&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R&Search=>

- HBI445 – Short Term Rental (STR) Bill

- **What it means:** A bill focused on short term rental regulations.
- **Current Status:** Passed committee but bit yet voted on the House floor.
- **Action:** No action needed right now, but keep an eye for possible changes
- **Link:**  
<https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=HB1445&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R&Search=>





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## METROPLAN UPDATE

- **New Metroplanner Alert!**  
*Drumroll*
- **Welcome Brittany Nichols !!**
- **CPRG Opportunities:**
  - **Green Networks: Deadline 21 Feb, 2025**
  - **Transportation Efficiency: Deadline 21 Feb, 2025**
  - **Know more: [Energy and Environment Innovation Plan - Metroplan](#)**



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## GRANTS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Delta Regional Authority: Key Grants Program (U.S. DOT)
  - To improve regional economic opportunities by helping to create jobs & build communities.
  - Available for 252 counties and parishes in eight-state Delta Region: <https://dra.gov/map-room/>
    - ❖ 3 CARTS region counties:
      1. Pulaski County
      2. Lonoke County
      3. Grant County
  - Link: <https://www.transportation.gov/rural/grant-toolkit/key-grant-programs/dra>



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## GRANTS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Delta Regional Authority: Key Grants Program Available Grants:
  - **2025 Strategic Planning Program Funding:**
    - This program provides strategic planning funds to address long-standing challenges and create tailored roadmaps for economic growth, through plans for economic development, utilities, transportation, workforce, and broadband, etc.
    - Max award: \$150,000 (Total Funds: \$1.5 Mil)
    - Opens: January 8, 2025
    - Deadline: March 7, 2025
    - Apply: <https://dra.gov/programs/capacity-building/strategic-planning-program/>



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# LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

**Seminar on Affordable Housing: Rural LISC**

*Open for Registration | Held on: March 3&4, 2025 from 10 am – 3pm*

- **Presented by Local Initiatives Support Corporation:**

- Provide a foundational understanding of:
  - Affordable housing development
  - Financing
  - Management
- Participants will explore topics like:
  - Housing affordability
  - Funding opportunities
  - Regulatory considerations
  - Practical strategies to address housing challenges
- Know More: <https://tinyurl.com/LISC-Affordable-housing>
- Register: <https://tinyurl.com/Register-LISC>

**RURAL LISC**

Grant	Status	Deadline
Transportation		
USDOT Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)	Closed	January 30, 2025
Transportation Alternatives Program 2025-2026 (Metroplan)	Closed	January 8, 2025
Transportation Alternatives Program 2025-2026 (ARDOT)	Open	April 30, 2025
Recreational Trails Program 2025	Open	April 30, 2025
Reconnecting Communities	Closed	September 30, 2024
Rail Crossing Elimination	Closed	September 23, 2024
Water		
FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure Communities (BRIC)	Open	April 18, 2025
FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance	Open	April 18, 2025
Energy		
Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG)	Open	May 31, 2025
Environmental		
EPA Inflation Reduction Act Community Change Grants Program	Closed	November 21, 2024
Housing		
HUD Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (PRO Housing)	Closed	October 15, 2024
HUD Choice Neighborhoods	Closed	June 10, 2024



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## PREVIEW OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **TODAY**
  - 10:00 AM: Board Meeting
  
- **Wednesday, February 26, 2025**
  - 9:00 AM: SCC Meeting
  - 10:00 AM: Board Meeting



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**THANK YOU!**

**SCC Leadership:**

Mayor Mike Kemp, Chair  
City of Shannon Hills  
501-455-2003  
shannonhillsmayor@aristotle.net

Mayor Charles Gastineau, Vice Chair  
City of Ward  
501-843-2226  
mayor@cityofward.com

**Metroplan:**  
501-372-3300

Bernadette Rhodes  
brhodes@metroplan.org

Paritosh (Pari/PJ) Jambhale  
pjambhale@metroplan.org





# Small Cities Council

## Meeting Summary

Wednesday, February 26, 2025, | 9:00 AM  
Pulaski County Regional Center | Little Rock  
Approved: 30 April, 2025

