

# 2016



METROPLAN  
SMART PLANNING MAKES SMART PLACES.

# ANNUAL REPORT



In 1988 Metroplan had a budget of **\$883,000** with 13 member local governments in 2 counties.

The budget for 2017 is **\$3 million**.

We have 29 members in 5 counties plus Rock Region Metro and AHTD.

## Metroplan, Past and Future

Excerpted comments from Jim McKenzie's final speech to the Metroplan Board before retirement:

### The Organization and McKenzie's Tenure

*When I started in 1988 Metroplan had a budget of \$883,000. We ran the transit system, we had 20 employees, 13 member local governments in 2 counties and 13 special purpose governments as members. The budget you just adopted for 2017 is \$3 million, we have 29 members in 5 counties plus the Highway Department and Rock Region Metro and 3 non-voting members—Grant County, Sheridan and Hot Springs Village. We are authorized 17 employees, but we've been operating for the last year with 14.*

*Over that period we have punched above our weight in the national MPO community. In 2000 we received the Outstanding MPO Over 200,000 Award in competition with Chicago and Dallas and Philadelphia and San Francisco. That was a big deal.*

### The Future

*In 1997, we made a promise to build 12 rail grade separations in the metropolitan area to reconnect communities divided by railroad tracks. Nine are either built or under construction. One was removed from the list, and we have two left; a rail grade crossing in Mayflower and the JP Wright Loop in Jacksonville. We promised to have those done by 2020...*

*Over time we have taken a couple of freeways off our plan—the long-planned mid-town freeway and the Northbelt Freeway. We*

*have downgraded what was planned as the South Loop Freeway, but that's still an important arterial connection that I think is of regional importance that still needs to be built.*

*The 89 Corridor Study has been initiated to replace the Northbelt Freeway as a key east-west connection across the northern part of our region.*

*We have long needed a fourth downtown bridge, and I still think the Chester Street Bridge is a good idea. The need's going to continue to be there and would lead to, I think, some redevelopment west of Broadway in both Little Rock and North Little Rock.*

*We have advocated, since we spun Central Arkansas Transit off in 1988, for a dedicated funding source for public transit in this metropolitan area. That's still an important issue.*

*We still haven't finished the Arkansas River Trail. We've got to close the loop here in downtown, reach out to Pinnacle Mountain State Park, and then work with the Highway Department to get shoulders and bike lanes on state highways to Conway and over Toad Suck and then back to the Big Dam Bridge.*

*In closing, I want to turn over to Tab an organization that is on sound financial footing, has a talented and dedicated staff, and is of high reputation, to lead into the next chapter of its service to the metropolitan area.*

## Executive Director's Letter

My Dear Friends,

For the past 28 plus years I have had the honor of serving as Executive Director of Metroplan. I will retire at the end of 2016. While I had never planned to stay in this job for such a long time, the challenges and rewards of working with you all for a better future for our region always drew me back for another year.



Jim McKenzie

Over that time I have had the pleasure of working with some extraordinary elected officials, with a fine professional staff and with hundreds of citizen volunteers and public servants from other organizations all dedicated to making the future better than the present.

I am proud of the work we have done here at Metroplan over the past three decades. For an organization with a small staff in a mid-sized metro area, we have punched above our weight class. But of course there are more challenges ahead, work that is unfinished, opportunities to be seized.

I trust that you will offer Metroplan's new Executive Director Tab Townsell the same courtesies, wisdom, patience and advice that you have given to me over the years.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim McKenzie". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jim McKenzie  
Executive Director  
1988-2016

## President's Letter

What a busy year at Metroplan. 30 Crossing, the largest and most complex highway project in recent memory, has kept our staff, Board and committees busy fulfilling our role in the federal planning and environmental processes.

The Highway 89 Corridor Coalition was formed to advocate for the improvement of SH 89 across the northern part of our region between Cabot and Jacksonville through Mayflower to west Conway. Metroplan has partnered with AHTD to fund a corridor study of the route to map out a strategy for future improvements.

Major projects funded through Metroplan continue to move forward around the region. But beyond the large projects, perhaps most important to local officials like me is the day in and day out support that the Metroplan staff provide to the community leaders throughout Central Arkansas.

On top of all of this important work, the Metroplan Board conducted a national search to replace our retiring Executive Director, Jim McKenzie, after his 28 years of service in that position. Our Deputy Director, Richard Magee, also decided to retire after 42 years with the organization. We want to thank both Jim and Richard for their decades of outstanding professional service to our region and wish them the best in their well-deserved retirements. They will certainly be missed.

But our organization is about the future, and I am pleased to say that the Board selected Tab Townsell, long-time mayor of Conway, as our new Executive Director. With Tab's selection, we remain committed to excellence and to visionary leadership and, as always, look forward to the future with anticipation.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Fletcher". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mayor Gary Fletcher, City of Jacksonville  
Metroplan President



Mayor Gary Fletcher

## Meet Metroplan Executive Director Tab Townsell



Tab Townsell

On August 31, 2016, the Metroplan Board selected Tab Townsell, the Mayor of Conway, to become Metroplan's fifth executive director. The Board selected Tab after a search process of many months' duration, involving 59 applicants. Tab formally begins serving as Metroplan's director when Jim McKenzie retires at the end of 2016.

Tab holds a Master's degree in business administration from Texas Christian University, and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Central Arkansas. He has served as mayor of Conway since 1999, completing his fourth term in late 2016 before taking over at Metroplan.

