

## AGENDA

### APO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING

THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2023 – 10 A.M.  
STEARNS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
455-28<sup>TH</sup> AVE. S, WAITE PARK  
**ZOOM OPTION AVAILABLE BY REQUEST**

1. Introductions
2. Public Comment Period
3. Consideration of Consent Agenda Items (*Attachments A-B*)
  - a. Approve minutes of Feb. 23, 2023, TAC meeting (Attachment A)
  - b. Receive staff report of March 9, 2023, Policy Board meeting (Attachment B)
4. Consideration of the July-December 2022 Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) Report (*Attachments C1-C2*), *Alex McKenzie, Associate Transportation Planner*
  - a. **Suggested Action: Recommend Policy Board approval.**
5. Consideration of the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments and Administrative Modifications (*Attachments D1-D2*), *Alex McKenzie, Associate Transportation Planner*
  - a. **Suggested Action: Recommend Policy Board approval.**
6. Discussion on Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) project prioritization/scoring methodology (*Attachment E*), *Brian Gibson, Executive Director*
  - a. **Suggested Action: Recommend CRP project scoring methodology.**
7. Other Business & Announcements
8. Adjournment

## English

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## Somali

Ururka Qorsheynta Deegaanka ee Cloud Cloud (APO) wuxuu si buuxda u waafaqsanahay Cinwaanka VI ee Xuquuqda Xuquuqda Rayidka ee 1964, Cinwaanka II ee Sharciga Naafada Mareykanka ee 1990, Amarka Fulinta 12898, Amarka Fulinta 13116 iyo qawaaniinta iyo qawaaniinta la xiriira. APO waa u furan tahay dhammaan dadka awooda oo dhan. Qofka u baahan dib-u-habeyn ama dejin, caawimaad gargaar ah, adeegyo turjumaad, adeegyo turjubaan, iwm, si uu uga qeyb galo kulan dadweyne, oo ay ku jiraan helitaanka ajendahaan iyo / ama ku lifaaqan qaab kale, ama luqadda fadlan la xiriir APO. 320-252- 7568 ama at [admin@stcloudapo.org](mailto:admin@stcloudapo.org) ugu yaraan toddobo (7) maalmood kahor kulanka.

## Spanish

La Organización de Planificación del Área de Saint Cloud (APO en inglés) cumple plenamente con el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, con el Título II de la Ley sobre los Estadounidenses con Discapacidad de 1990), de la Orden Ejecutiva 12898, de la Orden Ejecutiva 13116 y los estatutos y reglamentos relacionados. La APO es accesible para todas las personas de todas las capacidades. Una persona que requiere una modificación o acomodación, ayudas auxiliares, servicios de traducción, servicios de interpretación, etc., para poder participar en una reunión pública, incluyendo recibir esta agenda y/o archivos adjuntos en un formato o idioma alternativo, por favor, contacta a la APO al número de teléfono 320-252-7568 o al [admin@stcloudapo.org](mailto:admin@stcloudapo.org) al menos siete (7) días antes de la reunión.

**SAINT CLOUD AREA PLANNING ORGANIZATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE (TAC) MEETING**

***Thursday, Feb. 23 @ 10:00 a.m.***

A meeting of the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization's (APO) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom on Thursday, Feb. 23, 2023. Senior Transportation Planner Vicki Johnson presided with the following people in attendance:

Voting Members:

Michael Kedrowski	Saint Cloud Metro Bus
Jodi Teich	Stearns County
Matt Glaesman	City of Saint Cloud
Tracy Hodel	City of Saint Cloud
Todd Schultz	City of Sauk Rapids
April Ryan	City of Sartell
Randy Sabart	City of Saint Joseph
Tom Cruikshank	MnDOT District 3

Non-Member Attendees:

Ben Anderson	Stearns County Parks Department
Beth Kallestad	MnDOT Office of Sustainability and Public Health
Cheryl Malikowski	City of Saint Cloud
Kari Theisen	City of Sartell
Jeff Lenz	MnDOT District 3
Angie Tomovic	MnDOT District 3
Joe Klein	MnDOT OTSM
Voni Vegar	MnDOT OTAT
Brian Gibson	APO, Executive Director
Alex McKenzie	APO, Associate Planner
James Stapfer	APO, Planning Technician
Vicki Johnson	APO, Senior Planner

Introductions were made.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

No members of the public were present.

**CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Approve minutes of Feb. 2, 2023, TAC meeting
- b. Receive staff report of Feb. 9, 2023, Policy Board meeting

***Ms. Teich made a motion to approve Consent Agenda Items. Mr. Glaesman seconded the motion. Motion carried.***

### **Minnesota Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Plan**

Ms. Kallestad provided a summary of the Minnesota Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan and the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula Program (NEVI). New federal program authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides funds to states to install DC fast chargers along designated corridors. The Minnesota Plan was approved in September 2022 and allows \$68 million for federal FY 2022–2026. Ms. Kallestad reviewed the plan for potential locations for the charging stations and the cost estimates. Mr. Gibson clarified that MnDOT will not own the charging stations and asked who will own them. Ms. Kallestad said they will accept applications per charging site and use a scoring system to determine who will own them.

### **Consideration of the 2023-2027 Regional Infrastructure Investment Plan (RIIP)**

Ms. Johnson provided information on the RIIP. The RIIP was developed to address the “regionally significant” projects within the APO’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The RIIP identifies proposed non-transit transportation improvement projects regardless of funding source and includes projects that have been programmed in the TIP. This document, not subject to FHWA/FTA regulations, is designed to provide jurisdictions and residents with a more complete picture of transportation improvement projects occurring in the planning area over a five-year time frame. The RIIP will also serve as a means to track construction projects that have been completed within the past 12 months.

***Mr. Sabart made the motion to recommend approval to publish the RIIP document. Ms. Teich seconded. Motion carried.***

### **Consideration of the City of Sartell’s Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) application**

The Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) is a new formula program within the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The APO receives \$270,000 per year in CRP funds. The Policy Board approved a CRP project for the City of Saint Cloud to install Electric-Vehicle charging stations at five locations throughout the city. That project will expend \$200,000 of our available \$430,000, leaving \$230,000 still available in FY 2024. The city of Sartell has submitted an application requesting \$179,800 in CRP funds to plan and design a shared-use path facility that would connect the bicycle/pedestrian Mississippi River bridge crossing at the old paper mill site with the rest of the active transportation network on the east side of the river.

***Ms. Hodel made the motion to recommend approval of the Sartell CRP proposal for planning and design of a shared-use path for \$179,800. Mr. Kedrowski seconded. Motion carried.***

**Recommendations on typical cross sections to be used in MTP modeling scenarios and cost estimate development**

Typical cross-sections for consideration were summarized and noted that this is not what the final design would be. Considerations are to develop reasonable project cost-estimates based on some general rules-of-thumb. Mr. Sabart shared what estimates for state-aid city's construction needs are based. Mr. Gibson is going to speak to the consultants about cost estimates and this discussion will be continued at another time.

**Discussion on Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) project prioritization/ scoring methodology**

Mr. Gibson is seeking input on how the APO should prioritize the use of CRP dollars and how staff should begin scoring projects. Mr. Gibson presented different alternatives: 1: equality and leaving the decision up to discussion 2: reduce active transportation since there are other programs that fund it 3: increase weight of traffic management 4: increase weight of emerging technology. Ms. Teich and Mr. Glaesman would like to think over the options and discuss at the next TAC meeting. Once the TAC has reviewed they will make a recommendation to the Policy Board. Ms. Johnson asked that any comments be sent to Mr. Gibson by March 17 to include in the next TAC agenda.

**Other Business and Announcements**

All Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (ALOP) and financial information for the 2024-2027 TIP development should be returned to Ms. Johnson by March 17. Ms. Johnson will send out an email regarding discussions with jurisdictions on mid-term and long-term projects for MTP development. The next round of TIP amendments/modifications is on March 13.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.



1040 County Road 4, Saint Cloud, MN 56303-0643

*T. 320.252.7568 F. 320.252.6557*

**TO:** Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee  
**FROM:** Brian Gibson, Executive Director  
**RE:** Staff Report on Policy Board Meeting  
**DATE:** March 17, 2023

A Policy Board meeting was held on Thursday, March 9, 2023. The Board took the following actions:

1. Approved a resolution accepting a Safe Routes to School grant from the state of Minnesota
2. Approved publishing the Regional Infrastructure Investment Plan (RIIP)
3. Approved awarding \$179,000 in Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funds to the City of Sartell for the planning and designing of a shared-use path through the old paper mill site
  - a. As part of that conversation, the Board expressed a desire to develop a process to evaluate CRP proposals to better focus the use of the CRP dollars on their best, most-appropriate use

**Suggested Action:** None, informational.



1040 County Road 4, Saint Cloud, MN 56303-0643

T. 320.252.7568 F. 320.252.6557

**TO:** Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee  
**FROM:** Alex McKenzie, Associate Transportation Planner  
**RE:** 2022 Stakeholder Engagement Plan Mid-Year Report  
**DATE:** March 16, 2023

The 2022 Stakeholder Engagement Plan Mid-Year Report (SEP) looks at the various public outreach strategies APO staff utilized between July 2022 and December 2022.

Since the first SEP annual report in 2019, the traditional one-year time frame has been from July 1 to June 30, coinciding with the state fiscal year. However, due to most work items – particularly consultant lead studies – being contained within a traditional calendar year (Jan. 1 through Dec. 31), APO staff felt it best to align future SEP annual reports with this schedule. To do this, APO staff will close out the remaining six months of calendar year 2022 (July through December) with this mid-year report. All subsequent reports will then align to the new reporting period.

The bulk of the report focuses on how APO staff interacted with the community over the last six months of 2022. This includes information collected on the number of meetings and events hosted by the APO and discusses the use of online surveys to get people involved. The report also looks at the way APO staff let people know about different events through social media, press releases, email lists, etc. Staff also look at whom they are reaching with some of these efforts by reviewing demographic data collected during online surveying efforts.

Staff also want to ensure that those participating in APO-sponsored events or activities feel listened to and want to continue engaging with the APO and the transportation planning process. As part of this report, APO staff ask for feedback from those who have participated in an outreach activity on their experience and suggestions on where APO staff can improve.

The 2022 Mid-Year SEP Annual Report moves to a discussion on recommendations APO staff can make to improve public engagement. This section is two-fold. First, staff looks at past recommendations and how effective their implementation was. Second, staff identifies new ways to enhance public involvement based on the feedback from community members engaged with the APO.

APO staff hope that through this effort to reflect on past efforts, reassess existing strategies, and develop and explore new ideas, public engagement in the regional transportation planning process will only improve.

**Suggested Action:** Recommend approval of the 2022 Stakeholder Engagement Plan Mid-Year Report to the Policy Board.

2022 Mid-Year Report

# Stakeholder Engagement Plan



Prepared by the Saint Cloud  
Area Planning Organization

Approved by the Saint Cloud APO Policy  
Board on April 13, 2023



## DISCLAIMER

The preparation of this document was funded in part by the United States Department of Transportation with funding administered through the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration. Additional funding was provided locally by the member jurisdictions of the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization: Benton County, Sherburne County, Stearns County, City of Sartell, City of Sauk Rapids, City of Saint Cloud, City of Saint Joseph, City of Waite Park, LeSauk Township, and Saint Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission (Saint Cloud Metro Bus). The United States Government and the State of Minnesota assume no liability for the contents or use thereof.

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*A complaint may also be submitted to Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Civil Rights by submitting an online complaint form (<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/civilrights/nondiscrimination-complaint-form.html>) or by calling 651-366-3071*

## **CIWAANKA VI EE XAQIIJINTA**

*Ururka Qorsheynta Deegaanka ee Cloud Cloud (APO) wuxuu halkan ku siinayaa ogeysiis dadweyne in ay tahay sharciga APO in ay si buuxda u hoggaansanto Cinwaanka VI ee Xuquuqda Madaniga ee 1964 iyo Sharciga Soo-celinta Xuquuqda Madaniga ee 1987, Amarka Fulinta 12898 ee ku saabsan Cadaaladda Deegaanka, Iyo qaynuunada iyo qawaaniinta la xiriira barnaamijyada iyo nashaadaadka. Cinwaanka VI wuxuu xaqiijinayaa in qofna, sabab asal, midab, ama asal qaran ah, laga reebi doonin kaqeybgalka, loo diidi doonin faa'iidooyinka, ama haddii kale lagula takoorin barnaamij kasta ama waxqabad ee APO ay ku hesho kaalmada maaliyadeed ee Federaalka . Qof kasta oo aaminsan inuu ka xanaaqay fal sharci darro ah oo takoor ay ku sameysay APO wuxuu xaq u leeyahay inuu dacwad rasmi ah u gudbiyo APO, MnDOT ama US DOT. Cabasho kasta oo kale waa inay ahaataa mid qoraal ah lagana xaraystaa maareeyaha u hoggaansamida cinwaankeeda ee 'APO' VI VI waa boqol iyo siddeetan (180) maalmood gudahood taariikhda dhacday markii la sheegay in ay dhacday midabtakoor. Macluumaad dheeri ah, ama si aad u hesho Foomka Cabashada Kala-Takoorida Cinwaan ee 'VI kalasooc Foom', fadlan ka eeg bogga internetka ee 'Cloud Cloud APO' ([www.stcloudapo.org](http://www.stcloudapo.org)) ama waxaad ka arki kartaa nuqul xafiiskayaga 1040 County Road 4, Saint Cloud, MN 56303.*

*Cabashada ayaa sidoo kale waxaa loo soo gudbin karaa Waaxda Gaadiidka ee Minnesota Xafiiska Xuquuqda Madaniga ah iyadoo la soo dirayo foom cabashada ee khadka internetka (<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/civilrights/nondiscrimination-complaint-form.html>) ama iyada oo la soo wacayo 651 -366-3071.*

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*La Organización de Planificación del Área de Saint Cloud (APO en inglés) da un aviso público con la presente de que es política de la APO el cumplir plenamente con el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964 y de la Ley de Restauración de Derechos Civiles de 1987, de la Orden Ejecutiva 12898 sobre la Justicia Ambiental, y los estatutos y reglamentos relacionados en todos los programas y actividades. El Título VI asegura que ninguna persona, por motivos de raza, color o nacionalidad, podrá quedar excluida de la participación en, se le podrán negar los beneficios de, o de algún modo podrá ser objeto de discriminación en virtud de cualquier programa o actividad por la cual la APO recibe asistencia financiera Federal. Cualquier persona que cree que ha sido perjudicada por una práctica discriminatoria ilegal por la APO tiene el derecho de presentar un reclamo formal con la APO MnDOT o U.S. DOT. Cualquiera de estos reclamos debe ser por escrito y debe ser presentado ante el Gerente de Cumplimiento del Título VI de la APO dentro de los ciento ochenta (180) días naturales siguientes a la fecha en que la presunta ocurrencia discriminatoria. Para obtener más información, o para obtener un Formulario de Reclamo por Discriminación del Título VI, por favor, dirígete al Sitio web de la APO de Saint Cloud ([www.stcloudapo.org](http://www.stcloudapo.org)) o puedes ver una copia en nuestra oficina en 1040 County Road 4, Saint Cloud, MN 56303.*

*También se puede presentar una queja a la Oficina de Derechos Civiles del Departamento de Transporte de Minnesota enviando un formulario de queja en línea (<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/civilrights/nondiscrimination-complaint-form.html>) o llamando al 651-366-3071.*

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## CIWAANKA II EE ZAQIIJINTA

Hay'adda Qorsheynta ee Saint Cloud Area Organisation (APO) waxay siisaa ogeysiis dadweyne inay tahay siyaasada APO inay si buuxda ugu hoggaansanto Sharciga Naafada Mareykanka ee 1990 (ADA) iyo Sharciga Baxnaaninta 1973 (Sharciga Baxnaaninta) iyo qawaaniinta iyo qawaaniinta la xiriira Dhammaan barnaamijyada iyo nashaadaadka. Qodobka II ee Sharciga Naafada Mareykanka (ADA) wuxuu u baahan yahay dhammaan hay'adaha gobolka iyo kuwa maxalliga ah inay qaadaan tillaabooyinka ku habboon si loo hubiyo in xiriirka lala yeesho codsabayaasha, ka qeybgalayaasha, iyo xubnaha bulshada naafada ah ay u la mid yihiin sida xiriirka lala yeesho kuwa kale. Qof kasta oo aaminsan inuu ka xanaaqay fal sharci darro ah oo takooris ah oo ay sameysay APO wuxuu xaq u leeyahay inuu dacwad rasmi ah u gudbiyo APO, MnDOT, ama US DOT. Cabasho kasta oo noocan oo kale ahi waa inay ahaataa mid qoraal ah oo ay kujirto macluumaad ku saabsan takoorida la soo sheegay sida magaca, cinwaanka, taleefan lambarka cabashada, iyo goobta, taariikhda, iyo faahfaahinta dhibaataada. Hab kale oo lagu xareeyo cabashada, sida wareysiyada shaqsiyeed ama cajalad duuban cabashada, ayaa loo heli doonaa sidii wax looga badali karo macquul ahaan dadka naafada ah markii la codsado. Ashtakooyinka waa in ay soo gudbiyaan cabashada iyo / ama wakiilkiisa / wakiilkiisa sida ugu dhakhsaha badan ee suurtogalka ah laakiin aan ka dambayn lixdan (60) maalmood taariikhi ah ka dib dhacdada la xiriirta midab kala sooca waana in lagu fayl gareeyaa Agaasimaha Fulinta APO. Macluumaad dheeri ah, ama si aad u hesho Foomka Cabashada Kala-Takoorida, fadlan eeg bogga internetka ee 'Cloud Cloud APO' ([www.stcloudapo.org](http://www.stcloudapo.org)) ama waxaad ka arki kartaa nuqul xafiiskayaga 1040 County Road 4, Saint Cloud, MN 56303.

