



METROPLAN



METROPLAN

**SMALL CITIES  
COUNCIL**

**SMALL CITIES COUNCIL**

April 30, 2025 • 9:00 AM

# AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Introductions & Announcements
3. Summary of Previous Meeting
4. Legislative Update
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. HS Village      | 18. Wooster       |
|                    | 19. Wrightsville  |





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## INTRODUCTIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Projects
- Updates
- Successes
- Challenges



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# SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS MEETING

February 26, 2025



**Small Cities Council  
Meeting Summary**

Wednesday, February 26, 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 Don Robinson
7. Mr. Keith Keck
8. Mayor Sammy Hartwick
9. Mayor Crystal Herrmann
10. Mayor Stephanie White

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

**Additional Attendees**

11. Mayor Mark Stodola
12. Mr. Jason Bollinger

Arkansas Municipal League



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## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: PASSED

- **Current Status:**  
Delivered to Governor  
4/16/2025
- **Link:**  
<https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Details?id=SJR15&ddBicnniumSession=2025%2F2025R&Search=>

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: ADOPTED

- SB505 – To Amend the Law Requiring Municipal Planning & to Require an Administrative Procedure for Changes to the Zoning or District Designation of Property in Certain Instances
  - **What it means:** The bill introduced the option for municipalities to adopt an “administrative procedure” to change the zoning or district designation of a property and would not be subject to public hearings and city council approval if:
    1. The change is only made when it is requested by the owner of the property.
    2. The requested change is consistent with the city’s adopted land use plan.
  - Traditional public hearing procedures still apply to all other zoning changes except those handled through the new administrative process.
  - **Current Status:** Adopted and now is [Act 595](#)
  - **Link:** [SB505 Bill Information - Arkansas State Legislature](#)

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: ADOPTED

- **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.
  - **What it means:**The act limits local regulations on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by allowing them by right and by prohibiting:
    - Additional parking requirements for ADUs or fees in lieu of parking.
    - Mandates that ADUs match the design, roof pitch, or materials of the primary dwelling.
    - Requiring a familial, marital, or employment relationship between occupants of the ADU and the main dwelling or Improvements to public streets or sidewalks as a condition for ADU permits.
    - Development impact fees on ADU construction.
    - Setting more restrictive building heights, setbacks, lot sizes, or coverage for ADUs than for the primary dwelling.
    - Requiring separate water and sewer connections for ADUs or imposing restrictive covenants for ADUs unless between private parties.
  - **Current Status:**Adopted on 03/18/2025
  - The Act does not prohibit Municipalities from regulating short term rentals
  - **Link:**  
<https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=HBI503&chamber=House&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R>

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: ADOPTED

- **HB1510: 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**
- **What it means:** This act repeals the authority for municipalities in Arkansas to exercise territorial jurisdiction over unincorporated areas in a county.
  - Elimination of Municipal control over subdivisions in adjacent unincorporated areas leaving only county planning boards responsible for approving subdivisions.
  - The act repeals the ability to regulate areas outside city limits and inside planning area boundaries while planning annexations.
  - Repeals a city's ability to regulate zoning and development regulations. Developers will not have to comply with city zoning regulations in areas outside the city's limits.
  - Municipal ordinances no longer apply to fire protection districts outside city limits.
- **Current Status:** Adopted on 03/18/2025
- **Link:**  
<https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=HB1510&chamber=House&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R>



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## METROPLAN UPDATE

- **Development of a New Website**

*Questions from the web designer*

1. Have you used the Metroplan website before? If yes, what did you use it for?
2. Was it easy to find what you were looking for? Why or why not?
3. What could we improve to make the site more useful?