As Conway's mayor, Tab implemented several urban planning reforms. He is known as a leading advocate for traffic roundabouts, and has overseen the construction of sixteen roundabouts in Conway, with six under construction. The roundabouts improve traffic flow and reduce both the severity and frequency of accidents.

Tab also gave vital support for the Hendrix Village new urbanism project, helped recruit a Hewlett-Packard facility to Conway, made major improvements to Conway parks and pedestrian facilities, and logged many other successes. Conway population grew by 40 percent during Tab's tenure, giving him a perspective on both growth and quality of place.

Tab has been a familiar presence at Metroplan for many years. He served on Metroplan's Transportation Advisory Committee (forerunner of today's RPAC) in the early 1990s. He has been on Metroplan's Board of Directors since becoming mayor in 1999, and served terms as Board President in the years 2001 and 2008.

Tab Townsell served as Conway's Mayor for **19 years**. Under his leadership, Conway experienced **40 % growth**.

During his time in office, Townsell focused on urban planning, transportation improvements, and community and economic development.

## A Tradition of Leadership

### Metroplan Board Presidents 1955 to 2016

1955	Mr. Raymond Rebsamen	1977	Mayor B.E. (Bill) Henson	1997	Mayor Bill Harmon
1956	Mr. Raymond Rebsamen	1978	Mayor B.E. (Bill) Henson	1998	Mayor Jim Dailey
1957	Mr. M.S. McCord	1979	Mr. William H. McLean	1999	Judge John W. Carter
1958	Mr. Sam Strauss, Sr.	1980	Mayor James Reid	2000	Mayor Joe Allman
1959	Mr. Sam Strauss, Sr.	1981	Judge W.E. Beaumont, Jr.	2001	Mayor Tab Townsell
1960	Mr. John P Matthews	1982	Judge W.E. Beaumont, Jr.	2002	Judge Lanny Fite
1961	Mr. John P Matthews	1983	Mr. Russell H. Matson, Jr.	2003	Mayor Pat Hays
1962	Mr. Gus Ottenheimer	1984	Mayor J.W. Benafield	2004	Mayor Paul Halley
1963	Mr. Howard Eichenbaum	1985	Mayor J.W. Benafield	2005	Mayor Frank Pearce
1964	Mr. Howard Eichenbaum	1986	Mayor Jack Evans	2006	Mayor Burch Johnson
1965	Mr. Kenneth Pat Wilson	1987	Judge Don Venhaus	2007	Mayor Richard Holland
1966	Mr. James Binder	1988	Judge Don Venhaus	2008	Mayor Tab Townsell
1967	Mr. James Binder	1989	Mayor Harold McIntire	2009	Mayor Art Brooke
1968	Mr. James Binder	1990	Mayor Sharon Priest	2010	Mayor Mark Stodola
1969	Mr. James Binder	1991	Mayor Pat Hays	2011	Judge Preston Scroggin
1970	Mayor W. F. (Casey) Laman	1992	Mayor Tommy Swaim	2012	Mayor Mike Watson
1971	Mayor W. F. (Casey) Laman	1993	Judge Buddy Villines	2013	Mayor Bill Cypert
1972	Mayor Dean Boswell	1994	Judge Terry Parsons	2014	Judge Jeff Arey
1973	Mayor Dean Boswell	1995	Mayor David Kinley	2015	Mayor Randy Holland
1974	Judge B. Frank Mackey	1996	Judge Don Bevis	2016	Mayor Gary Fletcher
1975	Judge B. Frank Mackey / Mr. Jack Young				
1976	Mr. Jack Young /Mayor B.E. (Bill) Henson				

## Metroplan Collects Two Awards



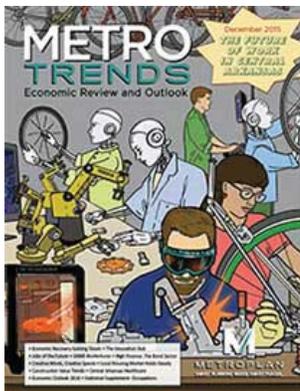
For the last several years Metroplan has been honored to receive prestigious awards for its work. In 2016, that trend continued.

### Bronze Quill Awards

The International Association of Broadcast Communicators (IABC), Arkansas Chapter, held its Bronze Quill Awards ceremony April 7, 2016. For the third consecutive year, Metroplan received honors for its efforts, garnering an Award of Excellence in Event Planning for its 60th Anniversary luncheon event and accompanying promotional materials.



Judges exclaimed that the event and promotional “swag” were “...a very effective and attractive method of communicating the legacy of the organization.” One reviewer acknowledged that the event was a “...well planned program.” The materials really “...drove home the value and contribution of the organization.”



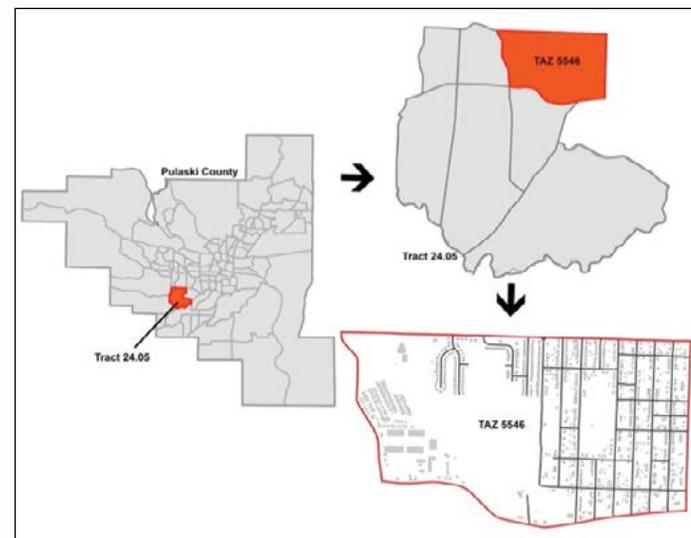
### American Advertising Awards

For a second year, Metroplan submitted work to the American Advertising Awards. The organization scored a bronze level award in the Publication Design category for the December 2015 Metro Trends Economic Review and Outlook. The issue’s theme “The Future of Work in Central Arkansas” inspired a front cover with humans working hand in hand with humanoid robots.