## GARANTÌA DEL TÌTULO II

La Organización de Planificación del Área de Saint Cloud (APO en inglés) da un aviso público con la presente de que es política de la APO el cumplir plenamente con la Ley sobre los Estadounidenses con Discapacidad de 1990 (ADA en inglés) y con la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973 (Ley de Rehabilitación) y con los estatutos y reglamentos en todos los programas y actividades. El Título II de la Ley sobre los Estadounidenses con Discapacidad de 1990 (ADA en inglés) requiere que todas las agencias de gobierno estatales y locales tomen las medidas adecuadas para asegurar que la comunicación con los aplicantes, participantes y miembros del público con discapacidades sea tan efectiva como la comunicación con otros. Cualquier persona que cree que Cualquier persona que cree que ha sido perjudicada por una práctica discriminatoria ilegal por la APO tiene el derecho de presentar un reclamo formal con la APO MnDOT o U.S. DOT. Cualquiera de estos reclamos debe ser por escrito y debe contener información sobre la presunta discriminación tales como el nombre, la dirección, el número de teléfono del denunciante, y la ubicación, la fecha y la descripción del problema. Los medios alternativos de presentar un reclamo, tales como una entrevista personal o una grabación de audio del reclamo, estarán disponibles como una modificación razonable para las personas con discapacidades a petición. Los reclamos deben ser presentados por el denunciante y/o su persona designada tan pronto como sea posible pero no más tarde de sesenta (60) días naturales después de la presunta ocurrencia discriminatoria y deben ser presentados ante el Director Ejecutivo de la APO. Para obtener más información, o para obtener un Formulario de Reclamo por Discriminación, por favor, dirígete Sitio web de la APO de Saint Cloud ([www.stcloudapo.org](http://www.stcloudapo.org)) o puedes ver una copia en nuestra oficina e 1040 County Road 4, Saint Cloud, MN 56303.

# MID-YEAR ENGAGEMENT

## A Summary of the APO's 2022 Mid-Year Stakeholder Engagement Plan Annual Report

The Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) is committed to coordinated planning – in a fair and mutually beneficial manner – on select issues transcending jurisdictional boundaries for the betterment of the entire Saint Cloud metropolitan planning area. To accomplish this mission, the APO relies heavily on ensuring that coordinated planning efforts involve meaningful public input and that input is a factor in the decision-making process behind the development of every plan and program the APO does.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan – SEP – is the roadmap for APO staff, advisory committees, and decision-makers on how to engage and reach the community in a way that ensures all community members are given an equal and equitable opportunity to participate in the process.

The APO has developed three specific goals when it comes to getting the community involved in the regional transportation planning process:

1. **Opportunities for Involvement.** Provide early, accessible, and continuous opportunities for public involvement from a diversity of stakeholders and interested public.
2. **Access to Information.** Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and projects.
3. **Review of Materials.** Provide a reasonable amount of time to review materials and comment prior to adoption of any plan or amendment.

To measure the APO's progress in achieving these goals, APO staff has committed to conducting an annual assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of its policies and practices around public involvement.

The 2022 Mid-Year SEP Report serves as the APO's public engagement evaluation.

This mid-year report starts with a general overview of the APO. It then takes a closer look at the various public outreach strategies APO staff utilized between July and December 2022. This first section of this report also addresses the change in reporting periods (from July 1-June 30 to Jan. 1-Dec. 30).

The bulk of the report focuses on how APO staff interacted with the community over the last six months of 2022. This includes information collected on the number of meetings and events hosted by the APO and discusses the use of online surveys to get people involved. The report also looks at the way APO staff let people know about different events through social media, press releases, email lists, etc. Staff also look at whom they are reaching with some of these efforts by reviewing demographic data collected during online surveying efforts.

The report also reviewed why it is important to ensure consultants follow the same guidelines and procedures in the APO's SEP.

Only looking at the ways people can participate is just one side of the coin. Staff also want to ensure that those participating in APO-sponsored events or activities feel listened to and want to continue engaging with the APO and the transportation planning process. As part of

this report, APO staff ask for feedback from those who have participated in an outreach activity on their experience and suggestions on where APO staff can improve.

Toward the end of the document, APO staff conduct a similar self-evaluation, explicitly discussing the staff's efforts in engaging people with limited English proficiency. As outlined in Federal regulations, the APO must have a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan that identifies reasonable steps staff can take to provide language assistance to those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. Part of the LEP plan – found within the SEP – calls for staff to do an annual review to ensure they are in line with the goals of the APO's LEP plan. That assessment can be found in Chapter 5 of this document.

Finally, the 2022 Mid-Year SEP Annual Report moves to a discussion on recommendations APO staff can make to improve public engagement. This section is two-fold. First, staff looks at past recommendations and how effective their implementation was. Second, staff identifies new ways to enhance public involvement based on the feedback from community members engaged with the APO.

APO staff hope that through this effort to reflect on past efforts, reassess existing strategies, and develop and explore new ideas, public engagement in the regional transportation planning process will only improve.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**3-C – Continuing, Cooperative, and Comprehensive:** A Federal mandate in accordance with the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 that requires transportation projects in urbanized areas of 50,000 or more in population be based on a continuing, comprehensive urban transportation planning process undertaken cooperatively by the states and local governments.

**APO - Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization:** The organization designated by agreement between the Governor, member units of local government, and relevant agencies as being responsible for carrying out the terms of 23 USC Sec. 134. The APO is the MPO for the Saint Cloud urban area.

**ATAC - Active Transportation Advisory Committee:** The Active Transportation Advisory Committee consists of citizen volunteers from within the APO planning area who have a special interest in bicycle and pedestrian issues. The ATAC reviews transportation studies, plans, and projects from a citizen’s perspective.

**ATP – Active Transportation Plan:** The regional ATP aims to provide a long-range planning framework to support non-motorized forms of transportation in the Saint Cloud Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). This plan identifies needs, resources, and strategies to enhance the safe and convenient use of non-motorized modes of transportation and the facilities necessary to accommodate them.

**BIPOC – Black, Indigenous and People-of-Color:** A group of historically underrepresented people.

**GRRL - Great River Regional Library:** The location where various APO sponsored events are held. The library is located at 1300 W Saint Germain Street in Saint Cloud.

**Jurisdictions:** The member units of government which are within the APO’s planning area. The member jurisdictions of the APO include the following: Benton County, Sherburne County, Stearns County, City of Saint Cloud, City of Saint Joseph, City of Sartell, City of Sauk Rapids, City of Waite Park, and LeSauk Township.

**LEP – Limited English Proficiency:** A person who do not speak English as their primary language and has limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

**MnDOT – Minnesota Department of Transportation:** The State department the APO coordinates with on transportation issues and which has oversight responsibilities for ensuring the APO complies with applicable Federal and State requirements.

**MPA - Metropolitan Planning Area:** The geographic area over which an MPO exercises planning authority and which must include the Census-defined Urban Area, plus other urban and urbanizing areas as agreed to by the MPO’s Board.

**MPO - Metropolitan Planning Organization:** The Saint Cloud APO is the MPO for the Saint Cloud urban area.

**MTC – Saint Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission:** MTC, more commonly known as Saint Cloud Metro Bus (or simply “Metro Bus”), is the urban transit provider within the Saint Cloud Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). Founded in 1969, Metro Bus provides fixed route,



paratransit (Dial-a-Ride), and commuter bus services – via the Northstar Commuter Link to access the Northstar Commuter Rail train in the City of Big Lake – for the cities of Saint Cloud, Sartell, Sauk Rapids, and Waite Park.

**MTP - Metropolitan Transportation Plan:** The regional transportation plan with at least a 20-year planning horizon, developed cooperatively between the units of government and relevant agencies which are members of any MPO, including the Saint Cloud APO.

**PWD/HD - Stearns County Public Works Department/Highway:** The location where TAC meetings are primarily held. The department is located at 455-28th Ave. S in Waite Park.

**SEP - Stakeholder Engagement Plan:** The public participation plan of the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization. Public participation plans are required by 23 CFR §450.316. The SEP is intended to fulfill the Saint Cloud APO's requirement for such a plan. In addition, the SEP also includes the APO's Title VI and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plans – both of which are also federally required.

**TAC – Technical Advisory Committee:** The Technical Advisory Committee consists of voting representatives from each APO's member jurisdictions and representation from Saint Cloud Metro Bus and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). This committee – typically composed of planners and engineers – reviews plans and programs from a technical perspective and makes recommendations to the APO's decision-makers.

**TIP - Transportation Improvement Program:** A compilation of significant surface transportation improvements scheduled for implementation in the APO's planning area during the next four years.

## 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR §450.316) requires all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to develop and use a documented public participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, and others with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

As the MPO for the Saint Cloud metropolitan planning area (MPA), the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) is responsible for complying with these regulations. The APO's [Stakeholder Engagement Plan](https://bit.ly/327W6vf) (https://bit.ly/327W6vf) – updated in October 2022 – fulfills those federal requirements and reinforces the APO's commitment to meaningful public involvement in its planning and programming efforts.

The APO's SEP provides detailed information regarding how the public can be involved in the APO's planning and programming processes, including: 1) the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP); 2) the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and 3) the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). It also provides general guidance for all other planning products done by the APO, such as region-wide planning studies, corridor studies, and sub-area studies.

In addition to the public participation plan, the APO's SEP also contains the Title VI and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan – both of which are also federally required.

To assess and evaluate the successes and shortcomings of the APO's public engagement strategies, the SEP outlines a process for staffers to compile pertinent quantitative and qualitative data regarding public engagement. Per the expectations outlined in the APO's SEP, staff will review all public outreach efforts annually and will use the information gathered to help modify any perceived deficiencies in public outreach strategies.

Since the first SEP annual report in 2019, the traditional one-year time frame has been from July 1 to June 30, coinciding with the state fiscal year. However, due to most work items – particularly consultant lead studies – being contained within a traditional calendar year (Jan. 1 through Dec. 31), APO staff felt it best to align future SEP annual reports with this schedule. To do this, APO staff will close out the remaining six months of calendar year 2022 (July through December) with this mid-year report. All subsequent reports will then align to the new reporting period.

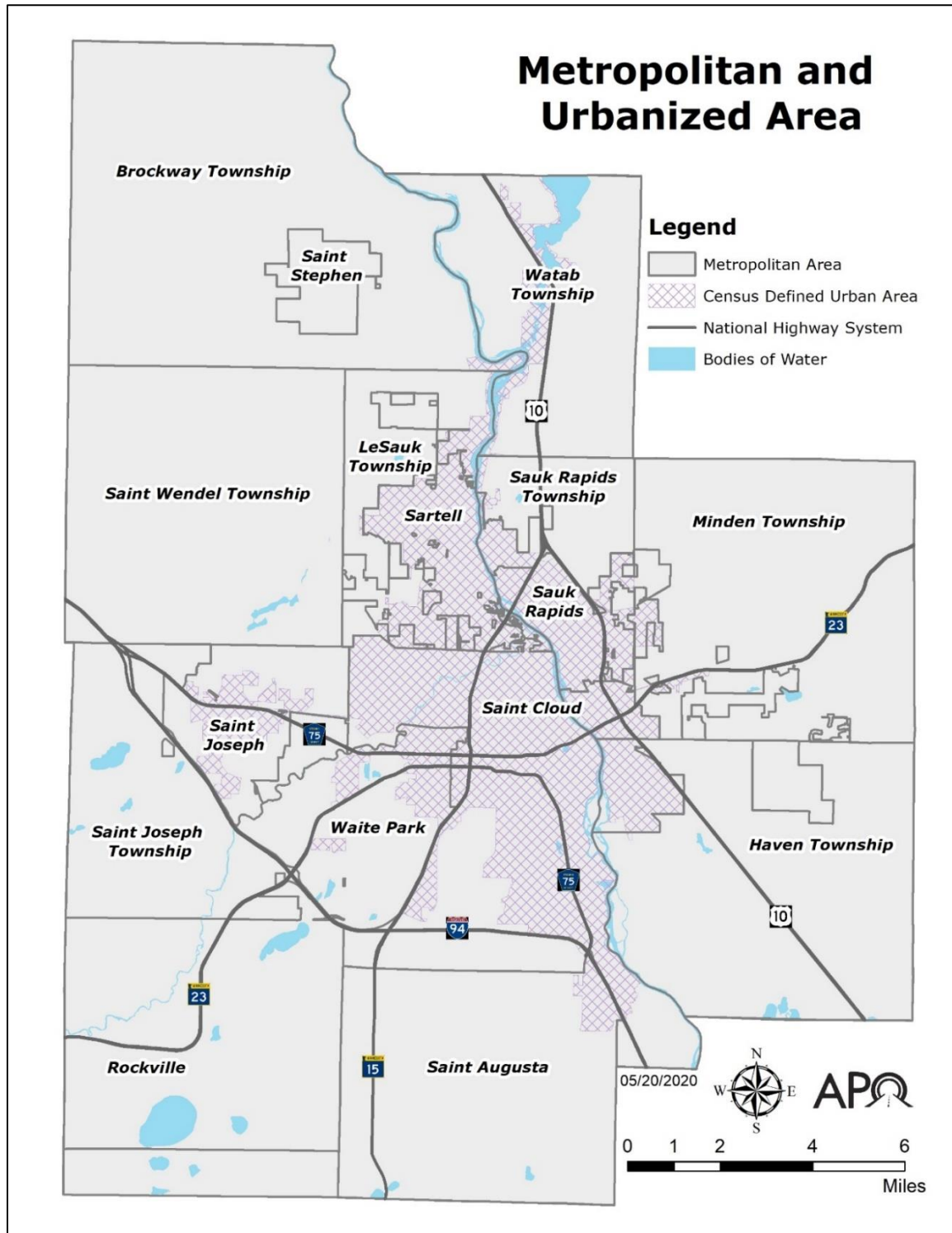
### **Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization**

The APO Urbanized Area is designated by the U.S. Census Bureau after every decennial census. Criteria for defining this area include population density and density of development. The APO, in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), approves a 20-year planning boundary that includes not only the Census-defined Urbanized Area, but also considers expected urbanized growth within that period.

Member jurisdictions include Benton County, Sherburne County, Stearns County, City of Saint Cloud, City of Saint Joseph, City of Sartell, City of Sauk Rapids, City of Waite Park, and LeSauk Township. Saint Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) – more commonly referred to as Saint Cloud Metro Bus – is also a member.

The cities of Rockville, Saint Augusta, and Saint Stephen along with Brockway Township, Haven Township, Minden Township, Saint Joseph Township, Saint Wendel Township, Sauk Rapids Township, and Watab Township are located within the designated APO 20-year

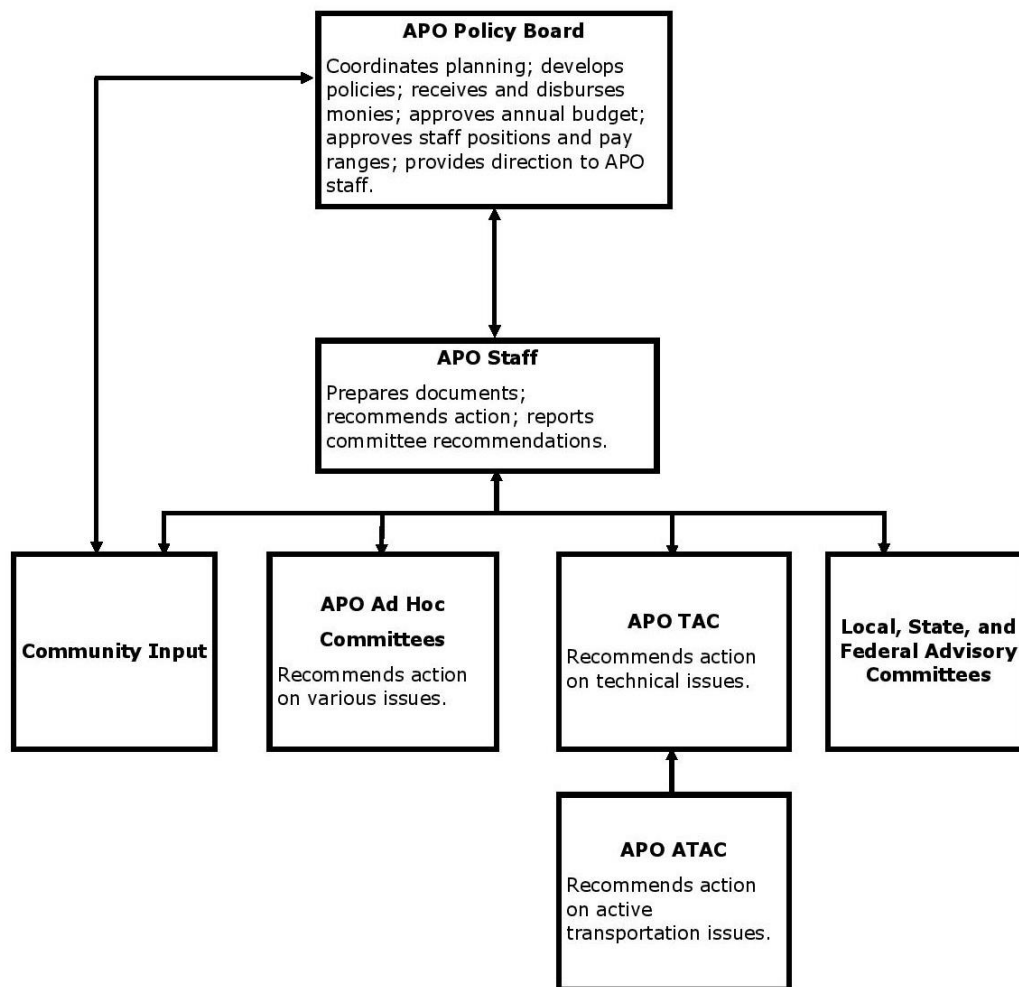
planning boundary but are not formal member jurisdictions. Instead, these jurisdictions are represented through their respective counties.