QR Code for Website



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## METROPLAN UPDATE

- **Draft Small Cities Council By-Laws**

*Discussion and Input Session*

- What new rules would you like to see added to the bylaws?
- **Any recommendations?**



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## GRANTS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program
  - Partnering up with Main Street America*
    - Investing a total of \$25M in 500 towns over 5 years
      - Will be awarding **100 towns with funding up-to \$50,000 (each town) each year.**
    - Eligible projects should support a community project of your choice.
    - Project that adds a sense of place or could lead to further investment are of particular interest.
      - ❖ Example:
        1. Tech Upgrades
        2. Outdoor Spaces
        3. Arts & Community Centers
    - Link: <https://mainstreet.org/about/partner-collaborations/t-mobile-hometown-grants>





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## GRANTS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Small towns with population less than 50,000 can apply for the funding opportunity.
- Application period will close on Monday, June 30, 2025.
  - **What is needed to apply for the grant?**
    - Showell ready projects are preferred
    - Proposal must include:
      1. Plans with Budget & Timeline
      2. Anticipated Impact
      3. Up to 5 letters of support from community stakeholders
      4. Details of Permits acquired/needed
      5. Examples of in-kind donation possibilities/additional funding to cover the remainder of the cost
    - Learn More & Apply:  
<https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/hometown-grants>



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## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

**One-Day Legislative Seminar:**

**By APA Arkansas Chapter**

*Russellville, AR | Tentative Date: May 21, 2025*

- **Topics to be discussed:**
  - Reviewing the changed laws in the recent past.
  - The impact these new laws will have on cities in Arkansas.
- **In-Person Event**
  - Will be recorded and made available for viewing afterward.
  - Will have a nominal fee to cover for refreshments/lunch.





## METROPLAN SMALL CITIES COUNCIL

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## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

### 2025 Arkansas Rural Development Conference: By AEDC Rural Services

*Open for Registration | Held on: May 20 - 22, 2025*

- **Tuesday: 5/20/2025:**
    - Lithium in Arkansas – A case study for success
  - **Wednesday: 5/21/2025:**
    - Empowering Rural Arkansas: A business development case study
    - Cybersecurity Resources for Rural Arkansas
    - Outdoor Recreation: A rural economic driver
  - **Thursday: 5/22/2025:**
    - Federal & State Resources for Rural Communities
    - Strategic Planning & Community Development
- 
- Know More: <https://tinyurl.com/AEDCRuralDevp>
  - Register: <https://tinyurl.com/ArRuralConf>





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## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

**2025 Arkansas Planning Official Training Program:  
By UALR | Course 3: Zoning & Rezoning**

*Open for Registration | Held on: April 30, 2025 | 6:00 – 9:00 pm*

- **Live Online via Zoom:**
    - Cost: \$65 per person
  - **You will Explore:**
    - Zoning Rules and Classifications
    - Zoning Map and its Implications
    - How to Evaluate Rezoning Applications
    - Real-world Case Studies to Build Your Confidence and Skills
  - **Other Courses:**
    - Course 4 Subdivisions – June 18
    - Course 5 Development Review and Variances – Sept 10
- Contact: Lisa Crittenden @ [lacrittenden@ualr.edu](mailto:lacrittenden@ualr.edu); 501 916 6050
- Register by **April 28:** [2025 Planning Official Training: Course Registration](#)



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)	Closed	April 18, 2025
FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance	Closed	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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4. Community Spotlight: City of Austin
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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, April 30, 2025, | 9:00 AM  
Pulaski County Regional Center | Little Rock  
Approved: 28 May, 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. Mr. Keith Keck                      | Hot Springs Village   |
| 7. Mayor Sammy Hartwick                | City of Greenbrier    |
| 8. Mayor Crystal Herrmann              | City of Alexander     |
| 9. Mr. Brady Zweifel                   | City of Vilonia       |

### Additional Attendees

- |                      |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 10. Mr. Ben Reynolds | SCS                      |
| 11. Mr. Mike Watson  | Halff                    |
| 12. Jamie Collins    | Neel-Schafer Engineering |

### 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. Jonathan Lupton   | Senior Planner for Publications / Economist              |
| 18. 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 Kemp informed the council that the City of Shannon Hills will be celebrating the groundbreaking ceremony of for the South-West Trail on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, 2025. He extended the invitation to the council to attend the ceremony. Mr. Zweifel informed the council that the City of Vilonia will be getting its first Taco Bell store. He also mentioned that the city will resume Krypto mining after briefly stopping it in the past.

