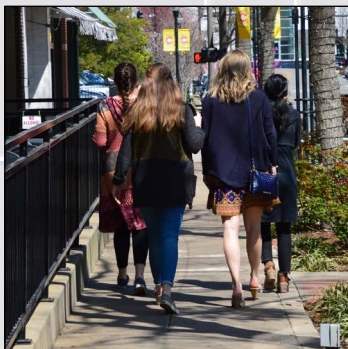


UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

FY 2026
& 2027



UPWP



M
METROPLAN

UPDATED 9/29/2025

CARTS ■ CENTRAL ARKANSAS REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY

UPWP FY 2026 & 2027

Central Arkansas REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Fiscal Years 2026 & 2027

Unified Planning Work Program

Prepared by

METROPLAN

Metropolitan Planning Organization & Council of Local Governments

In cooperation with:

United States Department of Transportation

Arkansas Department of Transportation

Rock Region METRO Transit Authority

and

City of Alexander

City of Austin

City of Bauxite

City of Benton

City of Bryant

City of Cabot

City of Cammack Village

City of Conway

City of England

City of Greenbrier

City of Guy

City of Haskell

Hot Springs Village*

City of Jacksonville

City of Keo

City of Little Rock

City of Lonoke

City of Maumelle

City of Mayflower

City of Mount Vernon

City of North Little Rock

City of Shannon Hills

City of Sheridan*

City of Sherwood

City of Traskwood

City of Vilonia

City of Ward

City of Wooster

City of Wrightsville

Faulkner County

Grant County*

Lonoke County

Pulaski County

Saline County

Little Rock Port Authority

Bill and Hillary Clinton

National Airport

Little Rock Port Authority

May 2025

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FISCAL YEAR 2026 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

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■ INTRODUCTION

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program describes the transportation planning activities Metroplan, the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) and Rock Region METRO propose to undertake.

The purpose of the UPWP is to promote a unified regional approach to transportation planning in order to achieve regional goals and objectives. Additionally, the UPWP serves to document proposed expenditures of Federal, State and local transportation planning funds, and provides a management tool for Metroplan and the funding agencies in scheduling major transportation planning activities, milestones, and products.

The UPWP is required of all metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) as a condition to receiving federal funds. Metroplan is the federally designated MPO for Central Arkansas.

Two Year UPWP

This UPWP is adopted for AR Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027. The two-year time period allows for enhanced sequencing of projects and transportation planning within the CARTS Study Area. It also aligns with the two-year election of Metroplan Board Officers and regional priorities determined under their leadership. The priorities and tasks will be reviewed at the end of fiscal year 2026 to determine any changes that are required. The 2027 budget will also be updated pending final determination of federal transportation planning funds.

Metroplan and the CARTS Planning Process

Metroplan is a council of local governments and the designated Metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). ARDOT and Rock Region METRO are partners with Metroplan in the CARTS planning process. Metroplan membership is restricted to municipal and county governments in the MSA, ARDOT, Rock Region METRO, Little Rock Port Authority, and the Bill & Hillary Clinton National Airport.

The US Department of Transportation Planning Emphasis areas have yet to be identified under the current administration. Metroplan will update the UPWP when additional guidance is received by FHWA.

The UPWP fulfills the federal requirement under 23 CFR §450.308:

(b) An MPO shall document metropolitan transportation planning activities performed with funds provided under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 in a unified planning work program (UPWP) . . .

(c) . . . each MPO, in cooperation with the State(s) and public transportation operator(s), shall develop a UPWP that includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the MPA. The UPWP shall identify work proposed for the next 1- or 2-year period by major activity and task (including activities that address the planning factors in §450.306(b)), in sufficient detail to indicate who (e.g., MPO, State, public transportation operator, local government, or consultant) will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding by activity/task, and a summary of the total amounts and sources of Federal and matching funds.

UPWP FY 2026 & 2027

The US Department of Transportation Planning Emphasis areas have yet to be identified. Metroplan will update the UPWP when additional guidance is received by FHWA.

UPWP FY 2026 & 2027

7. Promote efficient system management and operation;
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
9. Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate storm water impacts of surface transportation; and
10. Enhance travel and tourism.

Development of this FY 2026 & 2027 UPWP has been guided by regulations requiring the CARTS planning process to consider and implement projects, strategies, and services that address these ten Metropolitan planning factors. Each of these planning factors affects nearly every task; the degree of consideration and analysis is based on the scale and complexity of many issues, including transportation system development, land use, employment, economic development, human and natural environment, and housing and community development (23 CFR 450.306(b)). The matrix on page 6 summarizes the applicability of each Metropolitan planning factor to the 2026 & 2027 work program tasks.

2026–2027 Planning Priorities

The following planning priorities have been established by Metroplan, ARDOT, and Rock Region METRO for 2026 & 2027. They include a combination of federal, state, and local emphasis areas.