**Figure 1:** Map of the APO's planning area.

As a comprehensive, intergovernmental transportation planning agency for the Saint Cloud Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), the APO receives local, state, and Federal funds to administer programs and transportation-related studies.

The APO Policy Board is made up of elected officials and a senior-level management position from Saint Cloud Metro Bus. The Policy Board is the decision-making body of the APO and provides guidance and direction to staff. The Policy Board is advised by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and a TAC subcommittee for active transportation (i.e., non-motorized transportation such as biking and walking) issues known as the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC).



**Figure 2:** APO organizational chart.

The APO is committed to coordinated planning – in a fair and mutually beneficial manner – on select issues transcending jurisdictional boundaries for the betterment of the entire Saint Cloud MPA. This mission is accomplished through professional planning initiatives, the provision of objective information, and building collaborative partnerships that foster consensus.

The APO strives to be:

- Public service-oriented by providing accountability to constituents and exhibiting the highest standards of ethical conduct.
- Creative problem solvers by anticipating potential challenges and developing creative solutions based on professional knowledge, public involvement, and collaboration with our partners.
- Continuous learners who constantly seek new information, knowledge, and skills to better serve the Saint Cloud MPA.

In the transportation planning process, the APO's role includes:

- Maintaining a certified "3-C" (comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing) transportation planning process.
- Coordinating the planning and implementation activities of local, regional, and state transportation agencies.
- Undertaking an effective stakeholder engagement process which ensures meaningful public input is part of the decision-making process behind plans and programs.
- Providing leadership both in setting transportation policy and in metropolitan system planning.
- Lending technical support in planning and operations to local governments.
- Planning for an intermodal transportation system that is economically efficient, environmentally sound, provides the foundation to compete in the global economy, and will move people and goods in an energy-efficient manner.



**Figure 3:** Stakeholder engagement meeting for the Mayhew Lake Road consultant study.

## 2 - 2022 PUBLIC OUTREACH

### Goals

As identified in the APO's SEP, APO staffers strive to educate and engage the public in meaningful ways that allow for fully informed participation and engagement. The APO has created a list of goals and strategies to aid in the public development and implementation of the SEP.

The three goals of the SEP are:

1. Provide early, accessible, and continuous opportunities for public involvement from diverse stakeholders.
2. Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and projects.
3. Provide a reasonable amount of time to review materials and comment prior to adoption of any plan or amendment.

### Public Involvement Techniques

As outlined in the APO's SEP, APO staffers utilize various techniques to engage and inform members of the public on regional transportation planning and programming processes. A brief description of those strategies is also included below.

**Public Meetings:** These meetings generally function in coordination with transportation plan updates or planning studies with the overall intent of involving the public in the determination and consideration of identified issues and the development of project alternatives. All public meetings are announced via social media and the APO's website.

**Advertising of Public Meetings:** Notice of public involvement opportunities may include posting of notices in public places and direct notification of stakeholders identified in the process. The APO utilizes legal notices in the local newspaper of record to advertise public input opportunities on the documents and planning studies in their draft form prior to formal completion and/or adoption by the APO's Policy Board.

**News Media:** The APO notifies news media through general purpose meeting notifications for the Policy Board and project-specific press releases. The APO may also submit letters to the editor of the newspaper of record on current trends in transportation that would have implications on the APO planning area. The APO maintains a current list of media contacts.

**APO Website:** The [APO website](http://www.stcloudapo.org) (www.stcloudapo.org) is utilized to accommodate the timely delivery of information to the public. Information inclusive of meeting agendas, notices, announcements, draft/final plans, minutes, maps, and studies are located on the web in formats accessible to the public.

**Social Media:** The APO utilizes appropriate social media avenues to post pertinent information and notices frequently. This also provides another opportunity for the public to provide input to the APO's ongoing planning process.

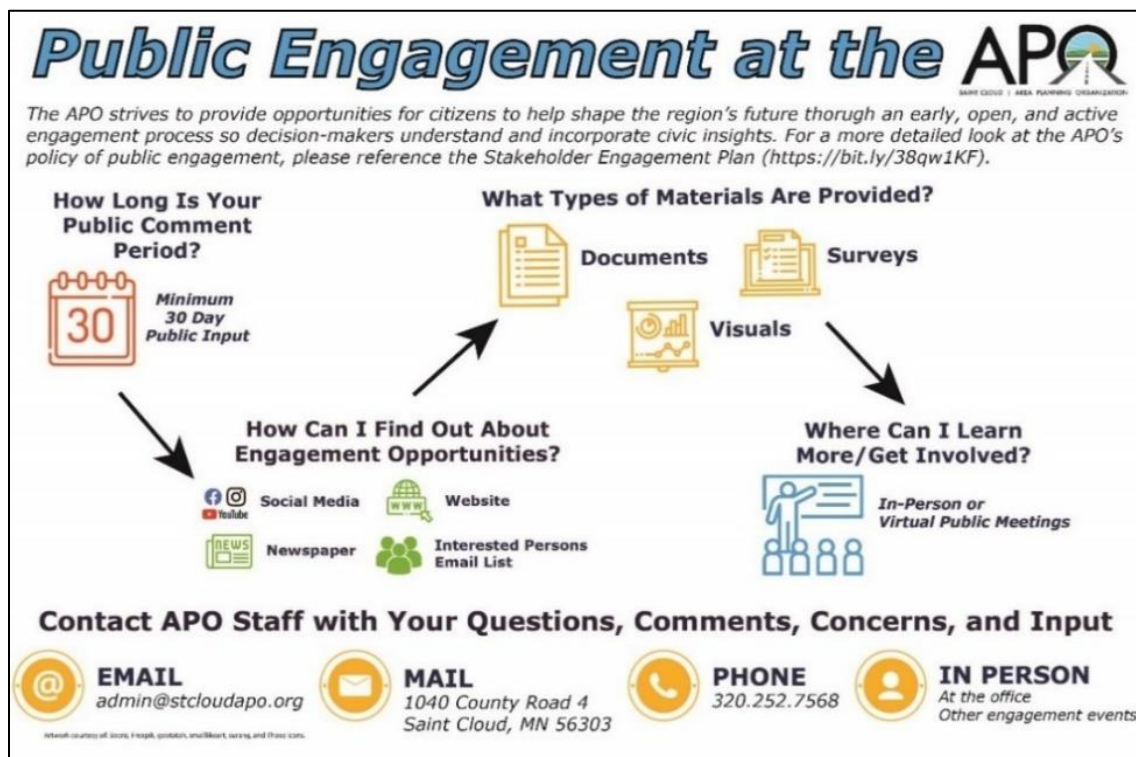
**Citizen Surveys:** On a project-specific basis, citizen surveys will be used to collect data and other relevant information. This information is generally documented within the transportation plan or study and is posted on the APO's website. These surveys will be available both online and in hard copy.

**Visualization Techniques:** This content-focused technique utilizes graphics such as maps, charts, graphs, pictures, renderings, and PowerPoint presentations to communicate relationships, trends, performance thresholds, deficiencies, issues, recommendations, and considerations to the public.

**Interested Persons List:** The APO will maintain a list of stakeholder contacts which includes citizens; affected public agencies; representatives of public transportation employees; freight shippers; providers of freight transportation services; private providers of transportation; representatives of users of public transportation; representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities; representatives of people with disabilities, people-of-color, persons of low income; and other interested parties. The list is used to notify stakeholder contacts of opportunities to be involved in the transportation planning process.

**Speaking Engagements:** APO staff members are available to provide general and project-specific information as requested by interested community groups. Staff members also may perform public outreach to community and advocacy groups.

**Ensuring Accessible Meetings:** For meetings to be successful, everyone involved must have an equal opportunity to participate. Three components are vital in presenting meetings that are accessible to people with disabilities: 1) where the meeting is held, 2) how the meeting room furniture is arranged, and 3) how the meeting information is communicated. APO staff shall use the guidance provided in [Accessible Information Exchange: Meeting on a Level Playing Field](https://www.ada.gov/business/accessiblemtg.htm) (<https://www.ada.gov/business/accessiblemtg.htm>). When preparing public meetings, APO staff shall make all reasonably good-faith efforts to provide auxiliary services if requested.



**Figure 4:** A simplified graphic of the APO's public engagement strategies. Artwork courtesy of Becris, Freepik, geotatah, smalllikeart, surang, and Those Icons.



### 3 – QUANTITATIVE DATA

#### APO Led Public Meetings

During the six-month period from July 1, 2022, to Dec. 31, 2022, APO staff were part of nine in-person outreach events, four hybrid meetings, and two online virtual engagement meetings that were open to the public. Public meetings include those related to review and project development for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the development of the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) visioning themes, and meetings such as the TAC and Policy Board.

Meetings of the APO’s TAC, and the APO Policy Board were scheduled events with notice provided to the public through the APO website.

Of note, for purposes of this analysis, APO staff define a “member of the public” as: 1) someone who does not work for the APO or one of its member jurisdictions or agencies, 2) an elected or appointed official who does not serve on the APO Policy Board 3) or staff of an organization who is in attendance for employment purposes.

#### TIP Open Houses

Between July 2022 and Dec. 2022, APO staff hosted one in-person and one online open house events to discuss the APO’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at either the Great River Regional Library (GRRL) -- 1300 West Saint Germain Street in Saint Cloud -- or online via Facebook Live. One person from the public attended the in-person open house.

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
In-person	7/22/2022	GRRL	1

**Figure 5:** A table of the in-person TIP open house engagement dates, locations, and the number of participants who attended between July 2022 and December 2022.

Method of Event	Date Held	Engagement	Reach	Number of Comments Received
Facebook Live	8/2/2022	N/A	126	0

**Figure 6:** A table of the online TIP open house engagement dates, locations, and the number of public comments between July 2022 and December 2022.

Facebook defines reach as the estimated number of people who saw any content from a page, broken down by total, organic, and promotions. Engagement is the number of times people have engaged with your posts through reactions, comments, shares, views, and clicks. Impressions are the number of times a post was on screen.

All open houses were advertised to the public via legal notices found within the APO’s newspaper of record (St. Cloud Times). The APO’s Facebook page was also used for advertising notice of the TIP open house events through posts and Facebook Live videos from the in-person events.

#### Looking Ahead 2050 - MTP Draft Visioning Themes

The public input for the draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) visioning themes official launched in December 2022. This input stemmed from the comments received from the 2021 visioning themes survey. APO staff boiled down the comments into six main visioning themes and went back out to public comment to ask if “did we hear you correctly” and “should these themes remain a priority for the region”? In order to solicit feedback, APO

staff developed a SurveyMonkey and promoted it at each of the public events held during the latter half of 2022. While the formal visioning themes feedback was launched in December 2022, APO staff did a "soft launch" at the Saint Cloud 101 event in October. Additional outreach for the MTP continued through the end of January 2023.

APO staff provided information about the MTP draft visioning themes to members of the public at three non-APO-sponsored events and two APO sponsored events.

Date Held	Meeting/Event	Number of People in Engaged
10/29/2022	Saint Cloud 101	13
12/8/2022	Human Service Council	N/A
12/19/2022	Whitney Senior Center	30
12/20/2022	RAC Meeting	7
12/21/2022	GRRL	0

**Figure 7:** A list of the events in which APO staff presented on the MTP draft visioning themes.



**Figure 8:** A news story for the MTP draft visioning themes.

### Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

The SEP ensuring the public is given ample opportunity to access, review, and comment on plans, studies, and other documents as they are being developed. The SEP was open to public review for a 45-calendar day period starting in August 2022.

The Facebook Live event was advertised in the St. Cloud Times and on the APO’s website and Facebook page. Event details and the draft plan were also distributed to organizations identified as working closely with traditionally underserved populations such as people-of color, individuals with low-income, individuals with disabilities, limited English proficient individuals, and elderly populations. APO staff also distributed copies of the draft SEP via email to those individuals who had expressed interest in being involved with APO planning and programming activities.

Method of Event	Date Held	Engagement	Reach	Number of Comments Received
Facebook Live	8/17/2022	N/A	31	0

Figure 9: A table of the SEP public review events.

### Regional Active Transportation Plan

The Regional Active Transportation Plan (ATP) is intended to be a deep dive into the specific and sometime peculiar barriers and opportunities that face this particular form of transportation. The goal of the plan is to identify specific projects or policies that will help improve the active transportation environment throughout the region and facilitate convenient and safe active trips for all needs and purposes.

The ATP Survey was released to the public between June 15 and July 15, 2022. The survey results are included in the 2022 SEP Annual Report. During this reports timeframe one Facebook post and one Facebook Live video was created to advertise the ATP survey.

### TAC Meetings

The APO's TAC -- made up of planners and engineers from APO member agencies and jurisdictions -- primarily focuses on technical transportation issues. Four in-person TAC meetings were held between July 2022 and December 2022 at the Stearns County Public Works Department/Highway Department (Stearns Co PWD/HD) -- 455-28th Ave. S in Waite Park. Given the existing technology capabilities, APO staff were able to offer a hybrid option for TAC representatives and members of the public to participate in meetings via Zoom. However, TAC representatives who participated online did not count toward establishing a quorum and were not allowed to vote. TAC meetings and public participation were as follows:

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
Hybrid	7/28/2022	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0
Hybrid	8/25/2022	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0
Hybrid	9/29/2022	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0
Hybrid	11/10/2022	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0

Figure 10: A table of the TAC meeting dates, locations, and the number of participants who attended between July 2022 and December 2022.

TAC meetings were advertised to members of the public on the homepage of the APO’s website.

### **Policy Board Meetings**

Between July 2022 and December 2022, the APO hosted three Policy Board meetings at the Saint Cloud branch of the Great River Regional Library. The dates of Policy Board meetings are as follows:

<b>Method of Event</b>	<b>Date Held</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Public Participants</b>
<b>In-person</b>	8/11/2022	GRRL	0
<b>In-person</b>	9/8/2022	GRRL	0
<b>In-person</b>	10/13/2022	GRRL	0

**Figure 11:** A table of the TAC meeting dates, locations, and the number of participants who attended between July 2022 and December 2022.

Policy Board meetings were advertised to members of the public on the homepage of the APO’s website the APO’s Facebook page and were emailed to the APO’s media contact list.



**Figure 12:** APO Policy Board members listening to a presentation at a Policy Board meeting.

### **Consultant Led Public Meetings**

To assist APO staff, consultants are hired to conduct various planning activities. During the six-month period from July 1, 2022, to Dec. 31, 2022, the APO hired a consultant to lead one in-person public engagement event. As stated in the APO’s SEP, it is important to ensure the public is given ample opportunity to access, review, and comment on plans, studies, and other documents as they are being developed and to provide a complete and open participation process. That being said, APO staff requires consultants follow the same guidelines and procedures in the APO’s SEP.

During the last six months of 2022, the APO partnered with the City of Sauk Rapids, Benton County, and the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District to hire a consultant, WSB, to assist in the Mayhew Lake Road Corridor Study. The effort began in the spring of 2022 and continued through the end of the year. The consultant conducted one in-person event during this time frame.

The APO advertised the open house event on its Website, Facebook, and Instagram page.

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
In-person	10/25/2022	Sauk Rapids Government Center	22

**Figure 13:** A table of the Mayhew Lake Road public input date, location, and the number of participants who attended between July 2022 and December 2022.

The APO also participated in a Stearns County led consultant alignment study pertaining to CSAH 133. The APO was not the lead in this study as it was sponsored by Stearns County. However, APO staff was included as part of the study's project management team

## Social Media

Between July 1, 2022, and Dec. 31, 2022, the APO had the following active social media accounts: Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok. Facebook is the predominant platform staffers use.

