



METROPLAN



METROPLAN

**SMALL CITIES
COUNCIL**

SMALL CITIES COUNCIL

June 25, 2025 • 9:00 AM

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Introductions & Announcements
3. Summary of Previous Meeting
4. Legislative Update
5. Small Cities Roundtable
6. Metroplan Update
7. Preview of Upcoming Meetings
8. 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

May 28, 2025



Small Cities Council Meeting Summary

Wednesday, May 28, 2025, | 9:00 AM
Pulaski County Regional Center | Little Rock
DRAFT

Meeting PowerPoint slides available at 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. Mr. Keith Keck
7. Mayor Butch Hale
8. Mayor Crystal Herrmann
9. Mr. Brady Zweifel

City of Shannon Hills
City of Ward
City of Austin
City of Wrightsville
City of Haskell
Hot Springs Village
City of England
City of Alexander
City of Vilonia

Additional Attendees

10. Mr. Mark Stodola
11. Mr. Mike Watson

Arkansas Municipal League
Halff



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SMALL CITIES ROUNDTABLE

- Discussed by the Arkansas Municipal League's Legislative Session: Major Planning Focused Legislation
 - **HB1503 | [Act 313](#): Regulation of ADUs**
 - Cities must allow at least one ADU per residential lot, removes special permit and hearing requirements.
 - **HB1510 | [Act 314](#): Repeal of Extraterritorial Jurisdiction**
 - Removes city's ability to apply planning or zoning regulations outside its incorporated limits (no PAB).
 - **SB 505 | [Act 595](#) Administration Rezoning Procedures**
 - Provided municipalities an option to establish a process for staff approval or rezonings in limited cases.



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SMALL CITIES ROUNDTABLE

- Judge Dodson: Metroplan Priorities for 2025-2026
 - Followed by a discussion with Judge Dodson & Mayor Kincade



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METROPLAN UPDATE

DRAFT SCC BYLAWS

- Draft SCC bylaws:



Scan for Draft SCC
Bylaws



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ARKANSAS
INC

METROPLAN UPDATE

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- Arkansas Community Assistance Grant Program (CAGP)
 - Supports community & economic development projects
 - Max funding up to \$1.5 million per project
 - 20% match in cash/in kind : labor/ material/ land
 - Award Criteria: Determined by AEDC based on eligibility, available funds & program demand
 - Eligible Applicants:
 - Cities & Incorporated towns
 - Counties & Unincorporated communities
 - Non-Profits & Other Govt. entities in Arkansas
 - Eligible Projects:
 - Renovation/Construction of public facilities
 - Healthcare centers, libraries, city halls, police stations, jails, parks, playgrounds, etc
 - Land or building purchase for related projects
 - Workforce training expense
 - Know more: <https://www.arkansasedc.com/community-resources/community-assistance-grant-program>



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METROPLAN UPDATE

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- **Arkansas Tourism Grant Opportunities**
University Of Central Arkansas| Deadline: Last Friday of July (25); September (26); November (28)
- **Festival Advertising Grant:** Supports advertising for free, public, recurring festivals in communities under 10,500 population
 - **Eligible Applicants:** Incorporated cities, unincorporated communities (via county), 1 grant per fiscal year
 - **Funding:** Up to **\$10,000**, reimbursing up to two-thirds of eligible advertising costs
 - **No Match Needed** for grants up to **\$5,000**; proof of performance due within 90 days post-event
- **Tourism Feasibility Study Grant:** 1:1 match, up to **\$15,000** for cities/counties to study potential tourism attractions
 - **Feasibility Grant Deadlines:** Last Fridays of **July, September, and November**



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LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Community Development Institute (CDI)

University Of Central Arkansas | Duration: July 28 – Aug 01, 2025



UNIVERSITY OF
**CENTRAL
ARKANSAS**

- **Registration:**
 - \$600 (Regular) if registered by July 1, 2025
 - \$650 (Late) for July 2–21, 2025
 - Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/registerCDI>
- **Curriculum:**
 - **Three-Year Core Curriculum** focused on community and economic development
 - **Year 1: Foundations** — community assets, visioning, and stakeholder engagement
 - **Year 2: Implementation** — entrepreneurship, business development, and finance
 - **Year 3: Application** — leadership, marketing, and workforce planning
 - Learn more about CDI: <https://uca.edu/cdi/cdi-2025/>