2026–2027 METROPLAN Planning Priorities

	Tasks	Anticipated/ Completion Schedule:
STBG Administration Procedures	50	2026
Support MTP Implementation through Technical Assistance to Local Jurisdictions	10	As Requested
Regional Greenways Status update	20	Spring 2026
Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendments and Updates	20	As Needed
Regional SMARTS Streets Plan	20, 22, 45	Spring 2026
Conway Loop Study	24	Fall 2027
2026-2029 CARTS TIP	50	Summer 2026
Additional Planning Studies	Various	As Required
Bridge and Pavement Condition Analysis	20, 43	2026
Maumelle Boulevard Study	24	2026
Additional Planning Studies	Various	As Requested
New Metroplan Website	2	Fall 2026

2026–2027 City of Little Rock Planning Priorities

	Tasks	Anticipated/Completion Schedule:
I-30 Deck Park Study	24	Fall 2027

UPWP FY 2026 & 2027

2026–2027 ARDOT Planning Priorities

	Tasks	Anticipated/Completion Schedule:
Statewide Corridors Complete Streets Priorities	24, 41	Ongoing
Resiliency Planning	42, 43	Ongoing
I-40 Corridor Little Rock to Memphis ITS Study	45	2027
Safety Planning	41	Ongoing
Vulnerable Road User Studies	24, 41	2026

Safe Streets For All Planning Grant	41	Beyond 2027
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2026–2027 Rock Region METRO Planning Priorities

	Tasks	Anticipated/Completion Schedule:
Transit Oriented Development Study - RCTC	42	Q4 2026
Conway Transit Long Range Plan	42	Fall 2027
Comprehensive Operational Analysis	42	Q4 2027

TABLE 1. PLANNING FACTORS AND TASK MATRIX

CARTS FY 2023 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM	METROPOLITAN PLANNING FACTORS									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PROJECT TASKS	Economic	Safety	Security	Accessibility	Environment	Connectivity	Management	Preservation	Storm Water	Tourism
44.21.00 PROGRAM SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATION										
1. Work Program Development and Administration	X	X		X		X	X			
2. Public Information & Citizen Participation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
44.22.00 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT & COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING										
10. Technical Assistance to Local Governments	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
11. Geographical Information System Graphics and Mapping		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
12. Land Use/Socioeconomic Data Development	X			X	X				X	
44.23.00 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING										
20. Metropolitan Transportation Plan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
21. Travel Demand Modeling and Emissions Analysis				X	X	X	X	X		
22. Strategic Regional Network	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
23. Sustainable Transportation Strategies	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
24. Studies Related to Major Transportation Investments	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
44.24.00 SHORT-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING										
40. Traffic Monitoring & Analysis of Existing Conditions	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
41. Traffic Congestion & Safety Planning	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
42. Public Transport, Goods Movement & Intermodal Planning	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
43. Facility Maintenance, Preservation & Enhancement Planning	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
44. Air Quality Planning & Public Awareness	X	X			X					X
45. Intelligent Transportation Systems	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
44.24.00 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM										
50. TIP Development, Project Selection & Monitoring	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

■ FISCAL YEAR 2026 & 2027 PROJECT TASK DESCRIPTIONS

CARTS planning activities are divided into five major planning projects taken from the Federal Transit Act, Section 5303, Metropolitan Planning Program, grant categories. Funding sources for CARTS planning activities include a combination of federal transit and highway programs. While UPWP tasks may change from year to year, UPWP projects tend to remain the same.

The following pages describe each task, including its purpose, agency or agencies responsible for carrying out the work, and expected results.

Below is a list of the projects and tasks, and the total budgeted for each project. For details, schedules and responsibilities, see the individual task descriptions beginning on the next page. Resources allocations and the planning project budgets of Metroplan, ARDOT, and Rock Region METRO are identified beginning on page 27.

Project Number	Title	Total Budgeted Amount	
		2026	2027
#44.21.00	■ PROGRAM SUPPORT & ADMINISTRATION	\$300,000	\$300,000
Task 1	Work Program Development and Administration		
Task 2	Public Information and Citizen Participation		
#44.22.00	■ GENERAL DEVELOPMENT & COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING	\$550,000	\$550,000
Task 10	Technical Assistance to Local Governments		
Task 11	Geographical Information System, Graphics, & Mapping		
Task 12	Land Use/Socioeconomic Data Development		
#44.23.00	■ LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING	\$729,200	\$537,500
Task 20	Metropolitan Transportation Plan		
Task 21	Travel Demand Modeling & Emissions Analysis		
Task 22	Strategic Regional Network		
Task 23	Sustainable Transportation Strategies		
Task 24	Major Transportation Investment Planning (Corridor Studies)		
#44.24.00	■ SHORT-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING	\$310,000	\$210,000
Task 40	Traffic Monitoring & Analysis of Existing Conditions		
Task 41	Traffic Congestion & Safety Planning		
Task 42	Public Transportation, Goods Movement & Intermodal Planning		
Task 43	Facility Maintenance, Preservation & Enhancement Planning		
Task 44	Air Quality Planning & Public Awareness		
Task 45	Intelligent Transportation Systems		
#44.24.00	■ TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM	\$125,000	\$125,000
Task 50	TIP development, Project Selection & Monitoring		

■ 44.21.00 PROGRAM SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATION

Task #1 Work Program Development & Administration

Purpose:

- 1) Prepare and administer the UPWP.
- 2) Support MPO, citizen committees, and subcommittee meetings.
- 3) Education and training activities

Method:

Metroplan, ARDOT, and Rock Region METRO staff will cooperatively develop and administer the UPWP, and coordinate CARTS planning activities and committee meetings in compliance with UPWP funding agencies. ARDOT staff is assigned primary responsibility for coordinating the CARTS planning process with the statewide planning process. Rock Region METRO staff is assigned primary responsibility for coordinating Rock Region METRO's transit planning activities with the CARTS and statewide planning processes.