The awards are the Advertising Federation’s (ADFED) premier honors, and recognize excellence in creative design, advertising, and promotional campaigns across all media channels. The 2016 competition drew hundreds of entries from local organizations.

## MSA to TAZ

In August of 2016, Metroplan Research Planner Jonathan Lupton gave a webinar to a national audience. The webinar was part of the TMIP (Transportation Model Improvement Program), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Titled *From MSA to TAZ: Assembling a Transportation Model 1993-2016*, the webinar chronicled Metroplan’s planning efforts over many years, as a “how-to” guide to help other transportation planning agencies. Metroplan has experience and expertise in making large-scale and long-term overall projections, from which it forecasts demographic and economic trends for nearly 1,500 separate TAZs (Traffic Analysis Zones) in the area. The resulting transportation model helps with understanding how transportation needs will change in response to demographic change and economic growth.



Metroplan’s experience with taking population and employment projections from county totals down to tract and TAZ level was a major feature of the webinar.

## Big Dam Bridge Celebrates 10 Years, Trail Sweeper Dedication



Former Judge Buddy Villines with Judge Barry Hyde at the Big Dam Bridge 10-year Anniversary press conference.

On September 30, 2016, the Big Dam Bridge saw its 10th birthday. In ten short years, the bridge has proven popular with local residents, and has become a regional and national attraction for a growing bicycle tourism market. The segment of the Arkansas River Trail running along both banks and connected by the bridge stretches 14 miles, with just one short remaining gap in the otherwise continuous loop of bike-and-pedestrian trail. The structure was named the

Big Dam Bridge in reference to its size, rising up to 90 feet above the Arkansas River with a 4,226-foot (0.8 mile) span. During 2015 the bridge had about 500,000 (half a million) visitors.<sup>1</sup>

During 2016, a Trail Sweeper began operations to help keep the heavily-used bridge and its North Little Rock approach trail clean. Its purchase was funded jointly by Pulaski County and North Little Rock Parks and Recreation, aided by private donations. North Little Rock operates the sweeper, which typically makes weekly cleaning runs over the bridge and on the trail's northern side.



Center, left to right: Buddy Villines with Judge Barry Hyde, Mayor Mark Stodola, Gretchen Hall, Jim Dailey and Pat Hays.



Rob Stephens, Arkansas River Trail Foundation Chairman, Pulaski County Judge Barry Hyde and North Little Rock Mayor Joe Smith cut the ribbon to celebrate the arrival of the Trail Sweeper.

The Arkansas River Trail Foundation would like to thank everyone who donated to the trail sweeper fund, which raised almost \$15,500 toward the sweeper. All donations, large and small, are greatly appreciated.

Donors include:

- Bicycle Advocacy of Central Arkansas (BACA)
- Big Dam Bridge Foundation
- Blue and You Foundation (Blue Cross/Blue Shield)
- Caterpillar
- Garver
- Healthcare Pharmacy
- Little Rock Bicycle Club
- Marilyn Fulper Memorial Fund
- Simmons Bank



Severe flooding in 2015 temporarily blocked the approach trail, compelling closure of the Big Dam Bridge. The new Trail Sweeper will enable quicker clean-up after floods and storms. Photo credit: City of North Little Rock.

<sup>1</sup>This figure is an approximation from 800,000 "hits" on an automatic recorder that counts every person or bike crossing the bridge, and allows for many "double hits" via return journeys.

## Four Years Into CAP



The Regional Planning Advisory Council (above) and the Metroplan Board (below) discuss the I-30 project.



Arkansas voters passed a sales tax to provide revenue for bond funding for highway improvements across the state during November, 2012. Called the Connecting Arkansas Program (CAP), this initiative aims to improve connections, widen highways, improve safety and ease congestion across the state. Further background is provided on the web at <http://www.connectingarkansasprogram.com>.

Four years after Arkansas voters approved the CAP, one project in Central Arkansas is complete, a few are underway and the rest are being planned. The widening of I-40 near Maumelle and Morgan in northern Pulaski County wrapped up during 2016, yielding six lanes all the way from North Little Rock to Conway. The widening of U.S. 70 (to four lanes) from I-30 near Haskell to Hot Springs has begun, and a widening of I-30 from southwestern Benton to the U.S. 70 interchange is scheduled to begin construction early in 2017. In 2017, construction work will begin on widening the U.S. 67/167 corridor from Vandenberg in Jacksonville to State Highway 5 in Cabot.

In mid-2017 work should also begin on widening I-630 from Baptist Hospital to University Avenue. The current schedule then foresees construction work beginning in late 2018 on the CAP's biggest project, a widening and improvement of I-30 from its interchange with I-440 in southern Little Rock all the way north to U.S. 67-167 in North Little Rock, including reconstruction of the freeway bridge, a project now called "30 Crossing." 30 Crossing also includes improving the I-40/U.S. 67 interchange and widening I-40 from there to the I-30 interchange.