### Facebook

APO staff primarily utilized Facebook to inform the public about opportunities to provide input on various planning studies including: the Mayhew Lake Road Corridor Study, and the Stearns County CSAH 133 Alignment Study.

APO staff utilized the Facebook Live feature to conduct five virtual open houses as well as provide notice of various meetings for the Regional Active Transportation Plan (ATP), TIP, and SEP. Facebook posts also provided notice Policy Board meetings and other topics of importance to transportation planning.

During this six-month time frame, the number of followers on the APO's Facebook page gradually grew. As of Jan. 1, 2023, the APO's Facebook page had 459 followers, a 7.2% increase compared to the 428 followers last July.

Time Period	2018 – July	2019 – July	2020 – July	2021 – July	2022 – July	2023 - January
<b>Total Number of Followers</b>	220	237	272	343	428	459
<b>Percent Increase from the Previous Year</b>	N/A	7.7%	23.6%	26.1%	24.8%	7.2%

**Figure 14:** Number of Facebook followers by year.

Regarding posts pertaining to the APO directly soliciting public input, the APO created 22 posts. The topics of the posts included:

- TIP public comment and development: 15 posts.
- Policy Board: 3 posts.
- Posts deferring to the APO's TikTok account: 3 posts.
- SEP: 3 posts.
- ATP: 2 posts.
- MTP development: 1 Post.
- Stearns County CSAH 133 Alignment Study: 1 post.
- Mayhew Lake Road Study: 1 Post.
- TAC meetings: 1 post.

APO staff used four styles of post to engage members of the public. Those styles included events, photos, links, and Facebook Live videos.

Reach is the estimated number of people who had any posts from your page on their screen, broken down by total, organic, and promotions. Figure 15 describes the top 10 posts in terms of their reach. The top performing posts were the July 12 release of the draft 2023-2026 TIP public comment period (with a reach of 287) and the MTP public engagement on Dec. 19, with a reach of 131.

Date	Purpose of Post	Post Type	Reach
7/12/2022	TIP public comment	Photo Event	287
12/19/2022	MTP public engagement	Photo	131
8/2/2022	TIP public comment	Facebook Live Video	126
10/18/2022	Mayhew Lake Road Corridor Study event	Photo Event	114
8/8/2022	TIP public engagement	Photo	105
8/10/2022	TIP public engagement	Photo	88
8/2/2022	TIP public engagement	Photo	87
10/28/2022	TikTok	Link	86
8/9/2022	SEP public engagement	Photo Event	77
*8/6/2022	TIP public engagement	Photo	67
*10/27/2022	TikTok	Link	67

**Figure 15:** The top 10 APO Facebook posts in terms of reach between July 2022 and December 2022. Data courtesy of Facebook. \*Posts are tied for the number of reaches.

Figure 16 describes the top 10 posts in terms of engagement – the number of times people liked/reacted, commented, or shared a post. The top performing posts in terms of engagement were the TIP public engagement on Aug. 8 with 16 engagements followed by the TikTok link on Oct. 28 with 15 engagements.

Date	Purpose of Post	Post Type	Engagement
8/8/2022	TIP public engagement	Photo	16
10/28/2022	TikTok	Link	15
7/12/2022	TIP public engagement	Photo Event	12
10/18/2022	Mayhew Lake Road Corridor Study Event	Photo Event	11
8/10/2022	TIP public engagement	Photo	10
12/19/2022	MTP public engagement	Photo	10
10/27/2022	TikTok	Link	8
8/2/2022	TIP public engagement	Photo	7
11/23/2022	TikTok	Link	7
8/6/2022	TIP public engagement	Photo	5

**Figure 16:** The top 10 APO Facebook posts in terms of engagement between July 2022 and December 2022. Data courtesy of Facebook.

A complete list of Facebook posts during this time frame can be found in Appendix A.

### Other Social Media

In addition to Facebook, the APO made use of other social media platforms - a YouTube account, an Instagram account, an TikTok account and a LinkedIn profile.

The APO's YouTube channel has four subscribers. No videos were posted in this report's time frame.

There were eight posts on Instagram, including several announcements regarding public comments for the TIP, MTP, TikTok, ATP, and the Mayhew Lake Road Study. Other posts included various activities the APO was performing. As of Jan. 1, 2023, there are 188 followers on Instagram compared to 175 followers in July 2022.

A LinkedIn page was created in 2020. The page, which has five followers, includes a description of the APO organization and its purpose. There was one post promoting the ATP during the period.

The APO’s TikTok was created in October 2022. During this period there were three posts, four followers, and 67 likes.

## Online Surveys

From July 2022 to December 2022, the APO created surveys for the 2023-2026 TIP using the online survey development platform SurveyMonkey.

Survey announcements and the necessary links were made available on the APO website, Facebook, Instagram, and were distributed via email to those interested in APO planning activities. In addition, mention of the availability of these surveys was made at the APO’s TAC and Policy Board meetings.

Figure 17 provides a summary of APO survey posts, when it was posted, how long the survey was open, and the number of responses received.

Survey Focus	When Posted	Days Active	Purpose of Survey	Total Responses
<b>2023-2026 TIP (includes 9 surveys)</b>	7/13/2022	30	Comment on proposed TIP projects.	14

**Figure 17:** A list of the online surveys posted in chronological order and the number of survey responses.

After the surveys were closed, summary results were made available on the APO [“Get Involved”](http://stcloudapo.org/get-involved/) web page (<http://stcloudapo.org/get-involved/>).

Below is a more in-depth look at the types of surveys developed.

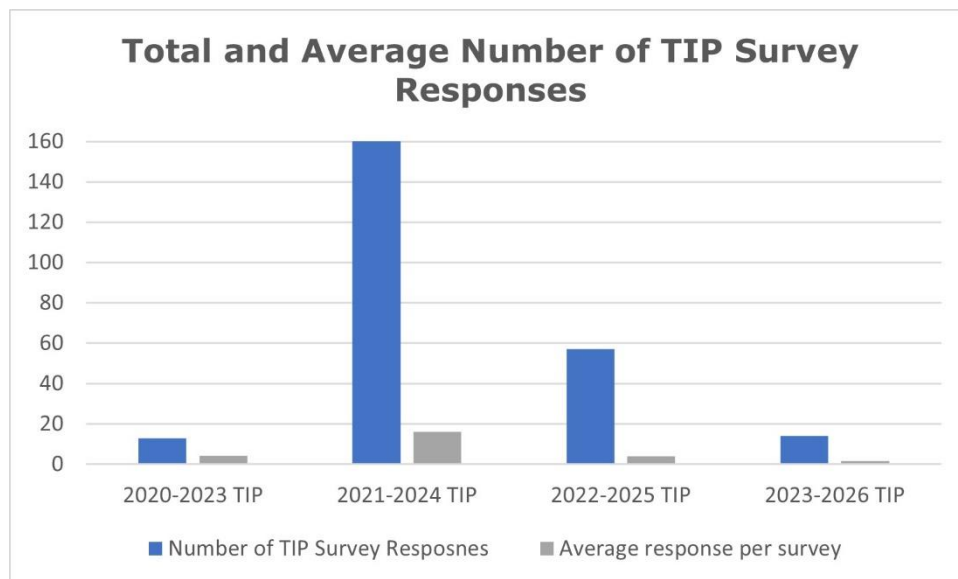
### 2023-2026 TIP Engagement

Nine surveys were created in relation to the APO's 2023-2026 TIP. All survey results and public comments were shared with representatives from the APO's TAC and Policy Board at their respective meetings.

In July the APO conducted engagement on the full document. As stated above, this effort included the development of nine surveys for agencies and/or jurisdictions with projects yet to be constructed that were programmed in the TIP. Surveys were open from July 13 through Aug. 12, 2022. A total of 14 people took part in at least one of these surveys. Results were incorporated into the draft document and then presented to the TAC in August and brought to the Policy Board in September.

Figure 18 shows the number of survey responses by TIP programming year. The number of surveys per TIP cycle depends on several factors, such as the number of amendments varies yearly. As shown in the chart, the 2020-2023 TIP had three surveys and an average response rate of 4.3 per survey. The 2021-2024 TIP had 10 total surveys and the highest average response rate per survey at 16. The 2022-2025 TIP, which had the most surveys at

15, the second lowest average response rate per survey at 3.8. The 2023-2026 TIP had a total of 14 total surveys with nine responses with the lowest average response rate of 1.6.



**Figure 18:** Number of TIP survey responses received by TIP year. \*Note only amendments to the 2020-2023 TIP had surveys.

## Demographic Questionnaire

APO staff adds nine demographic questions at the end of all APO online surveys. Respondents are asked to provide information regarding their gender, city of residence, age, ethnicity, household size, household income, whether they have a physical disability, place of birth (inside or outside the U.S.), and their primary language spoken at home. Completion of these the demographic questions by survey participants is optional.

Responses to these demographic questions assist APO staff in identifying the various groups within the MPA that are being reached through surveys. The intent is to ensure that all community members are afforded an equal and equitable opportunity to participate in the process. By understanding who is participating in APO outreach, staff can strategize various techniques to ensure all people – particularly traditionally underrepresented populations – are being reached.

## TIP Surveys

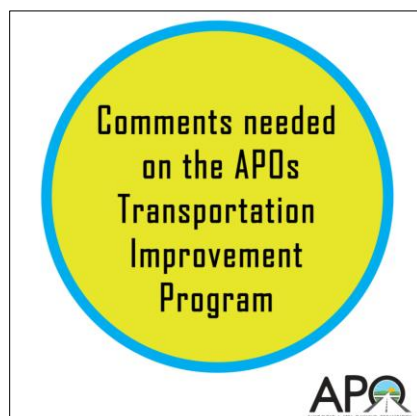
Out of approximately 14 individuals who participated in at least one of the nine TIP-related surveys between July 2021 and August 2022, 10 demographic responses were collected.

The average participant in these APO surveys:

- Is male (60% of total respondents).
- Lives in Saint Cloud (60% of total respondents).
- Is white (100% of total respondents).
- Lives in a two-person household (78% of total respondents).
- Has a household income of over \$150,000 (30% of total respondents).
- Is between the ages of 30 and 44 (70% of total respondents).
- Does not have a physical disability (80% of total respondents).
- Was born in the United States (100% of total respondents).



- Speaks English as the primary language spoken at home (100% of total respondents).



**Figure 19:** Example of a TIP Facebook post.

Category	Total Survey Participant Responses	% of Total Survey Participant Responses	% of MPA Population Estimates
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	6	60.0%	50.1%
Female	4	40.0%	49.9%
Other	0	0.0%	N/A
<b>City of Residence</b>			
Rockville	0	0.0%	1.7%
Saint Augusta	1	10.0%	2.5%
Saint Cloud	7	60.0%	49.4%
Saint Joseph	1	10.0%	5.0%
Saint Stephen	0	0.0%	0.6%
Sartell	0	0.0%	13.8%
Sauk Rapids	1	10.0%	10.0%
Waite Park	0	0.0%	6.0%
Other	1	10.0%	11.1%
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White or Caucasian	10	100%	79.2%
Black or African American	0	0.0%	10.4%
Hispanic or Latino	0	0.0%	3.5%
Asian or Asian American	0	0.0%	2.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0.0%	0.2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0.0%
Some Other Race	0	0.0%	0.2%
Two or More Races	0	0.0%	3.8%
<b>Number in Household</b>			
1 Person	1	11.1%	29.7%

Category	Total Survey Participant Responses	% of Total Survey Participant Responses	% of MPA Population Estimates
2 People	7	77.8%	34.0%
3 People	0	0.0%	14.9%
4 or More People	1	11.1%	21.4%
<b>Household Income</b>			
Less than \$5,000	1	10.0%	2.6%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	1	10.0%	2.3%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	0	0.0%	4.1%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	0	0.0%	3.6%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	0	0.0%	4.3%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	0	0.0%	9.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1	10.0%	14.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1	10.0%	18.7%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2	20.0%	14.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1	10.0%	14.8%
\$150,000 or more	3	30.0%	12.1%
<b>Age</b>			
Under 19	0	0.0%	27.2%
20 to 24	0	0.0%	11.2%
25 to 29	0	0.0%	7.3%
30 to 34	4	40.0%	6.6%
35 to 39	2	20.0%	6.2%
40 to 44	1	10.0%	5.9%
45 to 49	0	0.0%	5.2%
50 to 54	1	10.0%	5.4%
55 to 59	1	10.0%	5.7%
60 to 64	0	0.0%	5.6%
65 to 69	1	10.0%	4.6%
70 to 74	0	0.0%	3.4%
75 to 79	0	0.0%	2.4%
80 to 84	0	0.0%	1.3%
85 and over	0	0.0%	1.9%
<b>Physical Disability</b>			
Yes	2	20.0%	11.4%
No	8	80.0%	88.6%
<b>Where Were You Born</b>			
In the U.S.	10	100%	91.3%
Outside the U.S.	0	0.0%	8.7%
<b>Primary Language Spoken at Home</b>			
English	10	100%	87.4%
Something Other than English	0	0.0%	12.6%

**Figure 20:** Results from the APO's demographic questionnaire compared to the population estimates of various demographics within the Saint Cloud MPA. Population data courtesy of 2017-2021 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted.

## 4 - QUALITATIVE DATA

While the last chapter reviewed the quantitative data such as the number of public engagement events held and the demographic make-up of those participants; APO staff felt it necessary to survey participants on their experience to determine what APO staff are doing well and what areas are in need of improvement.

### Online Survey

After every public engagement opportunity, APO staff survey those who have interacted with the APO about their experience, the usefulness of the information provided, and their view of the staff response to their comments and feedback.

Between July 2022 and December 2022, one person participated in the online survey. That person had heard about the APO’s public engagement opportunity through Facebook.

Participants were given a series of statements relating to their experience before, during, and after the event and asked whether they agree or disagree. The survey then asked whether they were likely to participate in future events or encourage others to do. Figures 21 through 24 show the survey response to these statements.

Before the event ...	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>The notice or invitation to participate was clear and welcoming?</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>Information about the event topic helped prepare me to participate more effectively.</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>The purpose of the event was clearly defined.</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>I believed that any views offered would be taken seriously by APO staff.</b>	1	0	0	0

**Figure 21:** A list of responses about people’s experiences providing public input before an APO event as part of the APO’s public engagement qualitative survey.

During the event ...	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>There was sufficient opportunity for me to express my views about what I thought was important.</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>APO staff provided a safe, fair, and well-managed environment for participants.</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>APO staff heard my opinions on the topic(s) presented.</b>	1	0	0	0

**Figure 22:** A list of responses about people’s experiences providing public input during an APO event as part of the APO’s public engagement qualitative survey.

After the event ...	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>I believed that the event would result in better decisions on the topic(s) discussed.</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>I believe that any views offered would be taken seriously by APO staff.</b>	1	0	0	0

**Figure 23:** A list of responses about people's experiences providing public input after an APO event as part of the APO's public engagement qualitative survey.

Regarding future engagement opportunities ...	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Given the chance, I would participate in an APO outreach activity again.</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>I would encourage other residents to participate in similar APO events on this or other appropriate topics.</b>	1	0	0	0

**Figure 24:** A list of responses from the APO's public engagement qualitative survey inquiring about their willingness to participate in future APO-sponsored outreach events.

Staff are appreciative of the one person who participated in the qualitative survey. However, given the lack of responses, it is unclear if a majority of participants felt the same way.

## Demographic Questionnaire

APO staff adds nine demographic questions at the end of all qualitative surveys. Those who participated in one of the APO's other surveys may have already completed the demographic questionnaire. We do not want to count the same person twice in our demographic questionnaire, so we split them into two types, initial and follow-up survey questionnaires.