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
Metroplan	
1. Administer CARTS FY 2026 & 2027 UPWP	Ongoing
2. Prepare and publish the CARTS FY 2026 & 2027 UPWP	May/June 2027
3. Coordinate consultant-related activities	As Needed
4. Modify UPWP role and responsibilities	As Needed
5. Conduct education and training activities	As Needed
ARDOT	
1. Coordinate ARDOT's planning process within CARTS	Ongoing
Rock Region METRO	
1. Coordinate Rock Region METRO's planning process within CARTS	Ongoing

■ 44.21.00 PROGRAM SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATION

Task #2 Public Information & Citizen Participation

Purpose:

- 1) Disseminate public information regarding CARTS activities and current issues in metropolitan transportation planning.
- 2) Encourage and document citizen participation in the development of CARTS' transportation plans, programs and policies via the approved CARTS Public Participation Plan. Metroplan's public participation process also satisfies Rock Region METRO's public process.

Method:

Metroplan, ARDOT, and Rock Region METRO staff will coordinate to: (1) disseminate public information; (2) encourage citizen participation (including low-income and minority households); (3) consult with interested parties, and (4) facilitate and document public involvement in the CARTS planning process. ARDOT and Rock Region METRO staffs are primarily responsible for soliciting public input regarding their planning activities, consistent with their public participation policies.

Expected Results/Product:	Anticipated Completion Schedule:
Metroplan	
1. Implement and document public information and citizen participation	Ongoing
2. Modify/update <i>CARTS Public Participation Plan</i> and <i>Title VI Program and LEP Plan</i> as part of the long range plan update	As Needed
3. Publish Metroplan reports	
• <i>Metroplan Annual Report</i>	Spring
• Others	As Needed
4. Maintain and constantly update Metroplan archives	Ongoing
5. Maintain Metroplan websites (Metroplan.org , ozoneactiondays.org , arkansasrivertail.org , centralarkgreenways.com , others)	Ongoing/As Needed
6. Update CARTS Public Participation Plan	As Needed
7. Develop, administer, and implement new Metroplan committee for public outreach.	Summer 2026
8. New Metroplan Website	Fall 2026
ARDOT	
1. Solicit public input for ARDOT-led planning activities within CARTS	Ongoing/As Needed
Rock Region METRO	
1. Solicit public input for Rock Region METRO planning within CARTS	Ongoing/As Needed

■ 44.22.00 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT & COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Task #10 Technical Assistance to Local Governments

Purpose:

- 1) Assist local governments with planning activities integral to the comprehensively planned development of the CARTS area.
- 2) Assist in bringing local plans, regulations and ordinances into conformity with the long-range metropolitan transportation plan.
- 3) Provide ongoing technical assistance to member jurisdictions to aid local planning efforts in coordination with transportation.

Method:

Consistent with MPO priorities and policies, Metroplan staff may provide technical assistance requested by a member government to complete local planning activities integral to the comprehensively planned development of the CARTS area. Consistent with statewide planning priorities, ARDOT staff may also provide planning assistance to CARTS area local governments.

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
Metroplan	
1. Provide mapping and other technical assistance to CARTS area local governments	Ongoing
2. Update local plans and ordinances necessary to conform to regional goals	Ongoing/As Requested
3. Conduct technical studies for member jurisdictions, which may include field data collection; inter-regional coordination; municipal annexation/incorporation; traffic; transit, parking, population, housing, environmental, and/or signal warrants; safety and access management	As Requested
4. Develop or revise comprehensive and general plans, master street plans, land use plans, zoning ordinances and maps, subdivision regulations and design standards, bikeway and pedestrian system plans, public transit service plans, and other community facility plans	As Requested
5. Other CARTS Area local government planning activities	As Requested
6. Provide staff support to the Small Cities Council. (1) Assist jurisdictions with the application of model ordinances supporting MTP goals. (2) Conduct training sessions to planning commissions and others.	Ongoing

■ 44.22.00 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT & COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Task #11 Geographical Information System, Graphics & Mapping

Purpose:

- 1) Map and analyze appropriate spatial features and attributes in and near the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).
- 2) Maintain and improve GIS and related technical capabilities.
- 3) Produce, print, plot, display, publish, acquire, and maintain data, documents, digital imagery, illustrations and maps.
- 4) Provide spacial decision support to assist MPO planning tasks and member jurisdictions.

Method:

As needed, Metroplan staff will develop and manage digital computing facilities; employ desktop publishing and visual presentation/multi-media systems; collect and utilize digital imagery and GPS location data, as well as U.S. Census and other spatially referenced data in developing and maintaining an Arc/GIS™-based geographical information system (GIS) covering the MSA and CARTS Area.

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
Metroplan	
1. Maintain and enhance digital computing and communications, internet sites, and related technical capabilities	Ongoing
2. Continue development of an Arc/GIS™-based GIS covering the MSA and CARTS Area	Ongoing
3. Manage and improve Metroplan's local area network (LAN) and internet capabilities, including digital data storage, security & backup	Ongoing
4. Produce, display and publish CARTS area data, documents, illustrations, and maps; provide GIS support for the CARTS Travel Demand Model and socioeconomic data development.	Ongoing
5. Provide spatial decision mapping support for other UPWP tasks	Ongoing/As Needed
6. Provide GIS and mapping assistance to CARTS area local governments	Ongoing/As Requested
7. Utilize GIS to set goals, assist, and monitor a performance-based planning program	Ongoing

■ 44.22.00 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT & COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Task #12 Land Use/Socioeconomic Data Development

Purpose:

Efforts for this task will be associated with the development of scenarios for the long-range transportation plan.