The 30 Crossing project was a major issue during 2016, and became the subject of numerous discussions of the Metroplan Board as well as the RPAC (Regional Planning Advisory Committee). Many viewpoints were aired, particularly after the AHTD (Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department) requested that the Metroplan Board grant a waiver to its six-lane cap on regional freeways for the project. On August 31, 2016 the Board voted for the waiver. While the waiver allows more flexibility with project design, it still reserves to the Metroplan Board the opportunity to review and approve the final preferred design which comes out of the environmental review process (NEPA). If the Metroplan Board accepts the final preferred design, its ultimate acceptance and final selection will come from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Most parties to the debate recognize two primary goals, (1) moving traffic, and (2) preserving quality of life in Little Rock's increasingly vibrant downtown. While the final format for 30 Crossing has yet to be determined, it must strike a balance between these goals.



CAP funded the final segment in the widening of I-40 to six lanes all the way from North Little Rock to Conway.

## Broadway Bridge

It was during 2016 when, after years of planning, the old Broadway Bridge finally came down. The Metroplan Board attended the formal decommissioning of the old bridge on Wednesday, September 28. Many locals witnessed the demolition about two weeks later, on October 11, when cutting charges weakened the main arch span, but failed to bring it down. Later that same afternoon, barges finally toppled it.

For the rest of 2016, work was busily underway. By late year, two new arches were set in place and work continued on completing the approaches. The contract for bridge construction stipulates a six-month timeline for completion of the new bridge, with penalties for delay and bonuses to encourage early completion. By late winter or early spring, 2017, the new bridge should be in place,

with improved pedestrian facilities, and direct connections to the Arkansas River Trail.



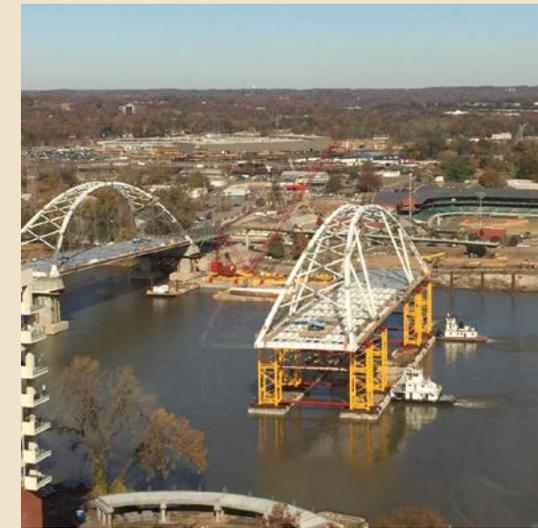
Veterans participating in the decommissioning ceremony.



The Metroplan Board at the decommissioning of the old Broadway Bridge on September 28, 2016. Photo credit: City of North Little Rock.



Concrete spandrel arches being demolished in November, 2016. Photo credit: Greg Davis (facebook.com/fastalkr/).



Tugboats moving the second arch into place. Photo credit: Barbara McMahan.

## Jump Start Spotlight: Jump Start Your Block Event

Volunteers from North Little Rock's Levy and Park Hill neighborhoods gathered one Saturday in July for a home improvement event that spanned multiple blocks in Levy. Residents were treated to home improvement tasks like yard work, simple repairs, and freshly painted houses. This is the spirit of community that the Jump Start Initiative hoped to achieve. Good work to everyone involved!



## Big Leaps for Jump Start in 2016

### Engineering Moves Forward

Jump Start is hopping along into its next phase. In September, an evaluation team met to select engineering firms for infrastructure projects. Street construction and reconstruction, street-scaping, landscaping, and other pedestrian and transit infrastructure improvements are being incorporated into the designs. These projects will provide the foundation for revitalization efforts in the six communities.

Selected firms submitted area-specific project proposals in December. The evaluation team will gather again to select the best proposals for each of the areas. Engineering is expected to begin in mid-2017, with construction later that year or in early 2018, transforming ideas into real-world landscapes that will enhance pedestrian, transit and traffic movements and build community character.

### RPAC Evaluations

Metroplan's Jump Start Initiative reached a significant milestone in 2016, when project areas were evaluated by the Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC), to determine if the areas met the goals of the original application.

On November 9th the RPAC recommended Old Town, Bryant; Markham Street, Conway; 12th Street, Little Rock; Heart of Mayflower, Mayflower; and Levy and Park Hill, North Little Rock to move forward with engineering. The Metroplan Board of Directors concurred with the recommendation, and voted to fund the projects.

### Communities' Continuing Efforts

The Jump Start communities wrapped up their visioning and rezoning in 2015, but are still hard at work achieving the objectives imagined in their original proposals. Bryant has been revamping infrastructure in its Jump Start project area. Engineering efforts are underway for Reynolds Road improvements. Nearby Boone Road has been reconstructed and a water line is being relocated away from Reynolds Road to facilitate development. Two different grants will fund sidewalks on North 3rd Street and North Elm Street.

In the 12th Street Neighborhood, Little Rock has combined efforts with Better Community Development and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in the form of an Invest Health grant. The grant aims to increase and leverage investments in at-risk neighborhoods that promote better health. Brandon House, a non-profit organization that provides art programs for kids, has held fundraisers to restore the former Lee Theater building into a community arts center.

North Little Rock continues efforts through its Jump Start Coalition. The group meets regularly to discuss strategies for implementation and other outreach initiatives. The Levy area has focused on extending the Levy Trail and has plans to expand the existing path to Kierre Drive. The North Little Rock Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee has also been revived, envisioning a "four park trail" traversing the city's two neighborhoods.