Category	Total Survey Participant Responses	% of Total Survey Participant Responses	% of MPA Population Estimates
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	1	100%	50.1%
Female	0	0.0%	49.9%
Other	0	0.0%	N/A
<b>City of Residence</b>			
Rockville	0	0.0%	1.7%
Saint Augusta	0	0.0%	2.5%
Saint Cloud	1	100%	49.4%
Saint Joseph	0	0.0%	5.0%
Saint Stephen	0	0.0%	0.6%
Sartell	0	0.0%	13.8%
Sauk Rapids	0	0.0%	10.0%
Waite Park	0	0.0%	6.0%
Other	0	0.0%	11.1%
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White or Caucasian	1	100%	79.2%

Category	Total Survey Participant Responses	% of Total Survey Participant Responses	% of MPA Population Estimates
Black or African American	0	0.0%	10.4%
Hispanic or Latino	0	0.0%	3.5%
Asian or Asian American	0	0.0%	2.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0.0%	0.2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0.0%
Some Other Race	0	0.0%	0.2%
Two or More Races	0	0.0%	3.8%
<b>Number in Household</b>			
1 Person	0	0.0%	29.7%
2 People	0	0.0%	34.0%
3 People	0	0.0%	14.9%
4 or More People	1	100%	21.4%
<b>Household Income</b>			
Less than \$5,000	0	0.0%	2.6%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	0	0.0%	2.3%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	0	0.0%	4.1%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	0	0.0%	3.6%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	0	0.0%	4.3%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	0	0.0%	9.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	0	0.0%	14.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	0	0.0%	18.7%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	0	0.0%	14.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	0	0.0%	14.8%
\$150,000 or more	1	100%	12.1%
<b>Age</b>			
Under 19	0	0.0%	27.2%
20 to 24	0	0.0%	11.2%
25 to 29	0	0.0%	7.3%
30 to 34	0	0.0%	6.6%
35 to 39	0	0.0%	6.2%
40 to 44	0	0.0%	5.9%
45 to 49	0	0.0%	5.2%
50 to 54	1	100%	5.4%
55 to 59	0	0.0%	5.7%
60 to 64	0	0.0%	5.6%
65 to 69	0	0.0%	4.6%
70 to 74	0	0.0%	3.4%
75 to 79	0	0.0%	2.4%
80 to 84	0	0.0%	1.3%
85 and over	0	0.0%	1.9%

Category	Total Survey Participant Responses	% of Total Survey Participant Responses	% of MPA Population Estimates
<b>Physical Disability</b>			
Yes	0	0.0%	11.4%
No	1	100%	88.6%
<b>Where Were You Born</b>			
In the U.S.	1	100%	91.3%
Outside the U.S.	0	0.0%	8.7%
<b>Primary Language Spoken at Home</b>			
English	1	100%	87.4%
Something Other than English	0	0.0%	12.6%

**Figure 25:** Results from the APO's demographic questionnaire compared to the population estimates of various demographics within the Saint Cloud MPA. Population data courtesy of 2017-2021 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted.

Given the lack of responses, comparing the results to the percentage of MPA population estimates is not feasible.



**Figure 26:** Photo of MTP public engagement event at the Whitney Senior Center.

## 5 - LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) MONITORING

As part of the APO's SEP, staff have developed a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan to identify reasonable steps for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency who wish to access services provided. Defined in Executive Order 13166, persons with limited English language proficiency are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

Per Federal regulations, APO staff will review its LEP Plan on an annual basis. As part of that review, staff will include the following:

- The number of documented persons with limited English language proficiency contacts encountered.
- How the needs of persons with limited English language proficiency have been addressed.
- Determination of the current LEP population in the service area.
- Determination of whether the need for translation services has changed.
- Determination of whether local language assistance programs have been effective and sufficient to meet the need.
- Determination of whether the APO's financial resources are sufficient to fund language assistance resources needed.
- Determination of whether the APO fully complies with the goals of the LEP plan.
- Determination of whether complaints have been received concerning the agency's failure to meet the needs of individuals with limited English language proficiency.
- Maintain a Title VI complaint log which includes LEP to determine issues and basis of complaints.

Below is the APO's six-month LEP self-evaluation.

### **Number of documented persons with limited English language proficiency contacts encountered.**

Between July 2022 and December 2022, the APO has had no requests for interpreters and no requests for translated documents. The APO's Board, committees, staff, contractors, and sub-recipients have not knowingly had any contact with persons with limited English language proficiency. There were no encounters from those with limited English language proficiency at any APO meetings, events, or activities.

### **How the needs of persons with limited English language proficiency have been addressed.**

A person who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English may be identified as a person with limited English language proficiency and may be entitled to language assistance with respect to the APO's programs and services. Language assistance can include interpretation, which means oral or spoken transfer of a message from one language into another language, and/or translation, which means the written transfer of a message from one language into another language.

APO staff may notify and identify a person with limited English language proficiency who needs language assistance by:

- Posting notice in a conspicuous and accessible place in the APO office of the LEP plan and the availability of interpretation or translation services free of charge in languages persons with limited English language proficiency would understand.
- Posting the APO's LEP plan on the APO website.
- Greeting visitors and participants as they arrive at the APO office or APO-sponsored meetings or events. By informally engaging participants in conversation or by using language identification cards, it is possible to gauge each attendee's ability to speak and understand English. Although translation may not be available at the time, it will help identify future needs.
- Providing "I Speak" cards to assist in identifying the language interpretation needed if the occasion arises.
- APO staff will be surveyed annually as part of the annual monitoring process.
- Publishing advanced public notice of the event including information on procuring a translator or interpreter.

In regard to meeting the needs of persons with limited English language proficiency, the APO strives to:

1. Take reasonable steps to provide the opportunity for meaningful access to clients who have difficulty communicating in English.
2. Provide the following resources to clients who have difficulty communicating in English:
  - a. Interpretive services for public meetings, if advance notice is provided to the APO and such services are available.
  - b. Translated versions (or provide for interpretation of relevant sections) of all documents/publications upon request, within a reasonable time frame and if resources permit.

Additionally, the APO includes the following paragraph – which is translated into both Somali and Spanish in accordance with the Safe Harbor Provision – at the bottom of every agenda distributed to the public by the APO; on the APO's website under the [Get Involved](https://stcloudapo.org/get-involved/) (<https://stcloudapo.org/get-involved/>) dropdown; displayed at the APO office near the desk of the administrative assistant and within the APO's conference room; and displayed near the sign-in form at all in-person meetings and in-person engagement events:

*The Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) fully complies with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Executive Order 12898, Executive Order 13116 and related statutes and regulations. The APO is accessible to all persons of all abilities. A person who requires a modification or accommodation, auxiliary aids, translation services, interpreter services, etc., in order to participate in a public meeting, including receiving this agenda and/or attachments in an alternative format, or language please contact the APO at 320-252-7568 or at [admin@stcloudapo.org](mailto:admin@stcloudapo.org) at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting.*

Somali Translation:

*Ururka Qorsheynta Deegaanka ee Cloud Cloud (APO) wuxuu si buuxda u waafaqsanahay Cinwaanka VI ee Xuquuqda Xuquuqda Rayidka ee 1964, Cinwaanka II*



ee Sharciga Naafada Mareykanka ee 1990, Amarka Fulinta 12898, Amarka Fulinta 13116 iyo qawaaniinta iyo qawaaniinta la xiriira. APO waa u furan tahay dhammaan dadka awooda oo dhan. Qofka u baahan dib-u-habeyn ama dejin, caawimaad gargaar ah, adeegyo turjumaad, adeegyo turjubaan, iwm, si uu uga qeyb galo kulan dadweyne, oo ay ku jiraan helitaanka ajendahaan iyo / ama ku lifaaqan qaab kale, ama luqadda fadlan la xiriir APO. 320-252- 7568 ama at [admin@stcloudapo.org](mailto:admin@stcloudapo.org) ugu yaraan toddobo (7) maalmood kahor kulanka.

Spanish Translation:

*La Organización de Planificación del Área de Saint Cloud (APO en inglés) cumple plenamente con el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, con el Título II de la Ley sobre los Estadounidenses con Discapacidad de 1990), de la Orden Ejecutiva 12898, de la Orden Ejecutiva 13116 y los estatutos y reglamentos relacionados. La APO es accesible para todas las personas de todas las capacidades. Una persona que requiere una modificación o acomodación, ayudas auxiliares, servicios de traducción, servicios de interpretación, etc., para poder participar en una reunión pública, incluyendo recibir esta agenda y/o archivos adjuntos en un formato o idioma alternativo, por favor, contacta a la APO al número de teléfono 320-252-7568 o al [admin@stcloudapo.org](mailto:admin@stcloudapo.org) al menos siete (7) días antes de la reunión.*

During this time frame, APO staff did not provide any surveys in multiple languages.

### LEP Population in the MPA

The most current data set available to APO staff that provided the most complete breakdown of languages by individual jurisdiction within the MPA was the 2017-2021 ACS Five Year Estimates.

According to 2017-2021 ACS Five Year Estimates, approximately 87.4% of the Saint Cloud MPA population over the age of 5 speaks only English. About 12.6% of the people within the MPA over age 5 speak a language other than English at home. Of this, 5.0% speak English less than “very well.” This is on par with the state (4.5%) and below the national (8.2%) threshold for people who speak English less than “very well.”

Geographic Area	2017-2021 ACS Population Estimates	2017-2021 ACS Population (5+) Who Speak English Less Than “Very Well”	Percent of Total Population
United States	310,302,360	25,535,259	8.2%
Minnesota	5,322,004	638,070	4.5%
Saint Cloud MPA	127,767	6,371	5.0%

**Figure 27:** A geographic breakdown of the 2017-2021 population estimates of people over age 5 who speak English less than “very well.” Data courtesy of the 2017-2021 American Community Survey Five Year Estimates.

Among persons speaking English “less than very well” within the MPA, the most common languages, according to the ACS data, are other and unspecified languages (3,765 people or 2.9%); Spanish (846 people or 0.7%); and Vietnamese (604 people or 0.5%).

In consultation with the Saint Cloud area’s urban transit provider, Saint Cloud Metro Bus, and St. Cloud ISD 742 data it was determined that other and unspecified languages is most



likely Somali. Data from District 742 reveal the most common languages excluding English are Somali (27.9%), Spanish (4.5%), and Vietnamese (0.8%).

U.S. DOT has adopted the Safe Harbor Provision, which outlines circumstances that can provide a “safe harbor” for recipients regarding the translation of vital written materials for LEP populations. A vital document includes paper or electronic, written material that contains information that is critical for accessing a component’s programs, services, benefits, or activities; directly and substantially related to public safety; or required by law. The Safe Harbor Provision applies to eligible LEP language groups that constitute 5% or 1,000 persons, whichever is less of the total population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered.

#### **Determination of whether the need for translation services has changed.**

The need for interpretation and translation services and the APO's commitment to respond to those needs have remained consistent.

#### **Determination of whether local language assistance programs have been effective and sufficient to meet the need.**

APO staff can respond to requests for language assistance utilizing a list of interpreter and translation services that can be made available. As stated earlier, the APO has had no documented encounters with LEP individuals. However, staff feel they are prepared to accommodate individuals with limited English proficiency appropriately.

#### **Determination of whether the APO's financial resources are sufficient to fund language assistance resources needed.**

Given its limited financial resources, the APO is likely unable to provide full multi-language translations of large planning documents or agenda packets. Given the limited LEP population, it is unlikely this would be warranted. However, the APO will consider any such requests and its ability to satisfy them on a case-by-case basis as they arise.

#### **Determination of whether the APO fully complies with the goals of the LEP plan.**

While citizens' involvement in APO planning activities is voluntary and not considered a vital, immediate, or emergency direct service, the APO is committed to ensuring all persons interested in APO activities have equal and equitable access to do so.

The APO’s goals for public involvement include early, accessible, and continuous opportunities for public participation; reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and projects; and a reasonable amount of time to review materials and comment prior to adoption of any plan or amendment.

In pursuit of these goals, the APO is committed to ensuring materials are accessible to those whose who speak English “less than very well.” As identified in the SEP, the APO provides notice to the public of how translation and/or interpretive services can be provided to review APO documents (including agendas) and participate in APO planning activities.

#### **Sufficient Staff Training**

The APO recognizes the significance of staff with appropriate training and resources available to assist LEP individuals. The following training will be provided to all staff on an annual basis and upon new hire employee orientation:

- Information on the Title VI Policy and LEP responsibilities.
- Description of language assistance services available and offered to the public.
- Use of the “I Speak” cards.
- Documentation of language assistance requests.
- How to handle a potential Title VI/LEP complaint.

APO staff attended one-hour training sessions for each of the following: Title VI on Dec. 6, 2021; LEP on Dec. 13, 2021; and a Title II training on Dec. 20, 2021. The next training sessions will be held in early 2023.

To provide added assurances of staff training, the APO has prepared an LEP training and certificate of completion log to ensure staff compliance as it pertains to annual LEP training. This can be found in Appendix C.

### **Title VI/LEP Complaints**

The APO assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (PL 100.259), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under an agency-sponsored program or activity.

In the event an individual (or his/her/their representative) believes that he/she/they have been subject to discrimination prohibited by Title VI and other nondiscrimination provisions they have the right to file a complaint. This includes LEP individuals.

In addition to responding to the complaint, the APO Title VI Coordinator, Brian Gibson, must maintain a log of all Title VI complaints filed against the APO.

***As of December 2022, the APO has had no formal Title VI complaints filed against the organization.***



**Figure 28:** Photo of MTP public engagement event at the Whitney Senior Center.

## 6 – RECOMMENDATIONS

### Response to Past Recommendations

During the development of the past SEP Annual Reports, APO staff have made numerous recommendations for improving public engagement. It is crucial to ensure we evaluate recommendations from the prior year's SEP and continue working on recommendations from all SEPs. We aim to continue building off past recommendations and adjust our strategies and focuses. A complete list of past recommendations can be found in Appendix D.

### Recommendations for Public Engagement

In addition to the self-evaluations in Appendix D, APO staff recommends focusing on the following strategies in the coming year. Some of these strategies have been recommendations from past annual reports that the APO is still working on. These recommendations are listed in no particular order.

#### ***Explore Targeted and More Frequent Outreach and Engagement***

This recommendation was added in the 2020 SEP Annual Report. In attempting to assure equitable access and opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process, APO staff have relied on their interested stakeholder email list. This list is comprised of organizations that work closely with traditionally underrepresented populations (i.e., BIPOC, low-income, people with disabilities, limited English proficient populations, older adults, and young people). Despite this, the response from these demographic groups – as measured by the optional demographic survey responses – was minimal. Representatives from these demographic groups have expressed a need for APO staff to do one-on-one engagement within their communities on a regular basis. This does not have to be tied to a specific activity or public comment period. Several comments received from the SEP survey suggest that strategies currently in use by the APO fall short in achieving meaningful participation.

- ❖ **Results: Ongoing.** *APO staff will explore opportunities to reach and engage with potentially underrepresented stakeholders more frequently and in alternative forums. APO staff will be mindful of the available time and financial resources needed to accomplish this task.*

#### ***Join a Community Organization***

Similar to the recommendation to explore targeted and more frequent outreach and engagement to underrepresented populations, this suggestion first appeared in the 2022 SEP Annual Report and could be a solution. APO staff should be more "plugged in" to the community, particularly organizations that engage hard-to-reach populations. APO staff can then explore joining a community organization comprised of a hard-to-reach population. To engage with these populations, the APO must build trust, engage with respected community leaders, learn about the group, go beyond digital engagement, and make it beneficial to the community we are engaging with.

- ❖ **Results: Ongoing.** *The APO is currently part of the Saint Cloud Area Human Service Council geared towards underrepresented populations. As staff time allows, we should join other organizations to help with more frequent outreach and engagement.*

### **Community Liaison for Hard-To-Reach Populations**

APO staff annually evaluates its public input campaigns of the previous years to determine their effectiveness. Past demographic questionnaire results have indicated low to no response rates among traditionally underserved populations to APO outreach efforts. In response, APO staff met with community organizations that serve these under-represented populations to identify strategies or tools that could be used to ensure that they are aware of the opportunity to impact the decision-making process. One of the identified strategies was to hire people from within the various communities to carry the message to their friends and neighbors. Outsiders and people from government organizations can often be distrusted. The community liaison initiative will serve as a pilot project to implement the suggestion received from community organizations. As public input opportunities become available, the APO will seek members of traditionally underserved populations, train them on the product that is available for public review and comment, and then ask them to work within their communities to spread the word. These individuals will be contractors to the APO and will keep a time sheet that includes descriptions of their actions taken in support of this effort. Afterward, APO staff will again evaluate participation from under-represented populations to determine if the pilot project was successful or not.

- ❖ **Results: No progress in 2022.** *The APO did not hire a community liaison in 2022. However, conversations with possible community liaisons for the MTP community outreach effort began in late December 2022. Plans to move forward with a community liaison were slated to begin in early 2023.*

### **Reach a Younger Audience on TikTok**

Social media apps such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have existed for many years. Other apps such as TikTok are relevantly new to the lineup but have a growing audience. According to Hootsuite Blog, TikTok was the most downloaded app in 2021 with 656 million downloads making it the sixth most used social media platform worldwide. Wallaroo states that in July 2022, there were over 80 million active users in the U.S., with 80% being between the ages of 16-34. The APO's demographic surveys reveal that the average age of survey takers skews on the older side. Creating a TikTok can help the APO reach a younger audience.

- ❖ **Results: Ongoing progress.** *APO staff created a TikTok account in Oct. 2022. Three TikToks were posted to the APO's account during the remainder of 2022. APO staff will work to continue creating content on TikTok and grow our following.*

### **Consistency in Posting Public Meetings on Facebook**

Informing the public of opportunities to voice their opinions at APO-related activities increases the visibility and understanding of transportation issues for the public, APO staff, and decision-makers. Between July 2022 and December 2022, all of Policy Board meetings were advertised on the APO's Facebook page, but only one TAC meeting was. To increase public awareness of the Policy Board, TAC, and ATAC meetings, every meeting date should be advertised via Facebook.

- ❖ **Results: Inconsistent.** *APO staff will continue to advertise all meetings on Facebook and will make a concerted effort to consistently advertise all public meetings on social media.*

## **Be More Consistent Use of All Social Media Accounts/Explore More Effective Usage of Available Social Media**

These two recommendations are very similar, one from 2020 and the other from 2022. Facebook is the predominant social media platform the APO staff uses, though the APO does have a presence on other platforms, including YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Instagram had several posts over the last year, but LinkedIn had one, and YouTube had none. The APO should post quarterly to each social media account or delete them if they are not utilized.