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 Bernadette Chamberlain        | City of Austin        |
| 4. Mayor Derrick Rainey                | City of Wrightsville  |
| 5. Mr. Jeff Arey                       | City of Haskell       |
| 6. Mayor Don Robinson                  | City of Wooster       |
| 7. Mr. Keith Keck                      | Hot Springs Village   |
| 8. Mayor Sammy Hartwick                | City of Greenbrier    |
| 9. Mayor Crystal Herrmann              | City of Alexander     |
| 10. Mayor Stephanie White              | City of Keo           |

### Additional Attendees

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 11. Mayor Mark Stodola  | Arkansas Municipal League |
| 12. Mr. Jason Bollinger | City of Greenbrier        |

### Metroplan Staff

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 13. Mr. Casey Covington   | Executive Director                                       |
| 14. Ms. Bernadette Rhodes | Deputy Director/Senior Planner for Partnerships & Grants |
| 15. Ms. Sydney Dozier     | Public Engagement Planner                                |
| 16. Ms. Lynn Bell         | Publications and Graphics Specialist                     |
| 17. Mr. Paritosh Jambhale | Community Planner  |

### **1. Call to Order**

Mayor Kemp called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He welcomed participants and asked participants to introduce themselves.

### **2. Introductions & Announcements**

Participants introduced themselves. Mayor Robinson announced that the City of Wooster will have a new City Hall soon. Mayor Rainey shared with the council that the City of Wrightsville has been busy with improving city services and celebrating the community's history, and that they are also looking to build new infrastructure. Mayor Kemp disclosed that the City of Shannon Hills is opening bids for a new bridge. The city has invested a lot of its ARDOT funding resources for the upkeep of the present bridges and that the grant was a 10% match. Mayor Gastineau communicated that the City of Ward is about to renovate its court room. He also mentioned that the Dollar General Market project is on the brink of completion and that the city is all set to welcome a new 911 center. He also mentioned that Ward is very close to adopting the UDO and that the city council has tabled its discussion because of the ongoing updates to the state legislature. Once it is all cleared the city will be on its way to adopt the UDO.

Mayor Herrmann discussed that the City of Alexander would also like to discuss about the UDO and it was followed by Mayor Chamberlain announcing that the City of Austin has adopted the UDO. They are currently working on a walking trail that connects Austin with Cabbot and ends at the city park in Austin. Mayor Herrmann discussed with the council Alexander is also interested in trails and has applied for trail grants. Currently they have received a DQ permit for restoring banks for rivers. They also have a brownfield grant update. The engineering firm they hired for the project is currently testing and are researching on the buildings. It may take a week or two for them to come to some conclusion. The city hasn't received any grants for the demolition of buildings on the brownfields yet. In order to make Alexander eligible for the grant the engineering firm took the ownership of the project and are currently working on a timeline for the same.

Mayor White discussed that the City of Keo is currently upgrading its water system. Only 25% of the work on the storage tank restoration is left. The Keo is also looking forward to having a new park on some land provided by a citizen to develop on and thus the City is applying for a trail grant to allow some funds for adding some hardscape to the new park. A new E.V. charging facility was installed in Keo, and the city is looking to annex about 10% of the City of \_\_\_\_\_. Judge Arey from the City of Haskell talked about the installation and repair of the Saline bridge. He also mentioned that Haskell is currently going through a process updating its comprehensive development plan which follows some parts of the UDO. The City has enrolled its first full time firefighter and is discussing on the lines of implanting a sidewalk plan by tweaking and reviewing some of the older plans available. And the city has also annexed some property in the north.

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

Mayor Gatineau made a motion to approve the summary of the January 22, 2024, meeting. Mayor Chamberlain seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 4. **Legislative Update:**

Ms. Rhodes led this section of the meeting and shed light on some of the bills being voted on in the Senate and the House. The bills were as follows.

