



IMAGINE CENTRAL ARKANSAS

Plan Smart. Live Smart.

HUD Sustainable Communities Grant Community Outreach

The following is a summary of outreach conducted for the Imagine Central Arkansas through the HUD Sustainability Communities Grant. Funding through this grant has been used to help collect information needed for the HUD grant, in addition to informing the Long-range Transportation Plan and to increase participation among populations that have traditionally been underrepresented in community outreach.

Community Conversations

A series of seven Community Conversations were held by Metroplan, with the assistance of The Design Group, to provide input into the five areas of study identified in the HUD Sustainability Grant. These community conversations consisted of a short introduction, followed by the “Faces of Central Arkansas” video, with approximately 40 minutes dedicated to the groups of 5-10 community members. The bulk of the conversation consisted of discussing and writing ideas pertaining to Transportation, Housing, Healthy Lifestyles, Energy/Environment, and Jobs/Economic Development. The following is a brief summary of main ideas from this outreach. Appendix A includes the written record from each of these meetings.

Transportation (key ideas)

1. Maintenance of Streets
2. More Bicycle Options (bike lanes, trails connecting cities)
3. Increased bus service (test new routes, lower cost, cultural change)
4. Metro-bus /subway system (more trolleys)
5. Better Pedestrian facilities (cross-walks/fix sidewalks)
6. Wider Roadways, improve Ramps
7. Complete loop around Little Rock (North Belt Freeway)
8. Toll Roads, HOV Lanes
9. Improve safety (lighting)

10. Taxi Cabs
11. Overnight construction on roadways

Housing (Key Ideas)

1. Revitalize neighborhoods
2. Affordable housing
3. Improved parks and community centers
4. Eco friendly apartments (more apartments/multi-family housing/condos)
5. Neighborhood watch/police enforcement/code enforcement
6. Revitalizing housing projects
7. More opportunities for homeless
8. Infill, build up historic areas, use older buildings
9. Storm shelters for tornado prone areas
10. Daycare/after hours for teens
11. Rehab and senior housing
12. Universal design

Healthy Lifestyles

1. Aquatic activities/community centers/health clubs
2. Healthy food stores/eliminate food deserts
3. Recreation and upkeep of neighborhood parks (more paths and trails)
4. Mobile grocery (free fruit and vegetables)
5. Educational classes
6. Commercial development/villages that encourage walking
7. Health clinics in neighborhoods/access to healthcare facilities
8. Community gardens
9. Clean air

Energy and Environment

1. Recycling
2. Public transit/less dependence on single user auto
3. Renewable energy sources
4. More energy efficient homes
5. Preserve green areas/watershed protection
6. Enforcement (smoking/noise)
7. Limit sprawl
8. Improved drainage system
9. Underground power
10. Energy efficient cars/electric cars

Economic Development

1. Regional Collaboration/market region
2. Education for workforce training (votech/community colleges)
3. Adult education/retraining
4. Safe/Clean/Good Schools
5. Affordable Colleges
6. Small Business Support
7. Tax breaks for job creators
8. High tech and green jobs
9. State minimum wage/working wage
10. More diversity/increased jobs outside urban core

Boys and Girls Clubs

The Boys and Girls Club of Central Arkansas is a partner with Metroplan on the HUD sustainable communities grant. In support of public involvement, seven boys and girls clubs within Little Rock and North Little Rock held Family Nights where parents were asked to respond to questions concerning their respective neighborhoods. Students also illustrated their vision for the future by drawing their ideal community. Below is a drawing from the Thrasher and Whetstone (Wakefield) clubs. Results from these family nights are in the process of being compiled and will be presented at the RPAC meeting.

Thrasher



Whetstone (Wakefield)



Appendix A – Community Conversations

Little Rock Community Conversation, St Marks Baptist Church: November 8, 2012

Estimated Attendance 40

- Transportation
- Housing
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Energy/Environment
- Jobs/Economic Development

(Responses being added)

North Little Rock Community Conversation, Metro Full Counsel, NLR: November 13th, 2012