## Green Streets and Parks: Markham Town Square



Illustration credit: University of Arkansas Community Design Center

Conway is planning a public space on the grounds of an old scrap yard between Markham and Spencer Streets. The City partnered with University of Arkansas Community Design Center on an Urban Watershed Plan that identified a possible wetlands-based town square with an outdoor performance facility. Grants will aid site clean-up and design of the public space.



## Metroplan Assists Little Rock Port with Successful TIGER Grant

During the spring of 2016, Metroplan staff received a request from the Little Rock Port Authority for assistance with an application for a federal TIGER grant. Staff analyzed local commuting patterns and incomes, and careful analysis showed positive benefits for many potential workers coming from economically distressed areas. In August of 2016, the Little Rock Port Authority was awarded \$6.1 million for expanding its rail storage track and improving its slackwater harbor. “We couldn’t have done it without you guys,” says Bryan Day of the Little Rock Port Authority, in appreciation of Metroplan’s help.



## Walkable Cabot: A Success Story



Raised crosswalks induce traffic to slow down, and are helpful for child safety near schools.

In 2007, the City of Cabot committed to enhancing walkability throughout the town in *Walkable Cabot: A Pedestrian Plan for Cabot Arkansas*. During 2016, the City revisited the plan and built on its already solid foundation.

### Progress Report

Nine recommendations came out of 2007's plan.

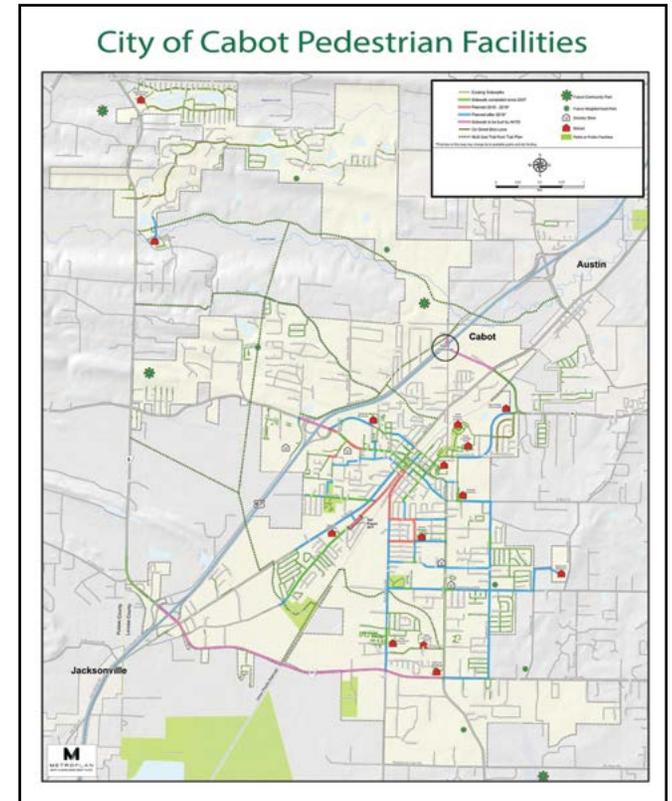
Progress includes:

- Sidewalks follow CARTS Design Standards. **Adopted**
- Pedestrian facility funding annually. **Adopted**
- All new construction should incorporate sidewalks. **Adopted**
- Sidewalks are wider and include a grassy buffer. **Incorporated where possible.**
- Maintain and improve existing sidewalks. **6,600 linear feet improved.**
- Provide safe and convenient pedestrian crosswalks and refuges. **Addressed, most aggressively near schools.**
- Make use of innovative pedestrian technology. **New technologies being explored.**
- A shared path/walking trail plan and a bikeway plan is in progress. **Not yet implemented. Crafton Tull developing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that touches on this.**

### Beyond 2016

Instead of collecting dust on a shelf, *Walkable Cabot* shows how planning can foster success. The update aims to continue to implement the original recommendations, and then adds a few more:

- Work with AHTD to address pedestrian needs on state highways;
- Increase public involvement for pedestrian planning issues; and
- Introduce planning for bicycle travel.



Since adopting *Walkable Cabot* in 2007, the City has built more than **28,776 linear feet (5.5 miles)** of new sidewalks.

## TAP Grants

During 2016, Metroplan announced Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant funding for building trails, restoring bridges and improving sidewalks and streetscapes across the region. The largest project, a trail extension along Pinnacle Valley Road in western Pulaski County, is part of a multi-year effort to connect the Arkansas River Trail with Pinnacle Mountain State Park and the Ouachita Trail.

Two vintage bridges are being restored. The Old River Bridge in Benton, featured in the famous movie *Sling Blade*, will allow pedestrians and cyclists to cross the Saline River. The Springfield-Des Arc Bridge in Faulkner County, built in 1871 and probably the oldest surviving bridge in the state, will be moved to Beaverfork Lake as a pedestrian structure. Improvements will be made to help pedestrians safely cross Pike Avenue in North Little Rock. The TAP program for 2016 includes many other projects, smaller but providing vital links and new additions that will make it easier for pedestrians, bicyclists, the mobility-impaired, children—in short everyone—to get around safely.

