

Regional Planning Advisory Council

Thursday, August 22, 2013

Minutes

RPAC Members Attending:

1. Becky Adams Arkansas Department of Health (ADH)
2. Sam Chaffin City of Benton
3. Marcia Cook City of Sherwood
4. Charles Cummings Freight & Trucking
5. Gary DalPorto (nonvoting) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
6. Julianne Dunn Clinton School of Public Service (UACS)
7. Coreen Frasier Bicycle Advocacy of Central Arkansas (BACA)
8. Robin Freeman Saline County
9. Dave Green City of Bryant
10. Bob Hardin City of North Little Rock
11. Paul Hastings City of Little Rock
12. Todd Larson City of North Little Rock
13. Matthew Long Central Arkansas Transit Authority (CATA)
14. Tommy Majors Pulaski County
15. Marcus Montgomery Pulaski Technical College/Youth Outreach
16. Tim Ragsdale Disabilities Community
17. Dan Roda City of Little Rock
18. Kim Romano Arkansas State Highway & Transportation Dept. (AHTD)
19. Doris Smith Mainstream
20. Jack Stowe City of Maumelle
21. Tom Sutton Clinton National Airport
22. Regina Taylor Youth Outreach

Metroplan Staff and Consultants Attending:

1. Lynn Bell Graphics Specialist
2. Casey Covington CARTS Planning Director
3. Nelson Galeano Transportation Engineer
4. Daniel Holland Planner
5. Lindsay Puckett Gresham Smith & Partners (GS&P)
6. Richard Magee Deputy Director
7. Susan Markman Transportation Planner
8. Jim McKenzie Executive Director
9. Brian Mitchell Research Planner
10. Jeff Runder GIS/Research Planner
11. Kevin Tilbury GS&P
12. Judy Watts Outreach Coordinator

1. Call to Order

RPAC Chairman Charles Cummings called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Council considered the Minutes of July 30th.

MOTION by Mr. Dan Roda, second by Ms. Coreen Frasier
"To accept the Minutes of July 30, 2013, as prepared."

PASSED

3. *Imagine Central Arkansas* Review

Mr. Covington briefly reviewed the tasks that have been undertaken to date by the RPAC and the *Imagine Central Arkansas* Partners (ICAP) and explained how the work will be folded into the plan. The two groups have been working on parallel tracks and are now reaching the point where the two will merge.

RPAC is charged by the Metroplan Board with two duties: (1) direct and oversee the public participation process; and, (2) develop the long range metropolitan plan. The ICAP was formed as part of the \$1.4 Million HUD Sustainable communities grant that was awarded in 2011. The funds are used to assist in the development of the plan, expanding and focusing on issues identified in previous regional transportation planning efforts. RPAC has the primary role in guiding process. Issues of housing, the environment, energy, health and economic vitality are both complementary and integral to the development of *Imagine Central Arkansas*.

4. Goals and Objectives

The ICAP has developed goals and objectives based on the HUD Sustainable Communities six livability principles, and staff has incorporated those elements into the long range plan VGO. Most of the concepts are already incorporated into the existing VG&O: housing, healthy lifestyles, environment/energy, and economic growth.

RPAC received these goals/objectives and has had reviewed them. Mr. Cummings noted that the RPAC's VG&O were approved at the July 30th meeting and proposed that the incorporation of ICAP goals and objectives be delayed until the first quarter, when the document will be blended.

There were no objections.

5. Draft LRMTTP Projects: Comments?

Mr. Tilbury reviewed the draft project selection/scoring. He stated that a link to the online interactive map would be sent to the RPAC.

Mr. Roda offered two suggestions for the online map: (1) explain the color coding; and (2) add a star or other symbol to denote fixed location projects. Some RPAC members said that they had trouble printing out the material. Overall readability was also cited as a problem. Mr. Tilbury said that the consultant team would address those issues.

After additional discussion, Mr. Cummings emphasized the need for individual RPAC members to score projects themselves—especially those projects that will impact the jurisdictions they represent.

Mr. Covington stated that comments on the scoring must be received by September 6th.

6. Alternative Revenue Sources and Draft Projections

Mr. Tilbury reviewed the cost analysis, much of which was discussed at the previous meeting, and asked for discussion.

Ms. Adams asked if the analysis included transit. Mr. Tilbury replied that only roads were included in this iteration.

Ms. Frasier stated that people must change their attitudes. What is needed is a paradigm shift away from driving single-occupancy vehicles for commuting and around-town errands.

After additional discussion, Mr. Tilbury went over revenue forecasts. He asked for discussion and ideas.

In response to a question regarding bond issues, Mr. Tilbury said that debt service payments were factored into the analysis.

Mr. Easterly pointed out that Arkansas State law permits counties to levy up to 3 mil in property tax. He said that to date only 20 of the 75 counties have elected to levy the tax. Mr. Tilbury added that comment to the list of possible alternative/new funding sources. The sources listed included:

- Sales taxes
- Fuel taxes
- Facility tolls
- Property taxes, including potential revenue from the 3 mil county tax noted by Mr. Easterly
- Electric vehicle fee, to off-set revenue lost by people driving fuel-efficient cars

The RPAC was unenthusiastic about levying a fee for driving a fuel efficient car. While it is true that fuel tax revenue might be lost, several RPAC members felt that the environmental good outweighed the lost revenue. Also, it was pointed out that money not spent on gas might instead be redirected to the local economy.

After additional discussion, the chairman called for a motion to approve the projections. Mr. Covington clarified that the projections may be slightly tweaked, but are grounded in much research.

MOTION by Mr. Easterly, second by Mr. Roda
"To approve the projections."

PASSED

7. Regional Forum Update

Conducting regional forums is concept that was introduced as part of Round 4 outreach. The idea is to present the *Imagine Central Arkansas* vision to business leaders and elected officials throughout the region. In return, the consultants hope to engage decision-makers.

After getting input from the RPAC at the previous meeting, Mr. Tilbury announced that a tentative date of November 14th had been selected to host a breakfast. Mr. Tilbury said that the breakfast could be a starting point for regional collaboration. He went over the proposed agenda for the breakfast meeting. He said they would plan for 300 attendees.

Mr. Chaffin pointed out that business people might appreciate an earlier time frame. Other member agreed and there was some discussion about what time would work best for everybody invited.

Mr. Larson reminded the Council that Metroplan and CATA hosted an all-day Saturday workshop on Pulaski Technical College. He said the event was well-attended by both elected and business leaders, and also by students and educators.

There was discussion about the best way to get participation from that many people. Ms. Frasier and Mr. Long suggested incorporating keypad polling or other computer technology to engage attendees.

8. Next Steps

The next RPAC meeting is set for 12:00 noon, Thursday, September 12th. Lunch will be available at 11:30. Additional information will be sent out prior to the meeting.

10. Adjourn

With no further business brought forward, the Council adjourned at 1:36 p.m.