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

Mayor Chamberlain made a motion to approve the summary of the February 26, 2025, meeting.. Judge Arey 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 that had passed in the Senate and the House. The bills were as follows.

- a. HBI 503: An Amendment Concerning Economic Development in the State of Arkansas; & Authorizing the General Assembly to Provide for the Creation of Economic Development Districts to Promote Economic Development.
  1. This constitutional amendment allows the creation of Economic Development Districts (EDDs) within cities, counties, or regions to promote targeted economic growth. EDDs can issue bonds and fund private or public projects like manufacturing, tech, or sports complexes without being subject to typical constitutional limits on public debt or requiring a public vote—unless backed by property taxes. Local governments can provide financial support or partner with EDDs, even for private-sector efforts. While EDDs may be exempt from standard property taxes, public-use properties like schools will retain their tax-exempt status.
  2. Mr. Keck informed Ms. Rhodes and Mr. Jambhale that the bill was to be revised, and if there were any changes made. Metroplan staff did check and can confirm that this ballot initiative has been approved by the governor and will be presented to the voters in the next general elections. The bill was withdrawn earlier in the process and was then amended on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March. But there have been no changes to the bill after that amendment.
  3. Link:  
<https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=SJR15&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R&Search=>
- b. SB505 – To Amend the Law Requiring Municipal Planning & to Require an Administrative Procedure for Changes to the Zoning or District Designation of Property in Certain Instances.
  1. This bill allows municipalities to adopt an *administrative procedure* for certain zoning changes, streamlining the process when specific conditions are met. If a property owner requests a zoning change that aligns with the city's adopted land use plan, the change can be made without requiring a public hearing or city council approval. All other zoning changes would still follow the traditional public hearing process. It is now Act 595.

2. Link:  
<https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=SB505&chamber=Senate&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R>
- c. 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.
  1. This act standardizes and protects the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by limiting how much local governments can regulate them. It allows ADUs *by right* and prohibits cities from imposing extra requirements such as additional parking, design matching rules, or public improvements as permit conditions. The law also bans development impact fees specifically for ADUs and prevents cities from applying stricter building standards to ADUs than to the main home. It further disallows requiring separate utility connections or restrictive covenants unless agreed upon privately. The act does not stop municipalities from regulating short-term rentals.
  2. Mayor Gastineau was asked to talk about the bill as he has been instrumental in understanding the bill for the City of Ward. He mentioned the questions that they arrived upon after the introduction of the bill. Will the ADU be allowed to tap into the current connection of the water supply and drainage lines of the primary unit? Will the added ADU add to the existing pressure on the water treatment and sewerage facilities of the city? Can the city ask for additional charge to treat the added amount of water that can possibly come with the added ADU for sewage? These were some questions that Mayor Gastineau discussed and also mentioned that if anyone would like to read the email in which he illustrates these points and more can contact Metroplan and the email can be forwarded to them.
  3. Link:  
<https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=HBI503&chamber=House&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R>
- d. 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.
  1. This act repeals a city's authority to regulate land use and development in unincorporated areas outside its official boundaries. Cities can no longer control zoning, subdivision approvals, or enforce planning ordinances in areas they once oversaw for future annexation. Instead, only county planning boards will handle development decisions in these areas. Additionally, municipal ordinances including those related to fire protection—no longer apply outside city limits, reducing city influence on nearby growth.
  2. Link:  
<https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=HBI510&chamber=House&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R>