- a. HBI448: An Act to Amend the Law Concerning Municipal Planning Areas; to Require Notice and Compensation to Property Owners; and for Other Purposes.
- b. Bill HBI510: An Act to Amend the Law Concerning Territorial Jurisdiction of Municipalities; to Repeal the Authority for a Municipality to Exercise Territorial Jurisdiction over an Unincorporated Area of a County; and for Other Purposes.
- c. HBI445: An Act to Prohibit Certain Restrictions on the Regulation of Short-Term Rentals; and for Other Purposes.
- d. HBI503: An Act to Amend the Law Concerning Municipal Regulations; to Prohibit Certain Restrictions on the Regulation of Accessory Dwelling Units; and for Other Purposes.
- e. HBI130: An Act to Amend the Law Concerning Permitting for Residential Construction; to Amend the Fast-Track Permits Act; to Allow Local Government to Create a Housing Improvement Zone; and for Other Purposes.
- f. SB87: An Act to Amend the Law Concerning County Planning; to Create a Penalty for Violating a Subdivision Ordinance; to Amend the Law Concerning the Membership of a County Planning Board in Certain Instances, and For Other Purposes.

A brief description of these bills was discussed in the meeting and was followed by a brief discussion about what they entail. Council members had a few questions regarding some of the bills. Mr. Covington assured the council that Metroplan staff would provide the council with a detailed written explanation of the bills. The legislative update can be viewed using this link: [Bills SCC Feb 26 2025.pdf](#). Mr. Covington also suggested that Metroplan staff do not take any stance regarding the bills and their potential impact.

#### 5. **Metroplan Update**

Ms. Rhodes introduced the council to a series of virtual seminars that Metroplan would be hosting in the weeks to come which revolve around community input regarding EEI measures. The Greenways seminar was to be held on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February and registration for all the seminars can be found on Metroplan's website: <https://metroplan.org/eei/>. Ms. Dozier discussed with the council the dates of the rest of the seminars:

- a. Increase Energy Savings, Independence and Resilience: March 13, 2025
- b. Improve Waste Services: March 20, 2025
- c. Use the Land We Already Have and Fill the Vacant Lots: April 3, 2025
- d. Expand Electric Vehicle Charging: April 17, 2025

Ms. Rhodes also informed the council that the CPRG funds are ready to get signed off and are ready to be used for their respective purposes.

## **6. Upcoming Grants & Capital Improvement Opportunities:**

Ms. Rhodes introduced the council to a new opportunity:

- Delta Regional Authority: Strategic Planning Program

This program provides strategic planning funds to address long-standing challenges and create tailored roadmaps for economic growth, through plans for economic development, utilities, transportation, workforce, broadband, and much more. The maximum award available is \$150,000 from the total funds of \$1.5 million. The opportunity is now open and will close on March 7, 2025. The link to apply for the grant is: <https://dra.gov/programs/capacity-building/strategic-planning-program/>.

When asked if any of the council members have some experience regarding DRA grants, Mayor White answered that the City of Keo did try to apply for some DRA grants. She discussed with the council that they are a bit rigorous. CAPPD helped Keo with the application process, however she further emphasized its rigorous nature. Mayor White discussed how cities needed to tie up everything claimed in the application to economic development of the city for the said grant. Building further on the topic, Mayor Rainey agreed with Mayor White and added that no money was allocated to cities in Arkansas through the DRA grant opportunity.

A learning opportunity of a seminar on affordable housing held by Rural LISC was brought to the council's attention by Ms. Rhodes. The seminar was to be held on March 4, 2025 and discussed various aspects of affordable housing such as financing and management, funding opportunities related to affordable housing, regulatory considerations regarding affordable housing and much more.

## **7. Member Q&A**

Mr. Covington brought back to the council's attention, updates regarding the bylaws of Metroplan. He mentioned that it is not to be voted on today. Mayor Herrmann asked the council if anyone has any experience regarding BLOCK grants. Mayor White answered that Keo did try its hand with BLOCK grants. She expressed that the challenge they faced was that the definition of low and moderate income changed with the Census data thus throwing their numbers off. CAPPD helped Keo with the process however, Mayor White suggested that the changing income brackets make BLOCK grants a tedious process.

## **8. Preview of Upcoming Meetings**

- Wed., April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2025
  - 9:00 am: Small Cities Council Meeting
  - 10:00 am: Board of Directors Meeting

## **9. Adjourn**

Mayor Robinson made a motion to adjourn. Mayor Herrmann adjourned the Small Cities Council meeting at 9:55 AM.