- ❖ **Results: Inconsistent.** *As stated above, APO staff has heavily relied on Facebook as the organization's main platform. Instagram has been the number two platform. However, LinkedIn and YouTube have consistently remained underutilized. As such, APO staff should delete both of these social media accounts.*

## **Explore Innovative Engagement Tools**

Cited in the 2021 SEP Annual Report, APO staff will further explore a variety of public engagement tools and determine if they are practical to implement including weighing the costs to use these methods.

- ❖ **Results: Ongoing.** *APO staff have consistently been exploring innovative engagement tools.*

## **New Recommendations for Public Engagement**

### **Send Qualitative Survey to Consultant Participants**

The APO contracts with consultants to help with a variety of tasks. Some tasks include hosting engagement events or creating surveys for the public. After every APO-hosted event and/or survey, we send a qualitative survey to participants who gave us their email. Currently, we do not send a survey to participants of consultant-led events and surveys. When the public attends an engagement event or takes a survey hosted by a consultant that reflects upon the APO, we should know how they felt about the experience.

- ❖ **Recommendation:** *Send a qualitative survey after every public engagement event hosted by a consultant.*

### **Review TIP Public Engagement Process**

The TIP is a multi-year program of transportation investments in the Saint Cloud MPA. Currently, the majority of public outreach events conducted by the APO revolve around TIP development and amendments. The APO should further review how we publish and conduct TIP notices, events and research how other MPOs do TIP public engagement.

- ❖ **Recommendation:** *Review TIP Public Engagement Process and improve engagement in 2023.*

Though the APO did not accomplish every recommendation during this report, the APO should always strive to improve its public engagement process through a wide variety of strategies

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Public Engagement Calendar of Events**

*(Remainder of page left intentionally blank)*

## Public Engagement Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Location	Method of Event	Purpose of Event	Number of Public Participants
July-22	7/27/2022	Great River Regional Library	In-Person	TIP Open House	1
	7/28/2022	Stearns County Highway Department	Hybrid	TAC meeting	0
Aug-22	8/2/2022	Online -- Facebook Live	Online -- Facebook Live	TIP Open House	N/A
	8/11/2022	Great River Regional Library	In-Person	Policy Board meeting	0
	8/17/2022	Online -- Facebook Live	Online -- Facebook Live	SEP Public Engagement	0
	8/25/2022	Stearns County Highway Department	Hybrid	TAC meeting	0
Sept-22	9/8/2022	Great River Regional Library	In-Person	Policy Board meeting	0
	9/29/2022	Stearns County Highway Department	Hybrid	TAC meeting	0
Oct - 22	10/13/2022	Great River Regional Library	In-Person	Policy Board meeting	0
	10/25/2022	Sauk Rapids Government Center	In-Person	Mayhew Lake Road Public Input	22
	10/29/2022	Saint Cloud City Hall	In-Person	Saint Cloud 101 (MTP Public Engagement)	13
Nov - 22	11/10/2022	Stearns County Highway Department	Hybrid	TAC meeting	0
Dec - 22	12/8/2022	Great River Regional Library	In-Person	Human Service Council (MTP Public Engagement)	N/A
	12/19/2022	Whitney Senior Center	In-Person	MTP Public Engagement	30
	12/20/2022	Metro Bus Mobility Training Center	In-Person	RAC Meeting (MTP Public Engagment)	7
	12/21/2022	Great River Regional Library	In-Person	MTP Public Engagement	0



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Facebook Public Engagement**

*(Remainder of page left intentionally blank)*

Month	Date	Purpose of Post	Post (Including post type)	Engagement (30 days after posted)	Reach	Post Impressions
July	7/7/2022	ATP	<b>Post Type: Facebook Live Video</b> The APO's Regional Active Transportation Plan (ATP) project survey is open for public comment! To take the survey click here: <a href="https://arcg.is/0CX8Wj">https://arcg.is/0CX8Wj</a> To learn more about the ATP visit our website: <a href="https://stcloudapo.org/.../active-transportation-plan/">https://stcloudapo.org/.../active-transportation-plan/</a>	N/A	56	N/A
July	7/12/2022	ATP	<b>Post Type: Photo</b> The Regional Active Transportation Plan survey ends this Friday! Take it now before it closes! To take the survey click here: <a href="https://arcg.is/0CX8Wj">https://arcg.is/0CX8Wj</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
July	7/12/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type Photo (Event)</b> You have the opportunity to provide comments on the draft 2023-2026 TIP! More information can be found here: <a href="https://stcloudapo.org/draft-2023-2026-tip-open-for.../">https://stcloudapo.org/draft-2023-2026-tip-open-for.../</a> The APO has started its 30-day public comment period which will run until Friday, Aug. 12, 2022. APO staff has developed online surveys about the roadway, bridge, transit, and active transportation projects to be constructed (or purchased) using Federal and/or state funding between 2023 and 2026. Sherburne County click: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LJCNXDT">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LJCNXDT</a> Stearns County click: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LJM8RJY">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LJM8RJY</a> City of Sartell click: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/89V3L9H">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/89V3L9H</a> City of Sauk Rapids click: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/892KHJW">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/892KHJW</a> Saint Cloud Metro Bus click: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/89T8XQ3">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/89T8XQ3</a> Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) click: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/893SF9L">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/893SF9L</a> ConnectAbility of MN, Inc. click: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/896WCYY">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/896WCYY</a> WACOSA click: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LOSGMVR">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LOSGMVR</a> Overall FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program click: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8DYCXQX">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8DYCXQX</a>	12	287	335
July	7/19/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Photo</b> <b>ConnectAbility of MN</b> is slated to receive three mobility management grants over the next three years (2023, 2024, and 2025). How do you feel about that? We want to know! The APO's 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is currently out for public comment now through Aug. 12. Provide your comments on these projects by taking the following survey: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/896WCYY">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/896WCYY</a> . Feel free to check out the rest of the surveys and the full TIP on the APO's website as well. Don't delay! Provide your comments today!	1	41	51
July	7/21/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Photo</b> WACOSA is planning on purchasing one replacement vehicle for their fleet in 2023, 2024, and 2025 (a total of three vehicles). What do you think about this? Let us know! The APO's 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is currently out for public comment now through Aug. 12. We are taking your comments on projects receiving Federal and/or state funding – like WACOSA – over the next four years. To provide your comments on WACOSA, click here: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LOSGMVR">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LOSGMVR</a> For more information on the other projects being considered, along with copies of the draft 2023-2026 TIP, check out the APO's website ( <a href="http://www.stcloudapo.org">www.stcloudapo.org</a> ).	0	33	45
July	7/22/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Photo</b> Live in/commute through Haven Township? Well, <b>Sherburne County MN Government</b> is requesting to use Federal and/or State funding for various roadway projects. We want to know your thoughts about it. The APO's 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is out for public comment through Aug. 12. So if you have thoughts on Sherburne County's projects, let us know by taking this survey: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LJCNXDT">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LJCNXDT</a> And check out the APO's website for more ways to provide your comments on other projects!	0	22	32

Month	Date	Purpose of Post	Post (Including post type)	Engagement (30 days after posted)	Reach	Post Impressions
July	7/27/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Facebook Live Video</b> Who's ready to talk transportation? Senior Transportation Planner Vicki Johnson sure is! Join her TODAY (Wednesday, July 27) from 3 to 5 p.m. at the St. Cloud library to chat about upcoming Federal and State funded transportation projects coming to the region as part of the 2023 to 2026 Transportation Improvement Program open house!	N/A	42	N/A
August	8/2/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Facebook Live Video</b> Senior Transportation Planner Vicki Johnson is here to provide information about the APO's draft 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and hopefully answer any questions that you have!	N/A	126	N/A
August	8/2/2022	Policy Board Meeting	<b>Post Type: Photo (Event)</b>	N/A	62	N/A
August	8/2/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Photo</b> Are you a resident of <a href="#">Stearns County MN Government</a> ? Do you work/travel through Stearns County -- particularly in the St. Cloud metro? If so, we want to hear from you about proposed Federally funded transportation projects occurring between 2023 and 2026. The APO's draft 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is open now until Aug. 12. If you have thoughts on Stearns County's projects, let us know by taking this survey: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LJM8RJY">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LJM8RJY</a> And check out the APO's website for more ways to provide your comments on other projects!	7	87	101
August	8/3/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Photo</b> Ride <a href="#">Metro Bus</a> ? Have an interest in public transit projects? Then do we have the survey for you! The APO's draft 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program is currently out for public comment until Aug. 12. Let us know your comments on proposed transit projects by taking this survey: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/89T8XQ3">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/89T8XQ3</a> Be sure to check out the APO's website for more ways to provide your comments on this and other projects within the St. Cloud metro!	2	32	41
August	8/4/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Photo</b> Calling all <a href="#">City of Sartell</a> residents. Did you know that the city has a Federally funded transportation project coming up (a shared use path along Heritage Drive)? What are your thoughts about this? The APO wants to know. The 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is currently out for public comment through Aug. 12. Feel free to share your thoughts on this Sartell project by taking this survey: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/89V3L9H">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/89V3L9H</a> And while you are at it, jump on over to the APO's website for more ways to provide your comments on all the other Federally funded projects within the region.	4	43	57
August	8/6/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Photo</b> The <a href="#">City of Sauk Rapids</a> is proposing to reconstruct Second Avenue S using Federal funding. What are your thoughts? We want to hear from you! The APO's 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is out for public comment now through Aug. 12. So if you have any thoughts you would like us to know about this project, please take this survey: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/892KHJW">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/892KHJW</a> And if you have the chance, feel free to swing by the APO's website to find out what other Federal and/or state funded transportation projects will be occurring within the St. Cloud metro and let us know your thoughts on those as well!	5	67	81
August	8/8/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Photo</b> Did you know? The largest (and most expensive) project identified within the APO's draft 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program is the US 10/MN 23 interchange reconstruction and Fourth Street bridge construction.	16	105	120

Month	Date	Purpose of Post	Post (Including post type)	Engagement (30 days after posted)	Reach	Post Impressions
			This \$49 million project within the St. Cloud metro will be a huge undertaking. But it isn't the only project the <a href="#">Minnesota Department of Transportation</a> has planned for the region. We want to know what your thoughts are on this and other MnDOT projects to be constructed in the St. Cloud area. Leave us your thoughts by taking this survey: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/893SF9L">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/893SF9L</a> Public comment is open now through Aug. 12. So don't delay!			
August	8/9/2022	SEP	<b>Post Type: Photo (Event)</b>	N/A	77	N/A
August	8/9/2022	SEP	<b>Post Type: Link</b> The Draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is now open for a 45-day public comment period until Friday, September 16, 2022. The SEP is important to ensuring the tax-paying public is given ample opportunity to access, review, and comment on plans, studies, and other documents as they are being developed. Check out our website for more information!	1	46	59
August	8/10/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Photo</b> Have opinions on ALL the Federal/state funded projects that will occur within the St. Cloud metro? Then buckle up. We've got a survey just for YOU! The 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program is open for public comment between now and Aug. 12. And we want to hear your thoughts/opinions on the proposed projects. Feel free to provide your comments on ALL of the projects within the TIP by taking this survey: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8DYCXQX">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8DYCXQX</a> Short on time? Feel free to check out the APO's website to find jurisdictional/agency specific surveys as well.	10	88	104
August	8/11/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Facebook Live Video</b> We are in the home stretch of our public comment period on the APO's draft 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). If you have any thoughts or comments on the proposed Federal and/or state-funded projects occurring within the Saint Cloud metro now is your time to provide them. Check out <a href="http://stcloudapo.org">stcloudapo.org</a> for more information on how you can provide your comments. Remember, public comment closes TOMORROW (Aug. 12) at 5 p.m.	N/A	46	N/A
August	8/17/2022	SEP	<b>Post Type: Facebook Live Video</b> The Draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is open for a 45-day public comment period until Friday, September 16, 2022. Contact Alex McKenzie via email ( <a href="mailto:mckenzie@stcloudapo.org">mckenzie@stcloudapo.org</a> ) with any comments or questions, or visit the APO's website for more information or questions.	N/A	31	N/A
August	8/31/2022	Policy Board Meeting	<b>Post Type: Photo (Event)</b>	N/A	16	N/A
September	9/21/2022	TAC	<b>Post Type: Photo</b> The next meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been scheduled for Sept. 29th at 10:00 am and will be held at the Stearns County Highway Department. All meetings of the TAC are open to the public. You can see a full copy of the agenda packet here: <a href="https://stcloudapo.org/.../09/09292022-APO-TAC-Agenda.pdf">https://stcloudapo.org/.../09/09292022-APO-TAC-Agenda.pdf</a>	2	36	44
October	10/4/2022	Policy Board Meeting	<b>Post Type: Photo (Event)</b>	N/A	21	N/A

Month	Date	Purpose of Post	Post (Including post type)	Engagement (30 days after posted)	Reach	Post Impressions
October	10/18/2022	Mayhew Lake Road Corridor Study	<b>Post Type: Photo (Event)</b> We're studying possible improvements to Mayhew Lake Road from Highway 23 to 35th St NE. Join us for an upcoming open house October 25 from 5pm – 7pm at the Sauk Rapids Government Center to share your feedback. If you drive, bike, roll or walk on or near Mayhew Lake Road, we want to hear from you: <a href="https://mayhewlakeroad-wsbeng.hub.arcgis.com/">https://mayhewlakeroad-wsbeng.hub.arcgis.com/</a>	11	114	127
October	10/27/2022	TikTok	<b>Post Type: Link</b> Check out our new TikTok account for a scary statistic! Be safe this Halloween! <a href="#">#HalloweenSafety</a>	8	67	73
October	10/28/2022	TikTok	<b>Post Type: Link</b> Going trick-or-treating this Halloween? Here are some tips to keep you safe! <a href="#">#halloweensafetytips</a>	15	86	98
October	10/31/2022	CSAH 133 Alignment Study	<b>Post Type: Link</b> Stearns County is partnering with the St. Cloud Area Planning Organization, the city of Sartell and LeSauk Township to identify a preferred alignment for a connection between Theisen Road and 19th Avenue. A Public Open House will be held on November 1, 2022 from 4:30 to 6:00 pm at the Sartell Community Center.	1	33	37
November	11/23/2022	TikTok	<b>Post Type: Link</b> Don't be a turkey. Don't drink and drive. <a href="#">#dontdrinkanddrive</a> <a href="#">#awareness</a> <a href="#">#mpo</a> <a href="#">#transportationplanning</a>	7	60	70
December	12/19/2022	MTP	<b>Post Type: Photo</b> APO staff are out and about today talking long range transportation planning at the St. Cloud Whitney Center until noon today! Come by and say hi!	10	131	142
December	12/28/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Photo (Event)</b>	N/A	32	N/A
December	12/28/2022	TIP	<b>Post Type: Photo (Event)</b> Changes to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) need your feedback! Community members are welcome to provide their input on these changes between Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2022, and Friday, Jan. 27, 2023. For more information visit our website: <a href="https://stcloudapo.org/changes-to-the-tip-need-your.../">https://stcloudapo.org/changes-to-the-tip-need-your.../</a> Check out our TIP change survey: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XJXWFKV">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XJXWFKV</a>	2	57	65

## **APPENDIX C**


### **Staff Training Certifications**

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# Equity Training

## 2021 Annual Training Certification

The undersigned attended a one-hour training session regarding equity, by Gina Kundan from MnDOT's Office of Equity on February 9, 2021. The training covered aspect of both Title II and Title VI issues.



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Brian Gibson



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Vicki Johnson



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Fred Sandal



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Alex McKenzie



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Amber Blattner

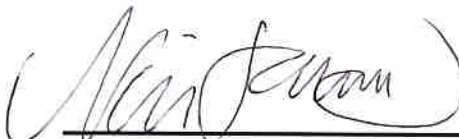
# Title VI

## 2021 Annual Training Certification

The undersigned attended a one-hour training session regarding Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and its applicability to the Area Planning Organization.

The training occurred on December 6, 2021 and consisted of watching **Non-Discrimination Assurances** video on FHWA.dot.gov website and reviewing the APO's Title VI document and the processes we use to help assure non-discrimination.

  
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Brian Gibson

  
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Vicki Johnson

  
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James Stapfer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Alex McKenzie

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Amber Blattner



# Title II

## 2021 Annual Training Certification

The undersigned attended a one-hour training session regarding Title II of the Civil Rights Act and its applicability to the Area Planning Organization.

The training occurred on December 20, 2021 and consisted of watching **Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) // Basic Training You Need To Know** by the Disability Law Center of Virginia and **Understanding the ADA Interactive Process** by Proxus.

  
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Brian Gibson

  
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Vicki Johnson

  
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James Stapfer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Alex McKenzie

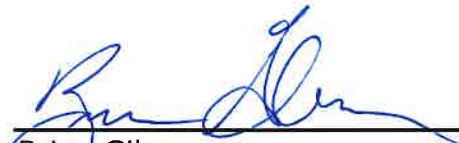
  
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Amber Blattner


# LEP

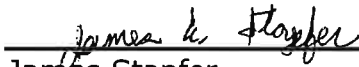
## 2021 Annual Training Certification

The undersigned attended a one-hour training session regarding Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and its applicability to the Area Planning Organization.