Estimated Attendance 31

- Transportation
 - Better maintenance of streets
 - CATA system that makes sense
 - Better network, make return bus stops, directly across from where you get off bus
 - App to see how you can get there
 - Equal maintenance of all neighborhoods
 - Repair/maintain sidewalks
 - Trim trees over streets
 - Complete River Trail behind Dillard's
 - More bike lanes
 - Airport to downtown connection with public transit
 - I-30 on-off ramp needs to be longer
 - 24 hour bus route for overnight workers
 - Public parking for carpool
 - Low cost public transportation
 - Rapid transit within 50 mile range
 - Alternative fuel infrastructure
 - Wider roadways
 - Driving lessons/bike safety/rules
 - Increased police enforcement
 - Improvement of pedestrian crosswalks especially handicapped
 - ADA traffic signals
 - Short range public transportation
 - Organizing bike group to have kids ride to school
 - Texting and driving, more laws
 - Incentives for car pool
 - Multi- lanes
 - Posted bus schedules
 - Comm. Bridges
- Housing
 - Revitalize neighborhood
 - Parks updated
 - Education/laws to help keep neighborhood up (enforcement of laws & codes)
 - Support system for elderly for upkeep, and others
 - Affordable housing for vets, disabled, homeless, etc.
 - Program to help with basic home repairs
 - Affordable planned unit development with community centers, etc.

- Providing replacement value
- Eco-friendly apartments/houses
- Upkeep of existing neighborhoods
- Neighbor fencing (brick or iron) standard through neighborhoods
- Non-traditional financing for homeownership (nonprofit, corp)
- Homeownership and education
- Homeownership/price/rental
- Neighborhood associations/ watch groups
- Revitalization of housing projects (Madison Heights, Granite Heights)
- Urban Renewal) Sustainable Housing
- Healthy Lifestyles
 - Aquatic activities within community centers (indoor/outdoor)
 - Eliminate food deserts
 - Mental help
 - Connectivity for sidewalks, handicap-accessible
 - Recreation and upkeep of neighborhood parks (safer)
 - Walk paths/bike trails
 - Bike rentals in neighborhoods
 - Increased exercise classes in community centers
 - Food pantries
 - Mobile grocery/mobile fresh fruits/vegetables
 - Transportation for less fortunate to health care visits, etc.
 - Accessibility @ public transportation stops within neighborhoods
 - Smoothie shops/ healthier options
 - Pre-natal care, prescription assistance, sex education
 - Food awareness
 - Promote healthy lifestyles
 - Free gyms
 - Community gardens, hear more about them
 - More cost efficient healthy meals
 - Educational classes on healthy foods and preparation
 - Food storage
 - Matching money for fruit and vegetable purchase
 - Commercial development “villages” that encourage walking, create destinations for physical activity
 - Discounts on insurance premiums for healthy living
- Energy/Environment
 - Raise awareness of recycling, more options for apartments
 - Conservation
 - Less gas dependent
 - Use of public transportation
 - Accessibility

- Sidewalks and curbs
- Lack of energy options
- CDCs (grant money and incentives) tax credits
- Not cost efficient for most
- More energy efficient cars
- Increase electric stations
- More energy efficient homes/ apartments/rentals
- More education
- Tie into grid to sell energy back
- Solar energy/wind energy increased rules/regulations for environmentally friendly
- Science parks for children
- Penalties for polluters
- Turning waste to energy
- Increased corporate incentives for use of renewable energy
- Education on wastewater
- Increased telecommuting (increased wi-fi enabling more to work from home)
- Incentives for carpooling
- Renewable energy sources
- LED street lights
- Energy education for homeowners/consumers
- Local focus on energy options
- Jobs/Economic development
 - Education for workforce skills training
 - Type of bus
 - Safe/clean/good schools
 - Level playing field at schools, offer same classes for all
 - High paying jobs
 - Green jobs & high tech jobs
 - Affordable colleges
 - Comm. Attractions
 - Light rail
 - Small business support
 - Be more sensitive to the demographic changes when considering economic development projects
 - Local food economy
 - Attention to k-12 improvements
 - Prejudices
 - Again felons/prisoners
 - Mandatory training
 - Self-sufficient institutions (prisons)
 - Apprenticeships
 - Tax breaks after creation of jobs not before

- More OJT
- Small business/school partnerships
- Increase vo-tech
- Evaluation of other city's practices/needs assessment
- Incentives for entrepreneurship
- City leadership in tune with community
- Business retention programs/financing/micro-loans

Little Rock Community Conversation, Southwest Community Center: November 15, 2012