- 1) Provide the CARTS planning process with data analysis of regional economic and demographic trends, population and employment forecasts.
- 2) Further develop the Metroplan Data Center.
- 3) Provide timely and reliable information characterizing land use and socioeconomic conditions and trends for the MSA and CARTS Area.

Method:

As needed, MPO staff will coordinate with CARTS committees and data providers to: (1) collect, develop, maintain, analyze and document land use and socio-economic data; (2) provide data support for and coordinate with other UPWP activities; and (3) prepare and publish technical reports and analyses.

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
Metroplan	
1. Develop, analyze, maintain and document land use and socio-economic data characterizing MSA and CARTS area conditions and trends	Ongoing
2. Develop and refine socioeconomic data for use in the CARTS and Statewide Travel Demand Models	Ongoing
3. Publish two <i>MetroTrends</i> magazines:	
• <i>Yearly Economic Review and Outlook</i>	Fall
• <i>Yearly Demographic Review and Outlook</i>	Spring
4. Publish semi-annual <i>Best Practices Newsletter</i>	Winter/Summer
5. Provide support for other UPWP tasks	Ongoing

■ 44.23.00 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Task #20 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Purpose:

To manage and update the regional long-range metropolitan transportation plan (MTP)

Method:

In accordance with Metroplan policy and applicable federal regulations, Metroplan will coordinate and undertake various activities to update the metropolitan transportation plan in consultation and coordination with ARDOT and Rock Region METRO staffs. The existing plan will be monitored and amended as necessary.

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
Metroplan	
1. Update the MTP	As Needed
2. Satisfactory progress in monitoring and implementing the MTP	Ongoing
3. Coordinate with ARDOT and Rock Region METRO on Regional Performance Measures	As Needed
4. Process requests for MTP amendments	As Needed
5. Regional Greenways Status Report	Annually
6. Complete county transportation plans	2026–2027
7. Develop Smart Streets plan (with ARDOT)	Spring 2026
8. SS4A integration into MTP	Ongoing
ARDOT	
1. Support MPO in MTP update	Ongoing
2. Consider the impact of recommendations from various studies on MTP, in association with ARDOT planning efforts	Ongoing
3. Evaluate the impact of performance measure targets on ARDOT long-term planning efforts	Ongoing
4. Implement Statewide Long-Range Intermodal Transportation Plan	Ongoing
Rock Region METRO	
5. Support Metroplan in MTP update	Ongoing
6. Review MTP in association with Rock Region METRO's planning efforts	Ongoing
7. Evaluate the impact of performance measure targets on Rock Region METRO's long-term planning efforts	Ongoing

Consultant Studies	Total Contract Amount	Estimated Expenditure	
		FY 2026	FY 2027
Smart Streets and ITS Plan	\$375,000	\$41,700	\$0

■ 44.23.00 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Task #21 Travel Demand Modeling & Emissions Analysis

Purpose:

- 1) Simulate existing and future travel demand.
- 2) Effectively model, analyze, and document multi-modal transportation networks.
- 3) Estimate on-road motor-vehicle emissions, as needed.
- 4) Incorporate new data into the CARTS Model.
- 5) Provide travel demand, congestion, delay, and other data to assist studies of proposed transportation projects.

Method:

- 1) Metroplan and ARDOT will cooperatively utilize the CARTS travel demand model; prepare, analyze and document network-based travel forecasts, as needed; and undergo training in the use of travel demand modeling and emissions analysis tools.
- 2) Process socioeconomic data from the 2020 census to update the base-year model.

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
Metroplan	
1. Maintain and implement the CARTS Travel Demand Model	Ongoing
2. Oversee consultant use of the CARTS Travel Demand Model	Ongoing
3. Provide forecasts for regional studies	Ongoing/As Requested
ARDOT	
1. Assist with maintenance/implementation of the CARTS Travel Demand Model	Ongoing
Rock Region METRO	
1. Provide route modification suggestions to Metroplan and ARDOT staffs for incorporation into respective travel demand models	Ongoing/As Needed

■ 44.23.00 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Task #22 Strategic Regional Network

Purpose:

- 1) Plan for CARTS area freeways, regional arterials, regional transit improvements, and regional bikeway and pedestrian systems in support of the MTP update.
- 2) Optimize the efficiency of the existing transportation networks.

Method:

- 1) Metroplan, ARDOT, and Rock Region METRO staffs will coordinate with CARTS committees on projects of regional significance. Metroplan staff will be primarily responsible for coordinating projects on the Regional Arterial Network (RAN) with affected municipalities and ARDOT (on state highways). ARDOT will coordinate with Metroplan staff on freeway projects. Rock Region METRO will coordinate with Metroplan on transit projects of regional significance.
- 2) Bicycle and pedestrian transportation planning will focus on implementation of the new regional bikeway plan over the next 10 years.

