



Next Steps Toward Possible New Mississippi River Bridge

The Saint Cloud APO has received \$800,000 from the US Congress to continue work on the proposed Mississippi River crossing project.

The funding, provided through Congressionally Directed Spending, is slated to be used to complete a detailed environmental review of the area. That review will attempt to quantify the environmental impacts of the potential new bridge, including air quality, water quality, wildlife habitat, noise, and other possible impacts. A specific alignment for the bridge and connecting roadway as well as some design details is anticipated as an outcome of the review.

The APO anticipates work on this project to start in 2025 and take approximately two years to complete.

This funding comes on the heels of a 2020 study to outline potential alignments for the bridge and roadway corridor that would connect 33rd Street S/Stearns CSAH 75 in Saint Cloud to US 10. That study, done in conjunction with engineering firm Stantec, is in its final stages. To view the draft final report, please visit https://bit.ly/Bridge_Doc.



Saint Cloud APO Awarded Grant for Safe Routes Planning

The Saint Cloud APO was awarded a planning assistance grant to help develop Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plans for three Sauk Rapids schools.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has assigned a consulting firm to work with APO staff to create site-specific SRTS plans for Pleasantview Elementary, Mississippi Heights Elementary, and Sauk Rapids-Rice Middle School during the 2023-2024 school year.

Once completed, the plans will provide guidance and recommendations for improving walking, biking, and rolling for Sauk Rapids students in grades K-8.

If you are a Sauk Rapids resident (or parent) and would like to get involved in the process, visit the [Sauk Rapids School District's Safe Route to School Plan website](https://bit.ly/3PJfHM7) (<https://bit.ly/3PJfHM7>) or contact APO Associate Transportation Planner Alex McKenzie (mckenzie@stcloudapo.org) for more details.

LOOKING AHEAD 2050



Looking Ahead 2050 Plan Update

Significant progress has been made on the APO's long-range plan – Looking Ahead 2050.

During the August and September 2023 APO Policy Board meetings, local decision-makers approved several key components of the draft document.

At the Aug. 10 meeting, Policy Board members approved six visioning themes that will be used to guide the development of the Looking Ahead 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Those themes, developed based upon community input gathered in summer/fall 2021, are:

- **System and Environmental Stewardship:** Protecting and preserving our existing infrastructure and environmental assets.
- **Multimodal Connections:** Providing a safe and equitable multimodal transportation network affordable for people of all ages and abilities to travel using their preferred modal choice.
- **Congestion Management:** Mindfully planning, developing, and operating an innovative transportation network to minimize unnecessary travel delays.

- **Transportation Safety:** Reducing fatalities and serious injuries by planning, designing, and building safe infrastructure and improving driving behavior.
- **Interregional Connections:** Supporting an economically vibrant region through developing and preserving vital connections to other state, national, and global centers of commerce.
- **Technological Advancements:** Understanding and planning for future innovative transportation technologies and encouraging their presence and incorporation into the region's existing transportation network.

APO staffers will work alongside local city and county planners and engineers to use these six themes as guidance when determining regional transportation infrastructure projects.

At the September Policy Board meeting, local elected officials voted to approve draft versions of the existing conditions and existing environmental conditions section of the plan. These two components provide a snapshot in time for our region. For purposes of the Looking Ahead 2050 plan, this snapshot is a look at the year 2020.

The existing conditions section contains the following information:

- Demographics.
- Land use.
- Commuting and travel patterns.
- Existing infrastructure including roadways, transit, active transportation, the regional freight network, and various other transportation options (i.e., Tri-CAP, Amtrak, Jefferson Lines, Northstar, etc.).

The section concludes with a review of the regional transportation system's impact on the local economy.

The environmental portion discusses existing environmental factors such as air quality, water quality, and soil health, as well as provides a detailed discussion on the impacts of climate change both on the environment and transportation

infrastructure.

Work will continue on the Looking Ahead 2050 MTP throughout the remainder of 2023. During this time frame, APO staff will be facilitating discussions with city, county, and Minnesota Department of Transportation staff to identify future infrastructure projects at a regional level.

For the latest information on the Looking Ahead 2050 plan, please visit www.lookingahead2050.org or contact APO Senior Transportation Planner Vicki Johnson (ikeogu@stcloudapo.org).

Public input on the completed draft 2050 MTP is anticipated to begin in Spring 2024.



Trina Ness Joins APO Staff

The Saint Cloud APO has hired Trina Ness as the organization's new administrative assistant. Trina comes to the APO after spending 16 years in the legal world – first as a legal assistant and then as a litigation paralegal.

Trina also worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant, an Emergency Medical Technician, and led the Christian education program at her church. She also spent a stint as a full-time stay-at-home mom.

Trina and her husband Dan live southeast of Clearwater with their 17-year-old son, two dogs, two cats, and several chickens. She also has three older sons, three daughters-in-law, and three granddaughters.

In her spare time, you can find Trina spending time with her family, especially her grandkids. Trina's hobbies include music, photography, ancestry, politics, event planning, rollerblading, biking, hiking, and watching Hallmark and Great American Family.

When asked about her role at the APO, Trina said: "God brings new opportunities into my life on a daily basis, and I am incredibly blessed. I am so thankful for the opportunity to work for the APO. The team here is amazing. I have a lot to learn, but I look forward to each twist and turn this road has to offer."



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