### TAP Funding 2016

Project	Sponsor	Award Amount
Pinnacle Valley Rd. (AR River Trail)	Pulaski County	\$400,000
Old River Bridge (SW Trail)	Saline County	\$296,000
Springfield-Des Arc Bridge relocation	Faulkner County	\$240,000
Roosevelt Rd. sidewalks	Little Rock	\$160,000
Dave Ward Dr. Overpass	Conway	\$150,000
Jackman St. / River St.	Benton	\$125,000
Edgewood Dr. /Lakefront Dr. sidewalks	Maumelle	\$125,000
First St. sidewalks, pedestrian crossings	Cabot	\$125,000
Military Rd / Hwy 294 sidewalks	Jacksonville	\$125,000
Kelso Rd. / Burns Trail sidewalks	Sherwood	\$125,000
Pike Avenue pedestrian improvements	North Little Rock	\$112,000
Third St. streetscape	Bryant	\$90,000
Levy Trail - 56th to Kierre	North Little Rock	\$42,000

## Realizing a Goal With Rail-Grade Separations

Two decades ago, in 1996, the Metroplan Board of Directors looked into the problem of regional railroad crossings, which were the site of serious accidents and regular traffic delays. The next year, following systematic review by Metroplan's Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), the Board recommended twelve rail grade separations to be completed by the year 2020, which was the culmination year of the then-recently-completed Metro 2020 Plan.

In 2016, Metroplan moved three more rail grade projects forward. The McCain crossing in North Little Rock was under construction at year's end, while the Geyer Springs project goes to bid in early 2017. The Highway 89 crossing in Mayflower is undergoing environmental review. With seven complete, and one cancelled due to lack of need, there will be just one left to go: the J.P. Wright Loop in Jacksonville. This one has been programmed for the 2016–2020 TIP, meaning the Rail Grade program started all those years ago should be complete by 2020. The benefits of such projects are easily forgotten when one drives smoothly and safely over a bridge where there was once a bumpy and unpredictable railroad crossing. Lives have been saved, however, and transportation efficiency has been improved for both rail and road traffic. Long-term planning has worked again to solve a problem.



The McCain Rail Grade Separation will be eighth in a series, with two more in the program.

### Rail Grade Separations—Status During 2016

Rail Grade	Location	Status
East Main St	Jacksonville	Complete
Baseline Rd (SH 338)	Little Rock	Complete
South Loop	Little Rock	Complete
North Cabot RR Overpass (SH 38)	Cabot	Complete
Salem Rd	Conway	Complete
Edison Ave (SH 35/183)	Benton	Complete
Maumelle Blvd	Maumelle	Complete
McCain Blvd	North Little Rock	Under Construction 2016-2017
Geyer Springs Rd	Little Rock	Bids in early 2017
Hwy 89 Extension	Mayflower	Environmental Review
JP Wright Loop	Jacksonville	2016-2020 TIP*

\*TIP stands for Transportation Improvement Program



## Jim McKenzie

Twenty-eight years ago, in 1988, Arkansas native Jim McKenzie became Metroplan's fourth Executive Director. Jim brought along years of experience in planning consulting work, and had served a term on Pulaski County's Quorum Court. His qualifications include a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Arkansas, and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. He is a seasoned member of the American Planning Association and holds certification from the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).

Mr. McKenzie has accomplished much during his tenure. Jim has served on several boards and committees such as the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Highway Finance, Department of Education's Little Rock Area Stakeholders Group, the Eno Transportation Foundation's Board of Advisors, an emeritus member of the Board of Trustees of Leadership Greater Little Rock and the Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance (MAWA), which he spearheaded. He also served two terms on the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations' (AMPO) Board of Directors, including Vice President and chairman of the policy committee in 2006.

A talented speaker, Jim has been panelist and lecturer at urban planning and transportation conferences like the national Main Street Program, the American Planning Association, the National Transit Institute, the Institute of Transportation Engineers and the Transportation Research Board. Also heavily decorated, Jim earned Metroplan's Jack Evans Regional Leadership Award in 2007 and again in 2016, AMPO's 2016 Ronald F. Kirby Award for Outstanding Individual Leadership and Arkansas American Planning Association's 2016 Bill Bonner Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Planning Profession.

Under his direction, the organization completed five major regional transportation plans, expanded its study area from two counties to four, helped to secure the region's water resources by creating MAWA and became more engaged with the community than ever before. In 2000, his leadership helped Metroplan secure the AMPO Outstanding Achievement Award (for Metropolitan Planning Organizations representing over 200,000 population).



At the 2016 Arkansas Planning Association (Arkansas Chapter) Fall Conference, Jim McKenzie accepted the prestigious Bill Bonner Award for himself and Richard Magee. The Bill Bonner Award is presented to individuals who have made a significant contribution to planning in Arkansas over a period of time. Metroplan staff nominated both Jim and Richard, citing their over 70 years of combined planning experience and dedication.



Jim McKenzie accepted the 2016 Jack Evans Regional Leadership Award from Metroplan Board President Mayor Gary Fletcher of Jacksonville.

### In 2016 Jim received three prestigious planning awards:

American Planning Association's Bill Bonner Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Planning Profession