Expected Results/Product:	Anticipated Completion Schedule:
Metroplan	
1. Evaluate RAN network	Ongoing/As Needed
2. Conduct long-range regional bike and pedestrian planning with a focus on implementation of the Regional Greenways Plan.	Ongoing
3. Conduct other long-range regional freeway or RAN corridor planning in consultation with ARDOT	As Needed
4. Conduct other strategic regional network planning in support of Task 20	Ongoing/As Needed
5. Consult, cooperate, and assist local governments and CARTS committees on city and regional bike plans.	Ongoing/As Needed
ARDOT	
1. Continue the evaluation of federal-aid maintenance needs and cost estimates, including system infrastructure performance measures, jointly with Metroplan	Ongoing
Rock Region METRO	
1. Develop long-term implementation strategies from <i>Move Central Arkansas</i>	Ongoing

*The Regional Safety Action Plan and Smart Streets Plan conducted under Task 20 will support development of the strategic regional network.

■ 44.23.00 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Task #23 Sustainable Transportation Strategies

Purpose:

Increase the livability of the region by developing and advancing sustainable transportation strategies, Jump Start implementation strategies, all consistent with the goals and objectives of *Central Arkansas 2050*.

Method:

Metroplan will participate in regional collaborations that promote sustainable transportation strategies.

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
Metroplan	
1. Administer Jump Start plans	As Needed
2. Participate in Healthy Active Arkansas and other stakeholder groups	Ongoing
3. Promote sustainability practices from <i>Central Arkansas Transforming Mobility</i> to the general stakeholder groups	Ongoing
4. Promote transit-oriented developments as a strategy to increase transit ridership	Ongoing
5. Perform any other activities required to develop and advance sustainable transportation strategies	As Needed
6. Coordination of EEI Plan and MTP	Ongoing

■ 44.23.00 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Task #24 Studies Related To Major Transportation Investments (Corridor Studies)

Purpose:

Cooperatively perform corridor/subarea studies related to major transportation investments within the region. These studies will be used to determine the need for a major investment study (MIS) or to address issues left unresolved by a MIS or a major transportation investment and may involve the application of access management techniques.

Method:

As needed, ARDOT, Metroplan, or Rock Region METRO may cooperatively undertake corridor/subarea planning activities to determine the need for a MIS or otherwise related to a major transportation investment.

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
Metroplan	
1. Multi-modal corridor studies	
a. Conway Loop Study	Fall 2027
b. Maumelle Blvd. Study	Fall 2026
c. Additional Studies	As Requested
ARDOT	
1. Satisfactory progress on corridor studies requested by the Arkansas Highway Commission	Ongoing
City of Little Rock	
1. City of Little Rock I-30 Deck Park Phase I Planning Study (\$5 million)	2027

■ 44.24.00 SHORT-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Task #40 Traffic Monitoring & Analysis of Existing Conditions

Purpose:

Identify and analyze existing and near-term transportation system and travel conditions in the CARTS area and monitor deployment of network optimization strategies.

Method:

ARDOT staff will coordinate traffic data collection for the CARTS area and provide data to Metroplan, Rock Region METRO, local governments, and others. Metroplan staff will develop an "existing conditions report" to support these efforts, and report on regional performance measures.

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
ARDOT	
1. Collect traffic volume, vehicle classification, vehicle speed, vehicle registration, and Highway Performance and Monitoring System (HPMS) data	Ongoing
2. Collect and provide traffic data in support of other UPWP activities	Ongoing
3. Prepare, publish and distribute traffic-related data and technical reports	Ongoing
Metroplan	
1. Satisfactory progress in collecting and reporting traffic related data, and publication of appropriate data and technical reports identifying and analyzing existing and near-term CARTS area transportation system and travel conditions	Ongoing
2. Develop applicable regional performance measures	Biennial

■ 44.24.00 SHORT-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Task #41 Traffic Congestion & Safety Planning

Purpose:

- 1) Further develop and implement the CARTS area system reliability by advancing travel demand reduction and operational management strategies.
- 2) Address CARTS area surface transportation safety concerns as needed.

Method:

- 1) Traffic Congestion/System Reliability: ARDOT, Rock Region METRO and Metroplan staff will coordinate and cooperate to further develop, implement, and report the CARTS area System Reliability Measures and Congestion Measures.
- 2) Transportation Safety: As needed, ARDOT, Rock Region METRO and Metroplan staff will coordinate and cooperate to address surface transportation safety concerns in the CARTS area.

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
ARDOT	
1. Complete operations studies and safety studies, in coordination with Metroplan staff and local governments	As Requested
2. Provide public information regarding ARDOT-operated park/ride facilities	Ongoing
3. Consider safety concerns with respect to state highway system incident management in the CARTS area	Ongoing
Metroplan	
1. Monitor regional performance measures	Ongoing
2. Evaluate and implement demonstration projects for SS4A	Ongoing
3. Develop a Smart Streets Plan focused on traffic operations and safety (also under Task 20)	Summer 2026
Rock Region METRO	
1. Promote Rock Region METRO's public transit commuter service	Ongoing
2. Identify how safety concerns impact the operations or use of Rock Region METRO's facilities and transit vehicles	Ongoing
3. Identify how safety concerns impact the operations or use of Rock Region METRO's transit vehicles in the Conway Service Area	Ongoing
4. Conduct reporting for Transit Safety Performance Measure to National Transit Database	Monthly
5. Conduct reporting for Transit Safety Performance Measures for Conway's Microtransit Service to the National Transit Database	Ongoing

■ 44.24.00 SHORT-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Task #41 Traffic Congestion & Safety Planning, continued

City of Little Rock	
1. City of Little Rock I-30 Deck Park Phase II Planning Study (\$5 million)	2027
2. Safe Streets for All planning	Beyond 2027

Task #42 Public Transportation, Goods Movement & Intermodal Planning

Purpose:

- 1) Perform short-range public transit service and operations planning, as needed.
- 2) Carry out inventories and short-range planning for public transportation facilities and equipment, as well as for public and private intermodal person and goods movement facilities and systems.