Estimated Attendance 27 Adults

- Transportation
 - Bike trails between LR and Conway
 - More areas to walk (sidewalks, lighted areas)
 - More trolleys (commuting purposes and cut down on pollution)
 - Gas stations with electric hook-ups for hybrids
 - Speed bumps
 - Safe bike lanes all over town (for bikers to ride to work)
 - CNG for school buses
 - Complete the loop around LR (North Belt Freeway)
 - Better coverage for public transportation
 - Reach out which areas need transit
 - Rail connection Conway-LR (Bus rapid transit), Benton, with dedicated lanes
 - HOV lanes
 - Traffic signal coordination to speed traffic
 - Improve driving skills with education (traffic schools for teenagers/elderly)
 - Fix road in neighborhood
 - Small buses to help with adding routes and less damage to the roads
 - Increase speed limit on highways to 75/80
 - More shuttles for business/employers
 - Toll roads
 - Railroad overpasses
 - Telecommuting
 - More buses
 - Later routes/times
 - Better & more bus routes
 - No roundabouts
 - Metro/subway system
 - Cultural change around the bus system; remove stigma
 - Commuter lanes
 - Test routes to improve ridership
 - Commuter lots should be safer (security, lighting)
 - Express buses/vans designated for commuter lots
 - Improve the paint on lanes (brightness)
 - Signs of road painted on road (i.e. I-630) indicating direction
 - Improved bus shelters
- Housing
 - Education for new homeowners
 - What to expect

- Upkeep/repair knowledge
 - List of resources or safety net of agencies and programs to sustain ownership
 - Homeless “shelters” for work in exchange for shelter approach, population utilize skill set to make city improvements to help sustain their next move
 - Affordable arts co-op type housing
 - Use empty buildings for affordable housing/infill
 - More environmentally friendly
 - More new homes in Rockefeller area
 - Habitat model
 - Identify and publicize empty lots
 - Neighborhoods with sidewalks, curbs and drainage (33 & Broadway)
 - Making affordable for everybody
 - Solar energy for homes (incentives)
 - Making all Central Ark free wifi of the nation (downtown areas)
 - Create more affordable housing
 - Clean-up older-historic areas by knocking down boarded up homes
 - More planned communities
 - Build up historic areas
 - No new home developments, rebuild areas that already exist
 - Tear down boarded vacant homes, recycle materials
 - Provide incentives for upgrading heating/cooling systems
 - Education about benefits of underground homes
 - Storm shelters in tornado prone areas
 - More efficient heating & cooling system in Ark; thermal cooling
 - More slumlord laws and enforcement
 - Educate people about tenant laws and rights
 - Moneys and incentives for rehab-ing existing homes
- Healthy Lifestyles
 - School food needs to be revised—healthy, no soda in schools
 - BMI in schools, competition among schools
 - Improve connections between small farmers and community farmers market for fresh produce
 - Access to health clinics/walk-in clinics (e.g. blood pressure)
 - Every chain must have 1 day a month for health screenings (Kroger, Walgreen, USA Drug, etc.)
 - Better labeling of food, including organic
 - Access for the neighborhood to have classes (aerobics, yoga, zumba) at schools nearby/in the neighborhood
 - Community garden spaces + in schools give credit to students
 - Physical education/lifestyle back in schools (home ec, woodshop, farming)
 - Walk more
 - Carpooling program for communities

- We think LR is doing great (e.g. trails, Big Dam Bridge)
- Maintain trails/outdoor tracks (e.g. lighting)
- Safe outdoor activities in older neighborhoods (e.g. SWLR, Southend Community)
- Convenient
- Access to healthcare facilities
- Activities for youth—bike trails in SWLR, fitness classes
- Access to mobile fruit and vegetable trucks or vendors
- More community gardens
- Rain barrels
- Recycling for apartments
- Awareness of the Esperanza Clinic
- Clean up park bathrooms
- Basketball team/sponsors
- More neighborhood pools
- Smoking ban on parks/trails (3 Check marks)
- Cleaning up after dogs (3 check marks)
- Energy/Environment
 - Preservation of green areas
 - Effects of watershed
 - Exhaust of autos
 - Coal for energy
 - More trees
 - Light and noise pollution
 - Water conservation
 - Stop building (maybe limit sprawl is what they mean by this?)
 - Park and Recreation Security
 - Sidewalks
 - Underground powerlines
 - Enforce noise ordinance/curfew
 - Enforce no smoking in non-smoking areas
 - Better garbage pick-up
 - Spray for mosquitos
 - Need pickup of electronics
 - Proper disposal of medications
 - LLE (police) presence
 - LED lights for streetlights
 - Better drainage system (SWLR)
 - Energy star overlay for city
 - Incentives for implementing energy practices for developers (1 check)
 - Adding a certain amount of green space to new commercial developments (1 check)
 - More awareness per city's website or Metroplan, an effective plan to communicate with community