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)	Closed	April 30, 2025
Recreational Trails Program 2025	Closed	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)	Closed	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



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

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PREVIEW OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **TODAY**
 - 10:00 AM: Board Meeting

- **Wednesday, July 23, 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, June 25, 2025, | 9:00 AM

Pulaski County Regional Center | Little Rock

Approved July 23, 2025

Meeting PowerPoint slides available at 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 Wayne McGee | City of Lonoke |
| 5. Mayor Stephani White | City of Keo |
| 6. Ms. Jennifer Hill | City of Alexander |

Additional Attendees

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Mayor Tom Farmer | City of Benton |
| 2. Mr. Jon Plafcan | City of Carlisle |
| 3. Judge Allen Dodson | Faulkner County |
| 4. Mr. Samuel Kreimeyer | Jacobs |
| 5. Mr. Mike Watson | Halff |
| 6. Mr. Tom Anderson | American Rescue Plan Administrator, Faulkner County |

Metroplan Staff

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Casey Covington | Executive Director |
| 2. Ms. Lynn Bell | Publications and Graphics Specialist |
| 3. Ms. Sydney Dozier | Public Engagement Planner |
| 4. 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**

All the council members and guests introduced themselves. Mr. Jon Plafcan was welcomed in his first ever meeting of the SCC. It also marked the attendance of the City of Carlisle in the SCC. Mr. Covington announced that the main topic of the meeting was the priorities of Metroplan and its vision for the next year and a half. He also mentioned that Judge Dodson was here to express the same and to hear the Council's wants and needs.

3. **Summary of Previous Meeting**

Ms. Hill made a motion to approve the summary of the June 25, 2025, meeting. Mayor Chamberlain seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Legislative Update:**

Mr. Jambhale led this section. He reminded the council about the Arkansas Municipal League's Legislative Session that happened in the convention hosted by the League. He brought to the council's attention that both Metroplan and the League have been covering legislative updates and that this section was just a reminder of the planning focused legislation that passed in this session. The acts talked about were:

- HB 1503 | Act 313: Regulation of ADUs
 - i. Cities must allow at least one ADU per residential lot, removes special permit and hearing requirements.
- HB 1510 | Act 314: Repeal of Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
 - i. Removes city's ability to apply planning or zoning regulations outside its incorporate limits (no PAB).
- SB 505 | Act 595: Administration Rezoning Procedures
 - i. Provided municipalities an option to establish a process for staff approval or rezoning in limited cases.

5. **Small Cities Roundtable:**

Judge Dodson led this section and extended his regards to the council members, both present and absent. He mentioned to the council that his vision for Metroplan and its board is to unite and work together on our regional problems. He highlighted and congratulated the council for managing their jurisdictions to the best of their abilities, which often makes his role as a County Judge even more rewarding and easy to perform. He also mentioned that the standard of work the region of Central Arkansas achieves in the future should compete with the best practices in the country and not just the state. Mr. Covington seconded Judge Dodson's overview of prioritizing planning as a united front. He highlighted the recent presentation that was presented by Mayor White in the Municipal League's Convention about how a small city Mayor has to take on many roles throughout the day to achieve their targets and to make their city better in all capacity. He further emphasized that connectivity between cities and counties will be the most important factor of the future planning efforts.

Mayor Kemp joined the discussion and warmly welcomed Judge Dodson to the meeting along with all the present council members. He highlighted that Cabot is doing great. Shannon Hills is probably one of the fastest growing cities in Central Arkansas, and suggested that more small cities are showing this trend of growing faster than before. He further emphasized the need of bigger cities to understand and acknowledge the growth and the need for cities big and small to utilize their connections and work together. The council seconded his notion of not favoring weighted voting. Judge Dodson agreed to this and responded positively that he never liked the concept as well. He further brought to the council's notice that he asked Faulkner County staff person Mr. Tom Anderson to join this meeting to emphasize the important of county staff understanding the views of cities under their jurisdiction and to cement the idea of working in unison. He added that the transportation problems cities in Central Arkansas are facing are regional problems and will need region-wide efforts and teamwork to solve. He highlighted the will to be industry leaders in transportation and added that the benchmarking trips are an excellent example of how other regions and cities have worked together to overcome their problems. Mayor White put forward a perspective of small cities, regarding the benchmarking trip, and how small city Mayors are sometimes not able to attend them because the cost has to be paid out of pocket.