Method:

- 1) Public Transit Service & Operations Planning: As needed, Rock Region METRO will coordinate and cooperate with Metroplan and ARDOT to develop short-range plans, programs and policies to expand and enhance its public transit services and system operations.
- 2) Public Transportation Facilities & Equipment: Rock Region METRO staff will coordinate and cooperate with Metroplan and ARDOT staff to carry out any inventories and short-range planning for Rock Region METRO's transit facilities and equipment, as needed. Rock Region METRO staff is primarily responsible for any inventories of Rock Region METRO facilities and equipment. ARDOT staff is primarily responsible for coordinating inventories of any other transit facilities and equipment in the CARTS area. Metroplan staff is primarily responsible for integrating the results of public transit inventories into the CARTS planning process.
- 3) Intermodal Facilities & Systems: ARDOT staff will coordinate and cooperate with MPO and Rock Region METRO staff to carry out inventories and short-range planning for public and private intermodal person and goods movement facilities and systems, as needed. ARDOT staff is assigned primary responsibility for any inventories of person and goods movement facilities and systems. Metroplan staff is primarily responsible for the modeling of truck trips, and for integrating the results of any intermodal inventories into the CARTS planning process.

Expected Results/Product:	Anticipated Completion Schedule:
Rock Region METRO	
1. Satisfactory progress in developing short-range plans to improve public transit system services and operations	Annual

■ 44.24.00 SHORT-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Task #42 Public Transportation, Goods Movement & Intermodal Planning, continued

2. Continue Rock Region METRO Comprehensive Implementation Stratagem:	Ongoing
a. Update inventories of public transit facilities and equipment	Annual
b. Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) data reporting	As Required
3. Satisfactory progress on Streetcar Strategic Study	Ongoing
4. Transit Oriented Development Study	2026
5. Continue various neighborhood and community service route planning	Ongoing
6. Coordinate with any other public or private transit providers regarding transportation services for the urbanized area	Ongoing
7. Coordinate with human service agency transportation providers to implement and update the <i>Arkansas Statewide Transit Coordination Plan: 2023</i>	As Needed
8. Maintain ITS data to constantly improve/upgrade transit network	Ongoing
9. Review Transit ADA Standards and potential violations	Ongoing
10. Conduct Conway Transit Long-range Plan for the Conway service area.	2027
ARDOT	
1. Continue modeling truck trips and short-range plans for intermodal person and goods movement facilities and systems in support of CARTS Travel Demand Model Update	Ongoing/As Needed
Metroplan	
1. Support the short-term planning activities of Rock Region METRO	Ongoing

Task #43 Facility Maintenance, Preservation & Enhancement Planning

Purpose:

- 1) Carry out inventories and short-range planning for pavement, bridge systems and other CARTS area transportation facilities.

Consultant Studies	Total Contract Amount	Estimated Expenditure	
		FY 2026	FY 2027
Phase II Transit Oriented Development Study - RCTC	\$5,860,000	\$2,930,000	\$2,930,000
Comprehensive Operational Analysis	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$0

■ 44.24.00 SHORT-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- 2) Plan for corridor maintenance, preservation and enhancements.

Method:

- 1) Pavement Management: As needed, ARDOT and Metroplan staff will consult and coordinate to carry out pavement inventories and prepare short-range pavement improvement plans for federal-aid roadways in the CARTS Area. The focus of such inventories will be area freeways and regional arterials.
- 2) Bridge Management: ARDOT staff is responsible for inspecting all publicly owned bridges in the CARTS area and maintaining a bridge inventory. Special emphasis will be on freeway structures and identified "critical" bridges on regional arterials. Metroplan staff is primarily responsible for integrating the results of bridge inventories and analyses into the CARTS planning process (refer to Tasks #20 and #22), including regional performance measures.
- 3) Highway-Railway Grade Separation Planning: As needed, ARDOT staff with the assistance of Metroplan staff will conduct studies of at-grade highway rail crossings to consider upgrades to existing crossings equipment and possible grade separations.
- 4) Other Facility Maintenance, Preservation & Enhancement Planning: As needed, Metroplan, ARDOT, and Rock Region METRO staff will jointly coordinate and cooperate to investigate methods of standardizing financial and project related record keeping for transportation maintenance and capital expenditures, and any other short-range transportation corridor or facility maintenance, preservation or enhancement planning.