- Protect Watershed
- Better building plans
- More street cleaning
- Bring ALL neighborhoods up to speed
- Solar energy for business, manufacturing, food chain supplement buildings
- CNG for public transportation and school buses
- Continue supporting recycling program
- Create industries of clothing recycling
- Jobs/Economic Development
 - State minimum wage
 - More opportunities for small business
 - More start-up capital
 - Awareness of diverse careers and newer career fields
 - Invest in census tracts where businesses are located
 - Adult education facility
 - Training ideas—mechanics, green jobs, transportation systems
 - More jobs for people with disabilities
 - Non-discrimination policies that list all categories including sexual orientation, and gender identity
 - Welcome the creative class
 - Become a Welcoming America Community
 - Better salaries
 - Immigration
 - Access to credit
 - More factories
 - Shopping possibilities
 - Support the small farmers/farm to market
 - Create the link between education and jobs training
 - Inclusion and diversity efforts across the borders
 - More vocational training/schools/apprenticeships
 - Incentives for businesses to locate in under-served areas/tax breaks
 - Better teacher training/accountability
 - Market Central Arkansas, brand it

Little Rock Community Conversation, St Edwards Catholic Church: November 18, 2012

Estimated Attendance 100

Comment cards, St. Edward

- Thank God, there is someone who is considering the future
- Safe places to play and exercise
- Imagine Central Ark is very beneficial for the Hispanic community
- More places for recreational activities, job opportunity and more training possibilities for immigrants
- I need to speak English, I need transportation, more security, better job
- Better transportation, communication and places to walk
- I would like to see more rapid transit
- I need to speak English, a legal status, to live safer and with more trust (self confidence) in order to buy a house and get a better job
- More job opportunities
- Safe places to play and more physical exercise

Summary being prepared, format similar to Boys and Girls Club Used

Lonoke Community Conversation—Lonoke Community Center: November 26, 2012

Estimated Attendance 35

- **Transportation**

- Buses
- School transportation for the Ward 4 area (Harrison off Palm
- More sidewalks, all neighborhoods
- A rail system from Little Rock to Memphis
- Trolley cars
- Taxi cabs
- Bus stop in Lonoke
- Toll bridge
- Bike lane
- Infrastructure for transportation for natural gas and electric
- Public transit*
- Commuter lots*
- School/bus transportation for all students
- Wider streets
- More street signs
- Affordable public transportation
- Interstate direct route/bypass

- **Housing**

- Affordable rental—home ownership
- Rehab housing
- Land to build house
- Multi family housing
- Senior housing
- Housing for people with disabilities
- Single family housing
- Housing for disabled veterans
- Housing for homeless people
- Transitional housing
- More apartments for younger generation
- Government-funded daycares
- Afterschool hours for teens
- Infill development
- Disaster housing
- After school hours for pre-teens
- Less trees around houses
- Easy access to storm shelters

- **Healthy Lifestyles**

- Healthy eating options
- GNC stores
- Adult sports
- Education classes (health)
- Expand community [center?] for exercise
- Walking trails and bike trails
- Larger parks (space)
- Community gardens
- Health seminars
- Promote clean air
- Drug/alcohol abuse training
- Grow organic food
- Health food store
- More affordable exercise places
- All facilities need to be handicap accessible
- Centers to address obesity
- Elderly Daycare***
- Seniors recreation room, will help with therapy patients
- **Energy/Environment**
 - Solar energy
 - More street lights
 - Underground utilities
 - Energy efficient cars
 - Water conservation
 - Water drainage
 - Refurbished streets
 - Sewage improvement
 - More water recycling – recycling
 - Clean air (burn-ban)
 - Build green
 - Recycle Center
 - Buy American products
 - Invest in water treatment facility
 - Curb and gutter/cover ditches
 - Buy energy saving appliances
 - Ultra low sulfur vehicles
 - Safe house (for storms/emergency shelter)
 - Sidewalks
 - Better drinking water
 - Better infrastructure re gas leaks
 - Invest in what we already have
 - Limit sprawl

- **Economic Development**
 - Industry
 - Job Training for adults and youth
 - Retail
 - Grocery store
 - Develop small businesses
 - Community Development
 - Need to retrain for those who have lost jobs
 - Job placement Center
 - One stop shop
 - Better marketing—development of Central AR “brand” and coordinated regional marketing effort
- **Jobs/Economic Development**
 - Daycare on the job site
 - More grocery stores, etc.
 - Better roads overall
 - Sidewalks
 - More educational facilities for children, youth, effective schools
 - Recreational facilities
 - More job development/training