AMPO's 2016 Ronald F. Kirby Award for Outstanding Individual Leadership

Metroplan Board's Jack Evans Regional Leadership Award

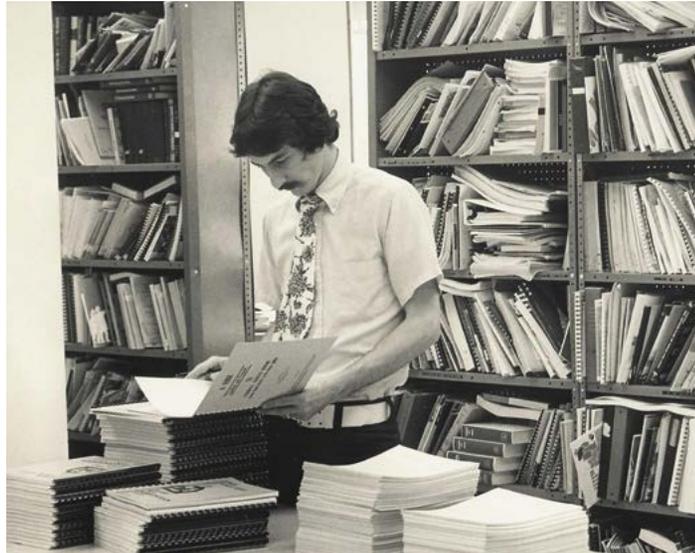
## Richard Magee

Metroplan's longest tenured employee, of forty-two years, will also be calling it a career. Hired fresh from Louisiana State University, Richard Magee adapted quickly to Central Arkansas. Richard holds certification from the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Mr. Magee has taken on many roles at the organization from Planner, Demographics/Research Specialist, Director of Planning, CARTS Study Director and Deputy Director, and has been instrumental in guiding a series of Long-Range Metropolitan Transportation plans. He was the lead technical advisor for planning efforts to assist Metroplan member jurisdictions, and has become skilled in comprehensive planning, zoning and subdivision regulations, access management plans and several other studies.

Under his tutelage, Metroplan developed Planning Commission Training workshops, and the Dave Ward Drive Access Management Plan, which is now used as a model statewide. Richard's eye for Central Arkansas' transportation needs informed the Regional Arterial Network Study, Regional Bikeway Development, and

I-630 Fixed Guideway Study. He played a key role developing the Arkansas River Trail, including the Big Dam Bridge and Two Rivers Park Bridge, enjoyed by thousands each year.

His influence in Arkansas planning earned him the Arkansas American Planning Association's 2016 Bill Bonner Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Planning Profession.



In 2016 Richard received two prestigious planning awards:

American Planning Association's Bill Bonner Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Planning Profession

Metroplan Board's Jack Evans Regional Leadership Award

**Metroplan appreciates the hard work, dedication and leadership both Jim and Richard have provided.**

**We wish them well as they begin their next chapters.**

**They will be missed.**

**Thank you, Jim and Richard!**

## Ozone Action Days

Metroplan staff and consultants conducted another successful Ozone Action Days public service campaign. Ditch the Keys week and media strategies throughout the summer helped raise awareness about the dangers of ground-level ozone. Central Arkansas has remained in attainment of the three-year federal ozone standard.



Rock Region Metro provided a fare-free day on Ride the Bus to Work/School Day.



Public outreach included Rockefeller Elementary in Little Rock. The students learned about ozone, made posters and enjoyed a parade around the school grounds.

## MAWA at a Crossroads

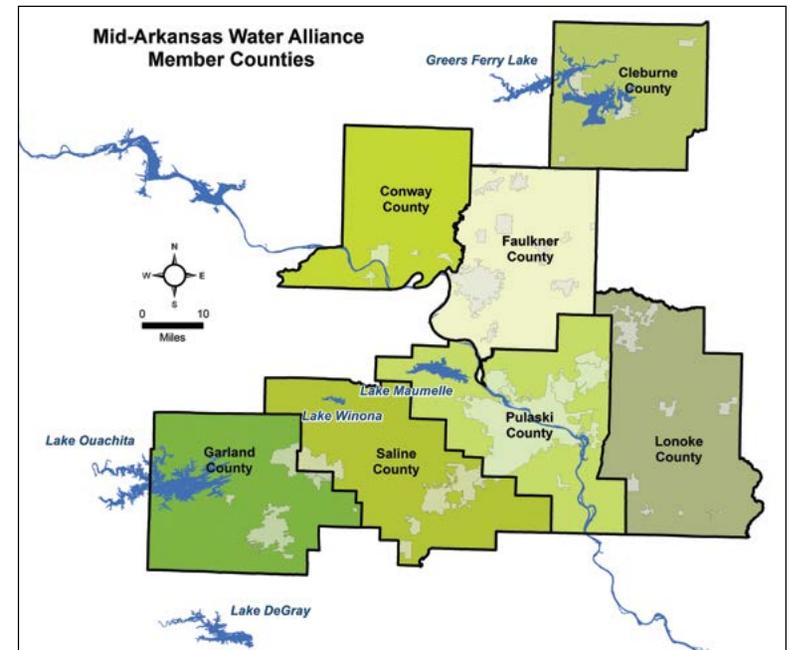
During 2016, the Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance (MAWA) made major progress in securing a long-term water future for its members. Founded in 2003, and based on water-securing efforts since the early 1990s, MAWA is not a water supplier, but rather a cooperative effort by multiple Central Arkansas government agencies. MAWA is concerned with two major water sources: Greers Ferry Lake for its members north of the Arkansas River, and Lake Ouachita for its members south of the river.

MAWA has secured 15 million gallons a day (MGD) from Greers Ferry Lake, and several member governments in the Lonoke-White Public Water Association are already drawing water from this source. Efforts are continuing to obtain more water from Greers Ferry Lake. In 2016, the City of Clinton withdrew its water request for 5.5 MGD from the lake. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has made this additional amount available to MAWA, bringing its total to 20.5 MGD, in its new allocation request.

But MAWA's biggest news in 2016 involved Lake Ouachita. MAWA is requesting an allocation of 20 MGD from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, while the City of Hot Springs is requesting an additional 7 MGD and North Garland County is asking for 3 MGD, for a total 30 MGD allocation from the lake. The Corps will decide the matter in early 2017.