Mayor Gastineau added to the small city perspective of the legislative changes, especially the ADU bill. He mentioned that cities will have to undergo a lot of changes due to the recent changes in literature, and a county judge may not be able to completely understand these struggles due to the difference in scale, thus further solidifying the need to communicate and work together. Ms. Hill also agreed that working together has a lot of merit. She stated that it's the small city residents that work in big cities and add to their sales taxes. Thus there should be a symbiotic relationship within big and small cities. This was followed by some discussion about practices such as affordable housing, should be molded to the needs of the region and not be copied from other success stories. There was also some discussion about there being a need to work together with other organizations which serve similar counties and are fighting the same regional problems like Central Arkansas Planning and Development District (CAPDD). Working together by combining expertise will help alleviate regional problems faster.

Mayor Kemp brought this section to an end by thanking Judge Dodson and Mr. Anderson for attending the council meeting and discussing their vision. He also mentioned how important Metroplan and the SCC has been in helping small cities grow. He added that the council feels that it is important to have some representation of small cities on the executive committee. Judge Dodson assured that more discussion on the same will continue in the future Full Board and SCC meetings.

6. Metroplan Update

I. Draft Small Cities Council Bylaws

Mr. Covington led this section and reminded the council that Metroplan had asked the council about their views on forming specific bylaws for the SCC. Metroplan did not have specific bylaws for the council before and wants to regularize it in the current tenure. He explained that the focus of the draft bylaws was to help increase the community of small cities. The draft bylaws also has some literature about which members have a vote on topics pertaining specifically to the SCC. Mr. Jambhale added that it is important to have set these bylaws, as the smaller cities bring a unique perspective and inform the full board on a broader range of topics.

2. Grant Opportunities

Mr Jambhale covered two grant opportunities and a learning opportunity in this section:

- The Arkansas Community Assistance Grant Program (CAGP) offers up to \$1.5 million in funding to support community and economic development projects across the state. Eligible applicants include cities, towns, counties, unincorporated communities, nonprofits, and other government entities in Arkansas. Projects can range from constructing or renovating public facilities like healthcare centers, libraries, parks, city halls, and jails, to purchasing land or buildings for related uses and covering workforce training expenses. A 20% match (cash or in-kind contributions such as labor, materials, or land) is required. Awards are determined by the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) based on eligibility, available funds, and program demand. Learn more at www.arkansasedc.com/community-resources/community-assistance-grant-program.
- The Arkansas Tourism Grant Opportunities, offered by the University of Central Arkansas, support local tourism development with deadlines on the last Fridays of July (25), September (26), and November (28). The Festival Advertising Grant helps communities under 10,500 in population promote free, public, recurring festivals. Eligible applicants include incorporated cities and unincorporated communities (via county), with one grant allowed per fiscal year. The grant offers up to \$10,000, reimbursing two-thirds of eligible advertising costs. No match is required for grants up to \$5,000, and proof of performance is due within 90 days after the event. The Tourism Feasibility Study Grant provides a 1:1 match, up to \$15,000, for cities or counties to study the potential for new tourism attractions. Both grants share the same quarterly deadlines.
- The Community Development Institute (CDI) at the University of Central Arkansas will be held from July 28 to August 1, 2025. Registration is \$600 if completed by July 1, and \$650 for late registration between July 2–21. Sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/registerCDI>. The program features a three-year core curriculum in community and economic development:
 - Year 1: Foundations – covers community assets, visioning, and stakeholder engagement.
 - Year 2: Implementation – focuses on entrepreneurship, business development, and finance.
 - Year 3: Application – includes leadership, marketing, and workforce planningTo learn more, visit: [CDI 2025 Info](#).

Mayor White asked if anyone from the council, has countered and solved any E.V. charging facilities. And how to get outdoor Wi-Fi facility for Tesla chargers. Mr. Covington mentioned that Mr. Allen Skags and Ms. Leesa Freasier, could be excellent people to get in touch with for this question. Mayor White mentioned that the city of Keo is trying to bring more bicyclists in the city by developing the Pecan Trail. The application for the same is long and difficult to follow. She asked if anyone could help with it. Mr. Covington suggested that Mr. Hans Haustein, can has data about trails and that Ms. Freasier as well as staff at CAPDD could be good sources of information.

7. Preview of Upcoming Meetings

- Wed, July 23rd, 2025
 - 9:00 am: Small Cities Council Meeting
 - 10:00 am: Board of Directors Meeting

8. Adjourn

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