## 5. Metroplan Update

Ms. Rhodes reminded the council that Metroplan has been working on building a new website. The web designers that Metroplan is working with asked for the user experience of the council regarding the current website and what changes would they like to see in it. She opened the floor for the council and asked if they had any suggestions. The general consensus was that the council finds it difficult to find the Board meeting agenda on the site. A quick link for finding the latest agenda would be better. The same applies for the agendas for the Small Cities Council. They also mentioned that it would be better if Metroplan could publish the agenda on the site ahead of time for the meeting. Some of the regularly used features of the current website are the quick links to the UDO, reports, statistics / projections and to RFPs. The council unanimously mentioned that they use the search bar heavily to find what they are looking for. Another suggestion that garnered attention and support was to bring diversity in the color palette to better differentiate the different sections of the website. Like a different color for South-West Trail section. Different color for Greenways, etc.

Ms. Rhodes then informed the council that Metroplan is also working on updating the Small Cities Council Bylaws. The first draft is under preparation and the council will be able to view it in the meeting on May 28<sup>th</sup>. She mentioned that the current draft talks about the nomination and voting of the leadership of the SCC. That the council doesn't prepare any policy but consists to advice the full board by bringing into focus the different needs and demands faced by the smaller cities of their jurisdictions. She also mentioned that any city or census designated place under the population of 10,000 would be welcomed in the SCC if they fall into the Central Arkansas area. She also asked the council if they have any suggestions for the bylaws and that they could convey them to any Metroplan staff.

Mr. Covington then brought to the council's attention a new GIS tool which was developed by Mr. Jeff Runder, Metroplan's Senior Planner for Technical Analysis. This tool uses Census Transportation Planning Products (CTPP) data which showcases the start and end destinations of people who travel for work in the state. Mr. Runder developed an interactive map using the said data which can show how many people travel to which city for work purposes. This map makes it easier to study and analyze transportation patterns which can help in identifying future transportation needs and current transportation upkeep as well. It also makes it easier to locate the said CTPP data which is laborious to hunt for your specific needs.

## 6. Upcoming Grants & Capital Improvement Opportunities:

Ms. Rhodes introduced the council to a new opportunity:

- T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program

The T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program, in partnership with Main Street America, is offering funding of up to \$50,000 per town for community-focused projects that enhance quality of life or encourage future investment such as tech upgrades, outdoor spaces, or arts and community centers. Open to towns with populations under 50,000, the program will award 100 towns per year, investing \$25 million over 5 years. Proposals should be shovel-ready and include a budget, timeline, impact statement, permit details, and up to five letters of support. Applications are due by Monday, June 30, 2025. The link to apply for the grant is: <https://mainstreet.org/about/partner-collaborations/t-mobile-hometown-grants>.

Upon discussion of the available federal and state grants, Mayor Gastineau expressed that Ward had applied for the ARDOT TAP which was due by the 30<sup>th</sup> of April. The city also applied for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG). He informed the council that it involves building efficiency projects.

Ms. Rhodes also introduced three learning opportunities to the council.

- The APA Arkansas Chapter's One-Day Legislative Seminar (May 21, 2025, in Russellville) will focus on recently changed laws and their implications for cities; the in-person event will include refreshments and a recording for later viewing.
- The 2025 Arkansas Rural Development Conference (May 20–22, 2025) hosted by AEDC Rural Services offers sessions on lithium development, cybersecurity, outdoor recreation, and strategic planning for rural communities.
- Lastly, UALR's Arkansas Planning Official Training Program continues with Course 3: Zoning & Rezoning (April 30, 2025), a live Zoom session covering zoning basics, map interpretation, and real-world case studies, with future sessions on subdivisions (June 18) and variances (Sept 10).

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

Mayor Hermann asked if there was a way to learn more about the T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program. The link for the same can be found: <https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/hometown-grants>

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

- Wed, May 28<sup>th</sup> 2025
  - 9:00 am: Small Cities Council Meeting
  - 10:00 am: Board of Directors Meeting
  - The meeting will be followed by Metroplan's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration at the William J. Clinton Library and Museum

## **9. Adjourn**

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