The training occurred on December 13, 2021 and consisted of watching **Providing Meaningful Access for Limited English Proficient Individuals** by the U.S. Department of Justice and discussing it within the context of the APO's processes.

  
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Brian Gibson

  
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Vicki Johnson

  
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James Stapfer

  
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Alex McKenzie

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Amber Blattner



## **APPENDIX D**

### **Past Recommendations**

Report Year	Recommendations	Issue/Problem	Suggestion	Year End Assessment	Recommendation
2019	Public Meetings	APO staff realize they cannot change the nature of many of its meetings. TIP open houses are designed to discuss changes to federally funded transportation projects; ATAC (formerly BPAC) meetings are convened to discuss active transportation issues; TAC meetings have a heavy focus on technical information presented to agency and jurisdictional planners and engineers; and Policy Board meetings are designed to present actionable information to elected officials. However, APO staff can do a better job of advertising those meetings to encourage more public participation.	Consistently utilize its social media platform to advertise meetings. This will include creating Facebook events.	Great - The APO regularly posts all APO sponsored public meetings to Facebook.	Continue advertising meetings on social media.
			Utilize simpler, less jargon-filled language. This will be included in advertising on social media platforms, on the APO's website, and in agenda packet material.	Good - The APO should always be mindful when sharing information to the public.	Continue utilizing simpler, less jargon-filled language to the public.
2019	Infrequent APO Meetings	APO staff realize that distributing flyers or printed material around the MPA for regularly scheduled meetings may not be the best use of limited staff time. But for infrequent meetings such as the ATAC or TIP open houses posting flyers or notifications at key locations would be beneficial in notifying the public of input opportunities.	Identify several key locations – locations with high traffic and those that attract a demographically diverse audience – within the MPA to distribute flyers about infrequent APO meetings.	Poor - Did not do.	Due to limited staff time and low effectiveness, this suggestion is not recommended unless a specific and wide spread targeted public input campaign is underway.
			Utilize simpler, less jargon-filled language. This will be included in advertising on social media platforms, on the APO's website, and in agenda packet material (should the meetings contain an agenda).	Good - The APO should always be mindful when sharing information to the public.	Continue utilizing simpler, less jargon-filled language to the public.

2019	Follow Up on Action Taken on Public Input.	When directly soliciting comments for specific plans or studies undertaken by the APO, APO staff record comments received by the public. Those documented comments are then individually responded to and are subsequently included into the plan/study. Comments received at public meetings (ATAC/TAC/Policy Board) are recorded in the meeting's minutes. These comments, however, are typically not disposed of in the same way as those on specific plans or studies. APO staff will do their best to provide follow up information to comments made during public meetings either with a follow up at the next regularly scheduled meeting and/or directly to the commenter dependent upon whether contact information is provided. By doing so, this will provide participants with the assurance that their opinions were heard.	At public input events, APO staff will ask participants if they are interested in signing up (providing their email address) in order to be contacted on specific topics they are interested in. However, currently these emails are lumped into one general stakeholder email listserv and are contacted very infrequently, if at all. Rather than attempt to manage multiple listservs on a wide variety of topics, APO staff will provide – at a minimum – quarterly updates to the one general stakeholder email listserv.	Excellent - The APO solicits emails at every public engagement event and creates specific lists based on topics the participant is interested in.	Continue soliciting emails at public engagement events.
			These updates will consist of a newsletter that will be distributed electronically and will be placed on the APO's website. These newsletters will consist of updates surrounding APO planning activities, such as active transportation, transit, and roadway construction projects, along with relevant transportation related information within the MPA. It is the hope that by providing this platform to interested stakeholders they will become more familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the APO and will receive regular updates on topics they have expressed interest in.	Excellent - The APO has a quarterly newsletter that is sent out to interested stakeholders and is shared on social media and the APO's website.	Continue the quarterly newsletter.
2019	TIP Participation	Out of all of the events and engagement opportunities provided during the time period of July 2018 and June 2019, participation in events around the TIP were virtually non-existent.	Relocate the open house events from the APO office to either a more centralized location – such as the Saint Cloud branch of the Great River Regional Library – or reach out to member jurisdictions who are impacted by the changes to the TIP during the amendment process for suggested locations for in-person events.	Great - The APO moved open house events from the APO to the Great River Regional Library.	Continue open houses at the library and look into adding event locations in the jurisdictions who are impacted by changes to the TIP.
			Develop an online survey during the 30-day public comment period that would be advertised online, in the required legal notice, and on social media.	Excellent - A 30-day public comment period with a SurveyMonkey is created for every public input process with a survey.	Continue online surveys.

2019	Demographic Questionnaire	The purpose of the demographic questionnaire is to ensure APO staff are providing all members of the community with the opportunity to receive information, ask questions, provide feedback, and be involved in the overall planning process. However, based upon the information presented in this report, the amount of demographic data collected using this tool is insufficient in terms of drawing conclusions for analysis.	Updating the demographic survey questions. APO staff will modify the existing demographic questionnaire to further determine gaps in achieving the goals of engaging all segments of the community.	Excellent - The demographic survey is aligned with U.S. Census and ACS data.	Continue collecting demographic information.
			On every online survey engagement opportunity APO staff will include the nine demographic questions at the end of the survey. There will be a disclaimer attached stating: The following questions are OPTIONAL, but completing them will help APO staff understand if they are reaching all segments of the population.	Excellent - The APO includes demographic question at the end of every survey.	Continue collecting demographic information.
2020	Explore hybrid in-person/virtual meetings	With COVID-19 effectively eliminating in-person meetings and public engagement opportunities, APO staff have been relying heavily on virtual platforms like Zoom to conduct meetings. Once public health guidelines allow for in-person meetings APO staff will more than likely transition back to this type of platform. However, APO staff realize members of the public may feel more comfortable attending and participating in meetings and/or events virtually.	To offer greater transparency and participation, staff will investigate the technology, costs, and practicality of methods that would permit members of the public to view, listen, or join meetings and events virtually.	Adequate - The APO offers members of the public to attend TAC Meetings via Zoom, but not Policy Board Meetings.	Continue offering the Zoom option to members of the public when feasible.
			Consideration will be given to posting audio recordings of meetings on the APO website.	Poor - Did not do.	Meeting minutes are provided for every public meeting are sufficient. Recordings of meetings are often low quality and not utilized by the public.
2020	Explore targeted and more frequent outreach and engagement	In attempting to assure equitable access and opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process, APO staff have relied on their interested stakeholder email list. This list is comprised of organizations that work closely with traditionally underrepresented populations (i.e., people-of-color, low-income, people with disabilities, limited English proficient populations, older adults, and young people). Despite this, the response from these demographic groups – as measured by the optional demographic survey responses – was minimal. Representatives from these demographic groups have expressed a need for APO staff to do one-on-one engagement within their communities on a regular basis. This does not have to be tied to a specific activity or public comment period. Several comments received from the SEP survey suggest that strategies currently in use by the APO fall short in achieving meaningful participation.	APO staff will explore opportunities to reach and engage with potentially underrepresented stakeholders on a more frequent basis and in alternative forums. APO staff will be mindful of the available staff time and financial resources needed to accomplish this task.	Adequate - The APO is continually working on reaching underrepresented populations.	Continue to explore ways to reach underrepresented populations.

2020	Solicit email addresses as part of online survey	For in-person meetings and engagement events, APO staff utilize a sign-in sheet which allows individuals the option to provide their email address to stay informed about APO planning activities. However, as APO staff have transitioned to online engagement – in part due to COVID-19 – providing the public with a means to stay connected to planning activities has not been consistent.	As part of online surveys, APO staff will include the option for individuals to provide their email address. This will provide participants the opportunity to receive the APO’s newsletter and emails regarding public input opportunities. It will also allow APO staff to more readily conduct qualitative assessments on public engagement.	Excellent - The APO includes the option for participants to leave their email address on surveys.	Continue to provide opportunities for individuals to include their emails as part of online surveys.
2020	Provide qualitative surveys more frequently	Currently, APO staff annually distribute a qualitative assessment to individuals who have participated in an APO public outreach activity within the past year. This survey allows participants to provide their feedback on their experience in dealing with APO staff. However, APO staff have noticed that for some events significant time has passed between the initial public engagement opportunity and when staff are inquiring about participant experience. Staff believe inviting feedback closer to the time frame for the product or event in which people were engaged will improve their recall of the activity and likelihood to participate in the survey.	APO staff will distribute public engagement qualitative assessment surveys to individuals immediately following the close of public comment periods. For plans that will be developed over multiple years like the MTP, APO staff will identify appropriate opportunities to receive feedback from participants on the quality of public engagement. At a minimum, these qualitative assessment surveys will be conducted on an annual basis.	Excellent - The APO distributes the qualitative assessment survey directly after public input has closed.	Continue to distribute qualitative assessment surveys in a timely manner.
2020	Explore more effective usage of available social media	APO staff has generally made much more effective use of Facebook through posts pertaining to events and announcements concerning public meetings and activities. Tools such as Facebook Live have increased engagement and public participation. In the last year (2020), social media accounts for Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn were created, though there has been little use of these platforms for planning related announcements or public engagement.	APO staff will explore opportunities to make improved use of Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn for informational purposes and other announcements.	Poor - The APO has utilized Instagram more frequently, but YouTube and LinkedIn have rarely ever been used.	Examine the usage of unused social media platforms and decide whether to delete them.

<p>2021</p>	<p>Respond to Comments and How Considered</p>	<p>As a standard practice, all comments on APO planning documents are recorded and responded to as part of their respective document. However, this is often not easily or readily accessible to members of the public. How staff responds to those who provide their input has varied. Those commenting on the TIP, for example, are informed that their comments are recorded and that they have been received and presented (or will be presented) to members of the TAC and Policy Board. Plans and studies prepared by consultants typically record public comments, however, consultants may not necessarily respond directly to participants regarding how their comments were considered.</p>	<p>The recommendation is to provide the comment disposition matrix to participants after the process of public engagement has concluded for that activity. If the person who provided the input is known, this may also include directly responding to the individual and – if relevant – how it influenced the outcome of the plan or study.</p>	<p>Excellent - The APO has begun to attach or direct participants of where and how their comments were disposed of.</p>	<p>Continue to inform participants of how their comments disposed of.</p>
<p>2021</p>	<p>Provide Standard Demographic Survey Questions</p>	<p>The APO surveys from last year created from SurveyMonkey include nine optional questions that ask for demographic information, specifically in response to gender, city of residence, ethnicity, household size, household income, age, disability, place of birth, and the primary language spoken in the home. The two consultant led surveys asked a different set of questions to obtain demographic data. The TH 15 Corridor Alternatives Survey asked about gender, race, age, and language only. The Mississippi River Bridge Study only asked survey respondents to identify their age, race, and affiliation with the area.</p>	<p>The staff recommendation is that consultants be required at a minimum to provide the same set of demographic questions with their survey engagement as are asked in other APO surveys. This would enable the APO to obtain more complete information on demographic characteristics needed to track progress toward equity in participation.</p>	<p>Good - When the APO writes an RFP for consultant work, included in the scope of work is the inclusion of using the APO's set of demographic questions.</p>	<p>Continue to include demographic questions as part of the scope of work for any consultant contracts.</p>
<p>2021</p>	<p>Explore Innovative Engagement Tools</p>	<p>In 2020, the APO received 27 comments from the public by using an interactive online tool, Wikimap, to obtain comments from the public relevant to active transportation needs. Besides Wikimap, there are a variety of other interactive two-way information sharing tools with brands such as Mentimeter, Video Ask, etc. that may be helpful in obtaining public input. In addition, other innovative passive tools such as sidewalk clings placed along shared use paths and/or sidewalks could also be used to boost public involvement.</p>	<p>APO staff will further explore a variety of public engagement tools and determine if they are practical to implement including weighing the costs to use these methods.</p>	<p>Adequate - As public engagement is needed the APO should consider innovative engagement tools.</p>	<p>Continue to consider innovative engagement tools.</p>



2022	Community Liaison for Hard-To-Reach Populations	APO staff annually evaluates its public input campaigns of the previous year to determine their effectiveness. Past demographic questionnaire results have indicated low to no response rates among traditionally underserved populations to APO outreach efforts. In response, APO staff met with community organizations that serve these under-represented populations to identify strategies or tools that could be used to ensure that they are aware of the opportunity to impact the decision-making process.	One of the identified strategies was to hire persons from within the various communities to carry the message to their friends and neighbors. Outsiders and persons from government organizations can often be distrusted. The community liaison initiative will serve as a pilot project to implement the suggestion received from community organizations. As public input opportunities become available, the APO will seek members of traditionally underserved populations, train them on the product that is available for public review and comment, and then ask them to work within their communities to spread the word. These individuals will be contractors to the APO and will keep a time sheet that includes descriptions of their actions taken in support of this effort. Afterward, APO staff will again evaluate participation from under-represented populations to determine if the pilot project was successful or not.	Poor - The APO did not hire a community liaison, but plans to in early 2023.	Hire a community liaison in early 2023.
2022	Join a Community Organization	In addition to the work of the community liaison, APO staff should also be more "plugged in" to the community, particularly organizations that engage hard-to-reach populations.	APO staff can then explore joining a community organization comprised of a hard-to-reach population. To engage with these populations, the APO must build trust, engage with respected community leaders, learn about the group, go beyond digital engagement and make it beneficial to the community we are engaging with.	Adequate - The APO is part of one community organization geared towards underrepresented populations.	As staff time allows, join other community organizations.
2022	Reach a Younger Audience on TikTok	Social media apps such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have existed for many years. Other apps such as TikTok are relevantly new to the lineup but have a growing audience. According to Hootsuite Blog, TikTok was the most downloaded app in 2021 with 656 million downloads making it the sixth most used social media platform worldwide. Wallaroo states that in July 2022, there were over 80 million active users in the U.S., with 80% being between the ages of 16-34. The APO's demographic surveys reveal that the average age of survey takers skews on the older side. Creating a TikTok can help the APO reach a younger audience.	TikTok accounts with similar content to the APO include channels such TalkingCities, which explores urban design, city planning, and architecture has 200,000 followers and 5.5 million likes. Other similar accounts to model after include Everyday Engineering, philritz1, and pedestriandignity, to name a few. In order to assist in reaching and engaging a younger audience, APO staff should explore the idea of developing and maintaining a TikTok channel.	Adequate - The APO created a TikTok in late 2022, and has only a couple of videos.	Continue to create content on TikTok

2022	Update Demographic Survey	APO staff uses nine demographic questions at the end of all APO online surveys. Respondents are asked to provide information regarding their gender, city of residence, age, ethnicity, household size, household income, whether they have a physical disability, place of birth (inside or outside the U.S.), and their primary language spoken at home. Completion of these the demographic questions by survey participants was optional.	Responses to these demographic questions assist APO staff in identifying the various groups within the MPA that are being reached through surveys. The intent is to ensure that all community members are afforded an equal and equitable opportunity to participate in the process. The survey results have been very insightful but have one major flaw. The demographic survey categories do not align with the Census and ACS categories. To resolve this, the demographic survey questions should be revised to line up with the questions for the Census and ACS data so they can be directly compared.	Excellent - The demographic survey was tweaked to aligned with U.S. Census and ACS categories.	Continue to use the most up-to-date demographic questions.
2022	Consistency in Posting Public Meetings to Facebook	Informing the public of opportunities to voice their opinions at APO-related activities increases the visibility and understanding of transportation issues for the public, APO staff, and decision-makers. Between July 2021 and June 2022, only four of the nine Policy Board meetings were advertised on the APO's Facebook page, with no member of the public attending any of the meetings.	To increase public awareness of the Policy Board, TAC, and ATAC meetings, every meeting date should be advertised via Facebook.	Good - The APO advertised every Policy Board Meeting on Facebook, and one TAC Meeting.	Continue to advertise all meetings on Facebook.
2022	Be More Consistent Use of All Social Media Accounts	Facebook is the predominant social media platform the APO staff uses, though the APO does have a presence on other platforms including YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Instagram had several posts over the last year, but YouTube and LinkedIn had none.	The APO should post to each social media account at least quarterly or delete them if they are not being utilized.	Poor - The APO didn't post on YouTube at all and on LinkedIn only once.	Consider deleting YouTube and LinkedIn profiles.



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**TO:** Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee  
**FROM:** Vicki Johnson, Senior Transportation Planner  
**RE:** FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments and Administrative Modifications  
**DATE:** March 17, 2023

One of the responsibilities of the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO), as outlined by the Federal Government, is to develop and maintain a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is the document that programs federal funds for transportation improvements in the APO's Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). Decisions about transportation investments require collaboration and cooperation between different levels of government and neighboring agencies and jurisdictions. As a document, the TIP reports how the various agencies and jurisdictions within the MPA have prioritized their use of limited Federal highway and transit funding.