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
ARDOT	
1. Inventory, analysis, and performance reports of pavements on the state highway system	Ongoing
2. Inventory, analysis, and performance reports for all publicly owned bridges in the CARTS area	Ongoing
3. Conduct studies of at-grade highway rail crossings	As Needed
4. Develop standardized financial and project related record keeping of transportation maintenance and capital expenditures on the state highway system	Ongoing
5. Perform other facility maintenance, preservation and enhancement planning	As Needed
Metroplan	
1. Compile local governments' pavement inventories	When Provided
2. Integrate pavement inventories/analyses into the CARTS planning process (see Tasks #20 and #22), including regional performance measures	As Needed

■ 44.24.00 SHORT-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Task #43 Facility Maintenance, Preservation & Enhancement Planning, continued

3. Develop applicable regional performance measures, in coordination with ARDOT	Biennial
4. Identify corridors, facilities and rights-of-way (ROW) to be preserved	Ongoing
5. Coordinate analysis of any proposed transportation enhancements	As Needed
6. Perform other facility maintenance, preservation, and enhancement planning	As Needed
7. Coordinate meetings and activities for the Southwest Trail task force and the Arkansas River Trail task force	Ongoing
Rock Region METRO	
1. Monitor and maintain standardized financial and project related record keeping of transportation maintenance and capital expenditures on the regional transit network	Ongoing
2. Perform other facility maintenance, preservation and enhancement planning	As Needed
3. Continue to implement Facilities Master Plan	Ongoing

Task #44 Air Quality Planning & Public Awareness

Purpose:

- 1) Increase public awareness of local air quality concerns.
- 2) Provide for stakeholder involvement in air quality planning.

■ 44.24.00 SHORT-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- 3) Conduct planning activities that lead to improved air quality for Central Arkansas.

Method:

Metroplan, ARDOT and Rock Region METRO staff will cooperatively participate in interagency air quality planning activities. ARDOT and Rock Region METRO staff will be primarily responsible for coordinating their own agency action plans in support of the Ozone Action Days program (OAD). The responsibilities of Metroplan, ARDOT, and Rock Region METRO staff for regional air quality (AQ) analysis and other AQ planning will be cooperatively determined as the need arises or as delineated in an interagency memorandum of agreement (MOA).

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
Metroplan	
1. Execution of the OAD awareness program for Central Arkansas	May-September
2. Develop 2026 & 2027 ozone season awareness plan	February
3. Monitor ambient air quality data, assist with regional emissions analyses, and coordinate preparations of any Metroplan conformity determination documents (see also Tasks #21 and #40)	As Required
ARDOT	
1. Support Ozone Action Days through ARDOT's activities	Ongoing
Rock Region METRO	
1. Support Ozone Action Days through Rock Region METRO activities	Ongoing

Task #45 Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

Purpose:

Refine and implement the CARTS ITS Plan in accordance with the regional ITS architecture, leading to improved efficiency and safety for the movement of people and goods throughout Central Arkansas.

Consultant Studies	Total Contract Amount	Estimated Expenditure	
		FY 2026	FY 2027
Ozone Action Days	\$60,000 Annually	\$60,000	\$60,000

■ 44.24.00 SHORT-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Method:

Metroplan, ARDOT and Rock Region METRO staff will continue to refine and implement the CARTS ITS Plan, Incident Management Plan, and CARTS Freeway Management System Plan, consistent with federal requirements and the adopted MTP (also see Task #20).

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
Metroplan	
1. Coordinate with ARDOT on regional and state ITS initiatives	As Needed
2. Update regional ITS plan and architecture as part of Smart Streets Plan	Spring 2026
ARDOT	
1. Evaluate incident management strategies	Ongoing
Rock Region METRO	
1. Monitor and maintain ITS data	Ongoing
2. Evaluate and monitor annual service enhancement reporting	Ongoing

Consultant Studies	Total Contract Amount	Estimated Expenditure	
		FY 2026	FY 2027
Smart Streets Plan	\$375,000	\$41,700	\$0

■ 44.25.00 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Task #50 TIP Development, Project Selection & Monitoring

Purpose:

- 1) Cooperatively develop and publish the CARTS 2027–2030 TIP.
- 2) Select TIP projects to be implemented (STP, HIP, TAP <200,000).
- 3) Revise policies and procedures for TIP development, as needed.
- 4) Monitor TIP implementation.
- 5) Prepare status reports on previously authorized TIP projects.

Method:

Metroplan, ARDOT, and Rock Region METRO staff will jointly consult and coordinate with each other and with the Metroplan Board and CARTS committees to develop the FY 2023-2026 TIP; monitor authorized TIP projects; revise as needed the CARTS policies and procedures for TIP development; and publish the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (ALOP).

<i>Expected Results/Product:</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Schedule:</i>
Metroplan	
1. Develop and adopt the FY 2027-2030 TIP	Summer 2026
2. Surface Transportation Block Grant Administration Procedures	Summer 2026
3. Publish the ALOP	Annually December 31
ARDOT	
1. Coordinate TIP project proposals for the State Highway System	Ongoing
2. Provide estimates of Federal/State funds available for TIP projects	As Needed
3. Prepare Funds Management Reports on federal obligations	Quarterly
Rock Region METRO	
1. Coordinate transit TIP projects and amendments	As Needed

■ FISCAL YEAR 2026 & 2027 CARTS BUDGET

Fiscal Year 2026 & 2027 CARTS Staff Resources

Ten personnel among the three UPWP agencies are committed to full-time direct support of the tasks outlined in the FY 2026 & 2027 CARTS UPWP; another five-plus personnel are committed in part-time direct support. Additional personnel may be assigned to consultant-led work tasks.

At present, Metroplan has eight staff positions committed in direct support of the FY 2026 & 2027 UPWP. Metroplan planning staff is composed of the CARTS Study Director/Deputy Director, three transportation/community planners, one statistician-research planner, two GIS/policy analysts, and one graphics coordinator.

ARDOT commits three study coordinators, plus others as needed, in direct support of the CARTS UPWP.

Rock Region METRO's transit planner is committed to direct support of the CARTS UPWP. Additionally, the CFO and grants accountant, plus others as needed, devote a portion of their time in direct support of UPWP tasks.