**Benton Community Conversation, with emphasis on Ralph Bunche Community and Alexander:
November 27, 2012**

Estimated Attendance 5

- **Transportation**
 - Widen streets in Ralph Bunche Community and across Edison (1, 2, 3rd and 4th streets)
 - Sidewalks
 - Improved safety
 - “Real” bus service
 - Commuter transportation
 - Transit stop in Ralph Bunche
 - Facilitate telecommute/work from home, more broadband required
 - Park/bike/trail system from LR to Benton
 - Work on Community gateways like South Street, to Ralph Bunche Community
- **Housing**
 - Affordable housing for low-moderate income people
 - Clean up dilapidated housing
 - Promote home ownership
 - Senior housing
- **Healthy Lifestyles**
 - Improve parks
 - Ralph Bunche park—better lighting, parking
 - Need park in Alexander in the St. Joseph Glen area
 - Keep existing green space
 - Community Gardens
- **Energy/Environment**
 - Curbside recycling
 - Organize trash service Benton and Alexander
 - Underground utilities
 - Establish infrastructure for electric cars
 - E-recycling for cash (there is a model for this in other towns)
- **Jobs/Economic development**
 - More good jobs here (Saline Co.)
 - True 4 year university (Saline Co.)
 - Live/work/invest in the community
 - High tech training facility (Saline Co)
 - Business and education work together
 - Training for seniors to stay in workforce
 - Green jobs
- **General**

- Electrical improvements on South Side of Benton (frequent power losses due to Entergy transformer?)
- New image—promote diversity/make it acceptable
- More community oriented policing
- Racial profiling issues need to be resolved
- Grocery/Dollar Store in Alexander
- More performing arts and visual arts
- Better Senior Center (LifeQuest model?)

Conway Community Conversation – McGee Center: November 29, 2012

Estimated Attendance 31

*'s notate the number of check marks/stars placed next to each idea

- **Transportation**

- More sidewalks and complete streets
- Integrate land use and transportation
- Bus routes for teachers
- Express train system from central Arkansas to LR**
- Express Bus Route ***
- More electric and Natural Gas Fueling Stations **
- Accessible transportation for people with disabilities *
- Taxis
- Overnight construction on highways/roads
- Connecting trails

- **Housing**

- Live, Work, Play Communities (similar to the Village of Hendrix)
- More urban housing (mixed-use retail and residential)
- Incentive building – move to less crowded areas
- Keep us as one of the cheapest places to live in the U.S.
- Energy Efficient **
- Universal Design
- Un-Crowded Areas (spaces)
- Well-designed parks
- More affordable
- Condos
- Sidewalks*
- More green areas with trees *

- **Healthy Lifestyles**

- Free gym memberships
- Drive less/walk or bike more
 - Better air quality
 - More walking/bike paths
 - Less driving could lead to more quality time at home
- Improve recycling education
- More health stores (Whole Foods)*
- Free/preventative health clinics*
 - Health coaches
- Raise taxes on tobacco/alcohol*
- Employment involvement (healthy living incentives)*
- Community gardens/slow food (increase access) **

- Neighborhood health watch (live, work, play neighborhoods)
- More promotion of city's parks/youth sports/rec centers *
- Model the Jones Center in Rogers, AR
- Early education regarding health and nutrition (K-12)
- **Energy/Environment**
 - Recycle bins at apartments and schools**
 - Fewer Ozone Action Days
 - Electric charging stations for electric cars *
 - CNG Fueling Stations
 - Continue recycling programs
 - Weatherize homes – provide workshops on this
 - Avoid sprawl and preserve green space
 - Reduce chemical use in lawn care/gardening
 - Programmable thermostats
 - Environmental course at library
 - Summer environmental jobs for youth/college students
 - Local utility to research best ways to save money and conserve energy
 - Public transportation to reduce exhaust from cars
 - Less runoff on parking areas
 - More fines or community service mandates for littering
- **Economic Development**
 - Regional collaboration
 - Connecting people with resources for college
 - Better promotion of what we have
 - Job training/within education via web/TV*
 - Technical college
 - More blue collar jobs/manufacturing jobs*
 - Convention center*
 - Job center*
 - High speed, affordable internet access everywhere
 - Develop small businesses
 - Cheesecake Factory
 - NY-Style Deli
 - All-inclusive complex
 - Community enrichment center
 - Keep jobs and businesses here
 - Outlet malls and shopping centers
 - Dave & Buster's*
 - Better Promotion for what we have