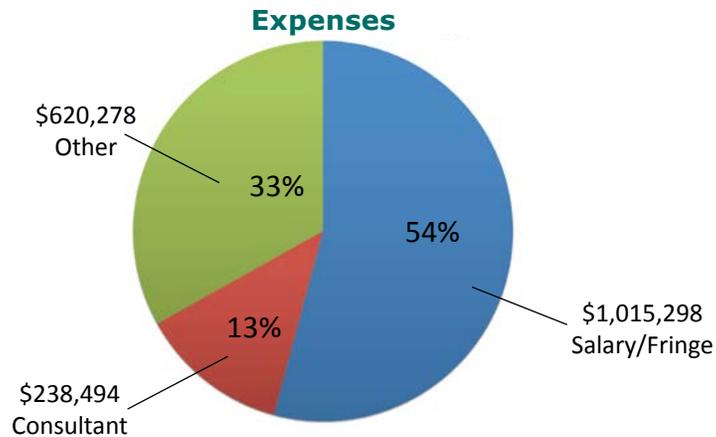
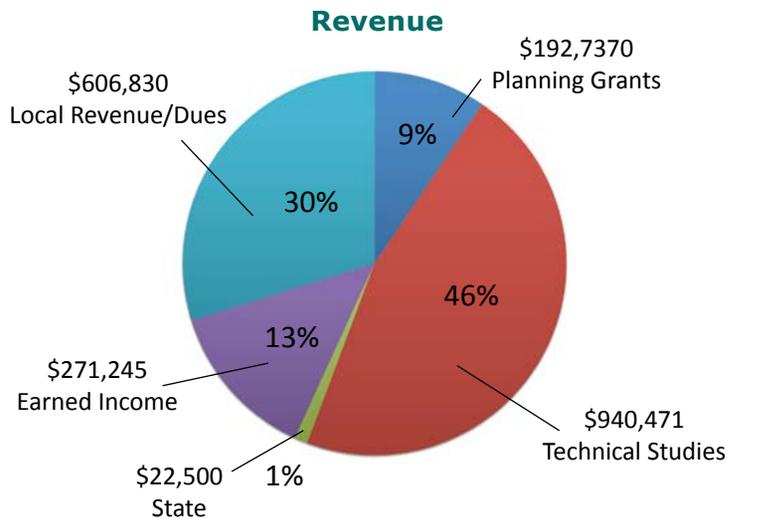
At the same time, several Saline County members are considering their own initiative to develop the Ouachita River as a potential water supply. However, members must decide whether or not to go together on the Lake Ouachita effort as soon as the Corps of Engineers approves the request.

The big picture is that MAWA has gone a long way toward getting local governments working together and thinking about long-term water supplies. Thanks to MAWA's long-range planning efforts, Central Arkansas region is better-placed to meet future water needs than other metros in the south-central United States, particularly those farther west. Outgoing Metroplan Director Jim McKenzie has served as ex-officio Secretary-Treasurer, and Metroplan has been MAWA's business footprint, taking care of accounting, bookkeeping and record-keeping. The effort continues, with Metroplan's new director Tab Townsell taking the job. There is a promising future for water supply in Central Arkansas and also much more to do. At a time of leadership change it is vital to recognize many past years of hard and thoughtful work.



# REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

## Metroplan 2016 Revenue and Expenditures

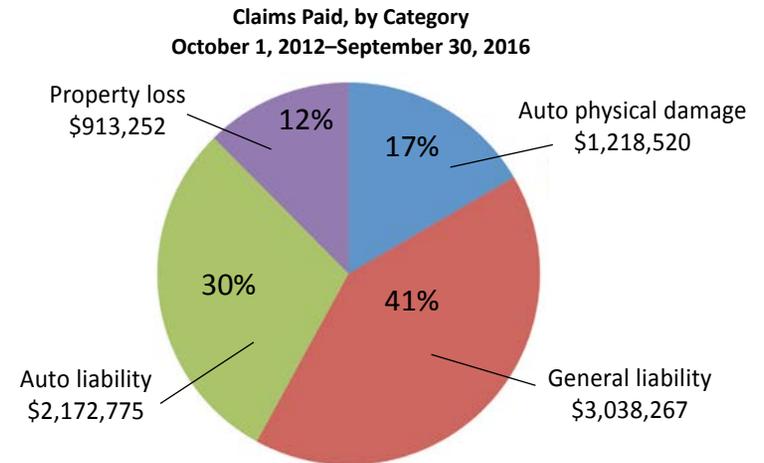


<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,033,783</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,874,070</b>
<b>Revenue over Expenses</b>	<b>\$159,713</b>

## CARMA 2016 Revenue and Expenditures

The Central Arkansas Risk Management Association continues providing affordable coverage to its members. From October 2012 through September 2016, CARMA members incurred \$7.5 million in claims. Despite the costs of providing coverage to its members, CARMA continues to run a net surplus, which helps to cover the costs of future claims development.

CARMA offers its members more coverage and fewer exclusions than commercial insurance or other self-insurance programs. And, as always, members are not just customers – they are members of the CARMA Board of Directors.



### Current CARMA Members

- Central Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council
- Central Arkansas Risk Management Association
- City of Shannon Hills
- El Paso Fire Department
- Jacksonville North Pulaski School District
- Metroplan
- Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance (MAWA)
- Pulaski County Bridge Public Facilities Board
- Pulaski County Special School District
- Recycle Saline: A Solid Waste District
- Regional Recycling & Waste Reduction District
- Rock Region Metro

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