Each UPWP agency is assigned primary responsibility for specific activities, as delineated in the task descriptions; inter-agency working groups are employed to accomplish specific UPWP activities. For example, ARDOT and Metroplan jointly maintain and utilize the travel demand and forecast models for the CARTS Area.

The CARTS Study Director/Metroplan Deputy Director is responsible for overall program support and administration of Metroplan's work program tasks, as well as for interagency coordination with the other UPWP Agencies. Although Metroplan staff often form working groups and share in the performance of work program activities, each staff person dedicated to direct support of the work program is charged with primary responsibility for accomplishing specific tasks or subtasks. For example, one transportation planner is mainly responsible for providing staff support for TCC meetings and TIP development.

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF FY 2026 & 2027 CARTS STAFF RESOURCES

CARTS Agency	Direct Support Full -Time	Direct Support Part -Time	Indirect Support Full -Time
Metroplan	9	2	2.5
ARDOT	1	2+	As needed
Rock Region Metro	2	2	0
CARTS Total	10	5+	4

UPWP FY 2026 & 2027

Tables 3 and 4 summarize overall federal and local revenues budgeted by Metroplan, ARDOT and Rock Region METRO in FY 2026 and FY 2027. Federal funds budgeted constitute 80 percent of the total; State and local matching funds constitute 20 percent, unless overmatched.

TABLE 3. SUMMARY OF FY 2026 CARTS UPWP BUDGET*

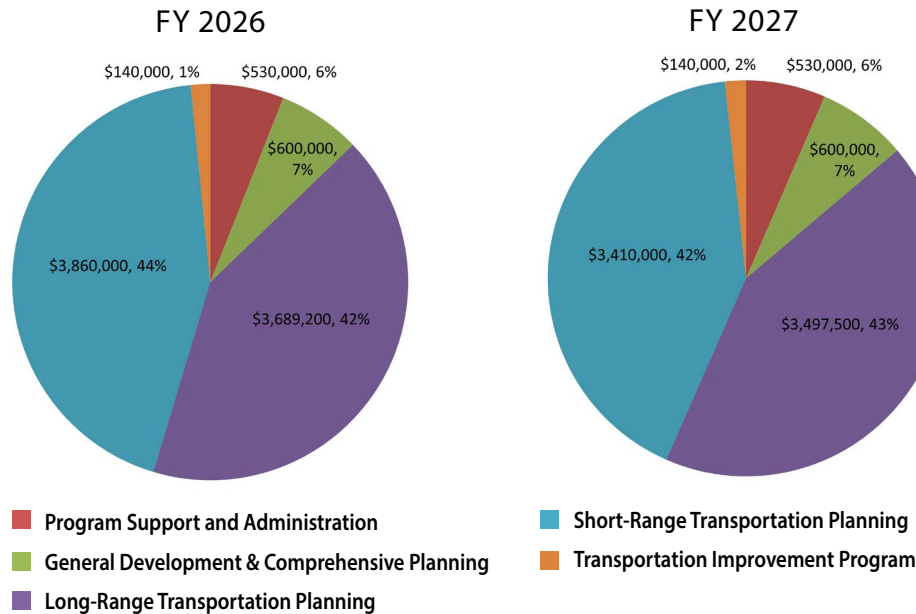
CARTS Agency	Federal	Local	Total
Metroplan	\$1,611,360	\$402,840	\$2,014,200
Rock Region METRO	\$2,920,000	\$730,000	\$3,650,000
ARDOT	\$524,000	\$131,000	\$655,000
City of Little Rock	\$2,800,000	\$700,000	\$3,500,000
CARTS Total	\$7,855,360	\$1,963,840	\$9,819,200

*Subject to change based upon final planning figures

TABLE 4. SUMMARY OF FY 2027 CARTS UPWP BUDGET*

CARTS Agency	Federal	Local	Total
Metroplan	\$1,378,000	\$344,500	\$1,722,500
Rock Region METRO	\$2,640,000	\$660,000	\$3,300,000
ARDOT	\$524,000	\$131,000	\$655,000
City of Little Rock	\$2,800,000	\$700,000	\$3,500,000
CARTS Total	\$7,342,000	\$1,835,500	\$9,177,500

FIGURE 3. TOTAL CARTS BUDGET BY TASK



On the following pages, **Tables 5 and 6** detail expenditures budgeted by Metroplan, ARDOT and Rock Region METRO, on CARTS planning projects or tasks described in this UPWP. For each planning project, total expenditures by each CARTS agency, type of fund, and federal/local matching amounts are identified.

TABLE 7. GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

ARDOT	Arkansas Department of Transportation
ALOP	Annual Listing of Obligated Projects
ASCT	Adaptive Signal Control Technology
AULP	Agreed Upon List of Projects
CARTS	Central Arkansas Regional Transportation Study
CMP	Congestion Management Process
FAST Act	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year (October 1 - September 30)
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
HPMS	Highway Performance and Monitoring System
ITS	Intelligent Transportation System
LAN	Local Area Network
MAP-21	Moving America for Progress in the 21 st Century
MIS	Major Investment Study
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MPO	Metropolitan planning organization
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area
MTP	Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan
OAD	Ozone Action Days
RAN	Regional Arterial Network
ROW	right-of-way
RPAC	Regional Planning Advisory Council
TAM	Transit Asset Management
TCC	Technical Coordinating Committee
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMC	Transportation Management Area
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program



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