Several changes have been proposed to the APO's FY 2023-2026 TIP from the following entities: City of Sartell, Saint Cloud Metro Bus, Stearns County, and City of Saint Cloud.

#### City of Sartell

- 2023:
  - **220-090-003. \*\*AC\*\*:** CONSTRUCT NEW TRAILS AND SIDEWALK IN GAP AREAS IN THE CITY OF SARTELL (PAYBACK IN 2025). Due to an increase in funding as a result of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) additional Transportation Alternatives (TA) funding – the program that provided Federal funding assistance for this project – was made available. Rather than having the city wait for reimbursement in 2025, the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP-3) has recommended moving the Federal funding to fiscal year 2023. Thus, this project will be fully funded in 2023. New description: CONSTRUCT NEW TRAILS AND SIDEWALK IN GAP AREAS IN THE CITY OF SARTELL. New funding breakdown is as follows: STIP TOTAL: \$458,740; FHWA: \$367,040; Other/Local: \$91,700; Project Total: \$458,740.
- 2025:
  - **220-090-003AC. \*\*AC\*\*:** CONSTRUCT NEW TRAILS AND SIDEWALK IN GAP AREAS IN THE CITY OF SARTELL (PAYBACK 1 OF 1). Due to an increase in funding as a result of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) additional Transportation Alternatives (TA) funding – the program that provided Federal funding assistance for this project – was made available. Rather than having the city wait for reimbursement in 2025, the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP-3) has recommended moving the Federal funding to fiscal year 2023. Thus, this project will be fully funded in 2023. Thus, this project line item can be removed from the TIP.

#### Saint Cloud Metro Bus

- 2023:
  - **TRF-0048-23J.** ST. CLOUD MTC; WESTERN TRANSIT CENTER. Currently this \$4 million project is being funded with \$2 million in state bonding funds, \$1.2 million in state funding, and \$800,000 in funds from Metro Bus. Per discussions with MnDOT's Office of Transit and

Active Transportation (OTAT), the state is requesting to use Federal funding instead of state funding for this project resulting in the \$1.2 million coming from Federal rather than state funding. The estimated project cost is not anticipated to change at this time. Changes are as follows: SECT 5339: ST. CLOUD MTC; WESTERN TRANSIT CENTER. Proposed Funds: FTA. New funding breakdown is as follows: STIP Total: \$4,000,000; FTA: \$1,200,000; Other/Local: \$2,800,000; Project Total: \$4,000,000.

#### Stearns County

- 2023:
  - **073-090-012.** BEAVER ISLAND TRAIL EXTENSION FROM ST CLOUD CITY LIMITS TO STEARNS CR 143 W OF CLEARWATER. Due to the influx in Transportation Alternatives (TA) funding – the program that provided federal funding for this project – Stearns County is receiving an additional \$135,090 in Federal funding to complete this project. This action was taken by the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP-3) in order to: 1. Spend the remaining FY 2023 funds available to the ATP-3, and 2. To get Stearns County closer to the ideal 80/20 split (80% Federal funding/20% local funding). New funding breakdown is as follows: STIP Total: \$1,225,000; FHWA: \$562,196; Other/Local: \$662,804; Project Total: \$1,225,000.
  - **073-675-042.** **\*\*AC\*\*MN270\*\*:** CSAH 75, REPLACE BRIDGE 6819 OVER SAUK RIVER (PAYBACK IN 2026). Due to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) additional Federal funding has been made available in fiscal years 2023-2026. In order to spend down those additional fundings within this time frame, the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP-3) has approved moving up the advance construction payback for this project from FY 2026 to both FY 2024 and FY 2025. Essentially, Stearns County will be receiving their Federal reimbursement earlier than FY 2026. No changes in overall project cost are anticipated with this project. Project description change: **\*\*AC\*\*MN270\*\*:** CSAH 75, REPLACE BRIDGE 6819 OVER SAUK RIVER (PAYBACK IN 2024 & 2025). New funding breakdown is as follows: STIP Total: \$2,864,880; FHWA Earmark: \$1,000,000; Total AC: \$2,135,120; Other/Local: \$1,864,880; Project Total: \$5,000,000.
  - **073-090-011AC.** **\*\*AC\*\*:** CONSTRUCT PHASE 3 OF THE ROCORI TRAIL ALONG RR CORRIDOR FROM COLD SPRING TO ROCKVILLE (PAYBACK 1 OF 2). Due to the increase in funding as a result of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the payback for this project is being adjusted. Instead of having Federal funding paid back in both 2023 (\$520,000) and 2024 (\$292,270), the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP-3) has recommended the Federal funding all be paid back in FY 2023 (\$812,270). New project description will read: **\*\*AC\*\*:** CONSTRUCT PHASE 3 OF THE ROCORI TRAIL ALONG RR CORRIDOR FROM COLD SPRING TO ROCKVILLE (PAYBACK 1 OF 1). Funding breakdown is as follows: STIP Total: \$812,270; Target AC Payback: \$812,270; Total AC Payback: \$812,270.
- 2024
  - **073-675-042AC.** **\*\*AC\*\*MN270\*\*:** CSAH 75, REPLACE BRIDGE 6819 OVER SAUK RIVER (PAYBACK 1 OF 2). Due to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) additional Federal funding has been made available in fiscal years 2023-2026. In order to spend down those additional fundings within this time frame, the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP-3) has approved moving up the advance construction payback for this project from FY 2026 to both FY 2024 and FY 2025. Essentially, Stearns County will be receiving their Federal reimbursement earlier than FY 2026. No changes in overall project cost are anticipated with this project. Project description change: **\*\*AC\*\*MN270\*\*:** CSAH 75, REPLACE BRIDGE 6819 OVER SAUK RIVER (PAYBACK 1 OF 2) New funding breakdown is as follows: STIP Total: \$1,393,992; Target AC Payback: \$1,393,992; Total AC Payback: \$1,393,992; Total AC: \$741,128.
  - **073-090-011AC1.** **\*\*AC\*\*:** CONSTRUCT PHASE 3 OF THE ROCORI TRAIL ALONG RR CORRIDOR FROM COLD SPRING TO ROCKVILLE (PAYBACK 2 OF 2). Due to the increase in

funding as a result of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the payback for this project is being adjusted. Instead of having Federal funding paid back in both 2023 (\$520,000) and 2024 (\$292,270), the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP-3) has recommended the Federal funding all be paid back in FY 2023 (\$812,270). With this change, there is no need to list this project in FY 2024 and it will be removed from the TIP.

- **073-596-010.** CR 120, RECONSTRUCT ROUNDABOUT AT STEARNS CR 120 & CSAH 1 & FROM 450 FT EAST OF NB MN 15 ENTRANCE RAMP TO CSAH 1, MILL AND OVERLAY. Stearns County was the recipient of \$1,250,000 in Congressionally Directed Spending to complete this project. As such, this project will need to be added to the APO's FY 2023-2026 TIP. Funding breakdown is as follows: STIP Total: \$2,000,000; FHWA Earmark: \$1,250,000; Other/Local: \$750,000; Project Total: \$2,000,000.
- 2025
  - **073-675-042AC1.** **\*\*AC\*\*MN270\*\*:** CSAH 75, REPLACE BRIDGE 6819 OVER SAUK RIVER (PAYBACK 2 OF 2). Due to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) additional Federal funding has been made available in fiscal years 2023-2026. In order to spend down those additional fundings within this time frame, the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP-3) has approved moving up the advance construction payback for this project from FY 2026 to both FY 2024 and FY 2025. Essentially, Stearns County will be receiving their Federal reimbursement earlier than FY 2026. No changes in overall project cost are anticipated with this project. Project description change: **\*\*AC\*\*MN270\*\*:** CSAH 75, REPLACE BRIDGE 6819 OVER SAUK RIVER (PAYBACK 2 of 2) New funding breakdown is as follows: STIP Total: \$741,128; Target AC Payback: \$741,128; Total AC Payback: \$741,128.
- 2026
  - **073-675-042AC.** **\*\*AC\*\*MN270\*\*:** CSAH 75, REPLACE BRIDGE 6819 OVER SAUK RIVER (PAYBACK 1 OF 1). Due to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) additional Federal funding has been made available in fiscal years 2023-2026. In order to spend down those additional fundings within this time frame, the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP-3) has approved moving up the advance construction payback for this project from FY 2026 to both FY 2024 and FY 2025. Essentially, Stearns County will be receiving their Federal reimbursement earlier than FY 2026. Since the AC Payback has been distributed between FY 2024 and FY 2025, the FY 2026 line item can be deleted from the TIP.

#### City of Saint Cloud

- 2024
  - **162-080-009.** **\*\*CRP\*\*INSTALL ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS, 5 LOCATIONS THRU-OUT THE CITY OF ST CLOUD.** This project is being added to the TIP per action taken by the APO's Policy Board on Feb. 9. This project will be funded using the newly created Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) developed as a result of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Funding source will be CRP. Funding breakdown is as follows: STIP Total: \$250,000; Dist C FHWA: \$200,000; Total FHWA: \$200,000; Other/Local: \$50,000; Project Total: \$250,000.

With all the proposed changes, fiscal constraint has been maintained for each agency and jurisdiction.

The 30-day public comment period on these changes concluded on March 17, 2023.

APO staff have received four completed online surveys. Those comments can be found in Attachment D2.

In addition, during this time frame, APO staff were notified by MnDOT of a proposed administrative modification involving project 7380-264.

MnDOT

- 2023
  - **7380-264.** I-94, OVERLAY BRIDGE NO 73868 AT THE CSAH 75 FLYOVER NW OF ST JOSEPH. This project is now being moved from FY 2024 back to FY 2023. Deletion of **\*\*ELLE\*\*** in the project description. No changes to funding are anticipated.

Due to this being an administrative modification, no public comment period is warranted for this proposed change.

**Suggested Action:** Recommend Policy Board approval.



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## FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments

*Public Comments February – April 2023*

Several substantial requests for changes to the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization's (APO's) fiscal year 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) have warranted a 30-day public comment period. During this period (Feb. 15 – March 17, 2023) the APO has received the following comments.

Online Survey:

Agency/Jurisdiction	Proposed Project Number	Comments	Date
<b>City of Sartell</b>	220-090-003 (Trail and sidewalk gaps)	Strongly approve (3) Neither approve nor disapprove (1)	03/06/2023
<b>Saint Cloud Metro Bus</b>	TRF-0048-23J (Western transit center)	Strongly approve (1) Approve (1) Neither approve nor disapprove (2)	03/06/2023
<b>Stearns County</b>	037-090-012 (Beaver Island Trail)	Strongly approve (3) Neither approve nor disapprove (1)	03/06/2023
<b>Stearns County</b>	073-675-042 (CSAH 75 bridge)	Strongly approve (3) Approve (1)	03/06/2023
<b>Stearns County</b>	073-090-011AC (ROCORI Trail)	Strongly approve (3) Neither approve nor disapprove (1)	03/06/2023
<b>Stearns County</b>	073-596-010 (CR 120)	Strongly approve (1) Approve (2) Neither approve nor disapprove (1)	03/06/2023
<b>City of Saint Cloud</b>	161-080-009 (EV charging stations)	Strongly approve (2)	03/06/2023

Agency/Jurisdiction	Proposed Project Number	Comments	Date
		Neither approve nor disapprove (1) Strongly disapprove (1)	





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**TO:** Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee  
**FROM:** Brian Gibson, Executive Director  
**RE:** Carbon Reduction Program Project Evaluation Methodology  
**DATE:** March 20, 2023

The Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) is a new formula program within the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)<sup>1</sup>, which was approved in 2021.

CRP can be used for a fairly wide range of eligible projects including:

Projects that support the reduction of transportation emissions, including, but not limited to:

- a project described in 23 U.S.C. 149(b)(4) to establish or operate a traffic monitoring, management, and control facility or program, including advanced truck stop electrification systems;
- a public transportation project eligible under 23 U.S.C. 142
  - that is, projects on any Federal-aid highway for the construction of exclusive or preferential high occupancy vehicle lanes, highway traffic control devices, bus passenger loading areas and facilities (including shelters), and fringe and transportation corridor parking facilities, which may include electric vehicle charging stations or natural gas vehicle refueling stations, to serve high occupancy vehicle and public mass transportation passengers;
- a transportation alternative (as defined under the Moving Ahead for Progress under the 21st Century Act [23 U.S.C. 101(a)(29), as in effect on July 5, 2012]), including, but not limited to, the construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation;
- a project described in 23 U.S.C. 503(c)(4)(E) for advanced transportation and congestion management technologies, these include:
  - advanced traveler information systems;
  - advanced transportation management technologies;
  - advanced transportation technologies to improve emergency evacuation and response by Federal, State, and local authorities;

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<sup>1</sup> *Pub. L. 117-58 (Nov. 15, 2021)*

- infrastructure maintenance, monitoring, and condition assessment;
  - advanced public transportation systems;
  - transportation system performance data collection, analysis, and dissemination systems;
  - advanced safety systems, including vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure communications, technologies associated with autonomous vehicles, and other collision avoidance technologies, including systems using cellular technology;
  - integration of intelligent transportation systems with the Smart Grid and other energy distribution and charging systems;
  - integrated corridor management systems;
  - advanced parking reservation or variable pricing systems;
  - electronic pricing, toll collection, and payment systems;
  - technology that enhances high occupancy vehicle toll lanes, cordon pricing, or congestion pricing;
  - integration of transportation service payment systems;
  - advanced mobility, access, and on-demand transportation service technologies, such as dynamic ridesharing and other shared-use mobility applications and information systems to support human services for elderly and disabled individuals;
  - retrofitting dedicated short-range communications (DSRC) technology deployed as part of an existing pilot program to cellular vehicle-to-everything (C-V2X) technology, subject to the condition that the retrofitted technology operates only within the existing spectrum allocations for connected vehicle systems; or
  - advanced transportation technologies, in accordance with the research areas described in section 6503 of title 49
- deployment of infrastructure-based intelligent transportation systems capital improvements and the installation of vehicle-to-infrastructure communications equipment;
  - a project to replace street lighting and traffic control devices with energy-efficient alternatives;
  - a project or strategy designed to support congestion pricing, shifting transportation demand to non-peak hours or other transportation modes, increasing vehicle occupancy rates, or otherwise reducing demand for roads, including electronic toll collection, and travel demand management strategies and programs;
  - efforts to reduce the environmental and community impacts of freight movement;

- a project that supports deployment of alternative fuel vehicles, including –
  - acquisition, installation, or operation of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure or hydrogen, natural gas, or propane vehicle fueling infrastructure; and
  - purchase or lease of zero-emission construction equipment and vehicles, including the acquisition, construction, or leasing of required supporting facilities;
  - a project described in 23 U.S.C. 149(b)(8) for a diesel engine retrofit;
- certain types of projects to improve traffic flow that are eligible under the CMAQ program, and that do not involve construction of new capacity; [§ 11403 ; 23 U.S.C. 149(b)(5); and 175(c)(1)(L)]
- any other STBG-eligible project, if the Secretary certifies that the State has demonstrated a reduction in transportation emissions, as estimated on a per capita and per unit of economic output basis. [§ 11403 ; 23 U.S.C. 133(b) and 175(c)(2)]
  - Note: FHWA will issue guidance on how the Secretary will make such certifications.
  - Per 23 U.S.C. 175(c)(2) Flexibility, in addition to the eligible projects under paragraph (1), a State may use funds apportioned under section 104(b)(7) for a project eligible under section 133(b) if the Secretary certifies that the State has demonstrated a reduction in transportation emissions-(A) as estimated on a per capita basis; and (B) as estimated on a per unit of economic output basis.

***With all of these options, the question is how do we as a region prioritize the use of CRP funds?***

As an example, consider Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP). Our current evaluation process weights “System Preservation” and “Safety” considerations much more heavily than “System Connectivity” or “Multimodal” because the TAC and Policy Board decided that the region’s greatest needs were in repairing pavements and improving safety.

Similarly, for CRP, APO staff is wondering if there is consensus that some eligible projects should be weighted more heavily than others.

Some options to consider:

1. **Equality** – we could continue weighting all eligible projects equally. This would result in no changes being made to our current process.
2. **Alternative Transportation** – we could reduce the weight of planning, designing, and constructing alternative transportation facilities (e.g., shared-use paths, bike lanes, etc.) because we already have both a Federal and a State program dedicated to planning, designing, and constructing facilities of

those types.

3. **Traffic Management** – we could more heavily weight traffic/congestion management projects (e.g., travel information systems, traffic management technologies, integrated corridor management, transportation data collection and analysis systems, etc.) to squeeze as much efficiency as possible out of existing assets.
4. **Emerging Tech** – we could more heavily weight emerging transportation technologies (e.g., EV charging stations, vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure communications, etc.) to better prepare the region for the future.

Other possibilities exist.

At the March 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Policy Board, the Board members expressed their desire to focus the use of CRP dollars. Specifically, there appeared to be consensus that CRP should not be used to pay for things that can be funded through other formula programs (see Alternative 2 above) such as Transportation Alternatives or the STBGP.

**Suggested Action:** Recommend Policy Board approval of a CRP project evaluation methodology to prioritize the use of CRP funds.