

Stakeholder Engagement Plan Annual Report

Prepared by the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization

April 10, 2025



SEPAR
2024 Report

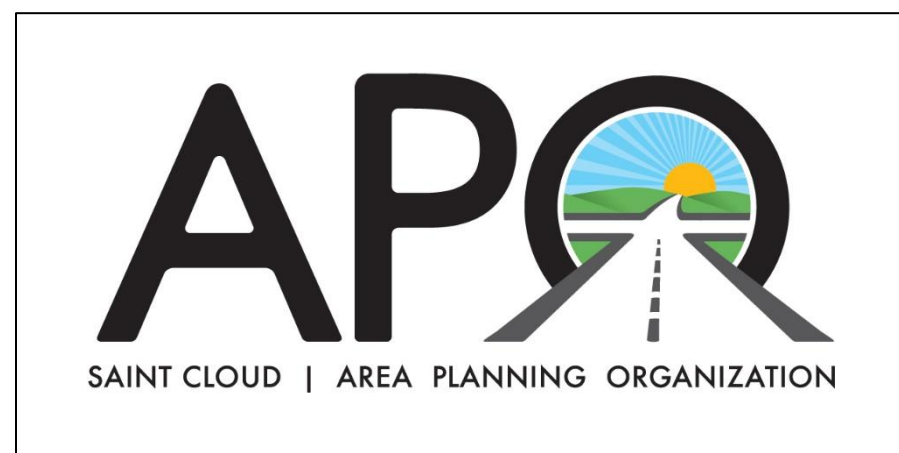


Disclaimer

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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 taarikhda dhacday markii la sheegay in ay dhacday midabtakoor. Macluumaad dheeri ah, ama si aad u hesho Foomka Cabashada Kala-Takoorida Cinwaan ee 'VI kalasoc Foom', fadlan ka eeg bogga internetka ee 'Cloud Cloud APO' (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.

Garantía Del Título VI

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) 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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The Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) hereby gives public notice that it is the policy of the APO to fully comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act) and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires all state and local government agencies to take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice by the APO has a right to file a formal complaint with the APO, MnDOT, or the U.S. DOT. Any such complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number of complainant, and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available as a reasonable modification for persons with disabilities upon request. Complaints should be submitted by the complainant and/or his/her/their designee as soon as possible but no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the alleged discriminatory occurrence and should be filed with the APO's Executive Director. For more information, or to obtain a Discrimination Complaint Form, please see the Saint Cloud APO website

(www.stcloudapo.org) or you can view a copy at our offices at 1040 County Road 4, Saint Cloud, MN 56303.

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 suurtoogalka 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) ama waxaad ka arki kartaa nuqul xafiiskayaga 1040 County Road 4, Saint Cloud, MN 56303.

Garantía Del Título 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) o puedes ver una copia en nuestra oficina e 1040 County Road 4, Saint Cloud, MN 56303.

A Summary of the APO's 2024 Stakeholder Engagement Plan Annual Report (SEPAR)

The Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) is dedicated to fostering coordinated planning for the collective benefit of the entire Saint Cloud metropolitan planning area (MPA). Our commitment revolves around ensuring fair, mutually beneficial processes that transcend jurisdictional boundaries. Central to this mission is meaningful public input which shapes and informs the decision-making process behind every plan and program developed by the APO.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) serves as our roadmap, guiding APO staff, advisory committees, and decision-makers on how to engage with the community. Our overarching goal is to provide every community member an equal and equitable opportunity to participate in the planning 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.** We strive to offer early, accessible, and continuous opportunities for public involvement, embracing diversity among stakeholders.
2. **Access to Information.** We are committed to providing reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in planning and project development.
3. **Review of Materials.** Ensuring transparency, we provide sufficient time for the community to review materials and offer comments before plan adoption.

To assess our progress, APO staff conducts an annual evaluation, measuring the effectiveness of policies and practices around public involvement. The 2024 Stakeholder Engagement Plan Annual Report (SEPAR) serves as our public engagement evaluation tool.

Chapter 1 of this report begins by introducing and providing an overview of the APO and its roles and responsibilities in regional transportation planning.

Chapter 2 outlines various techniques APO staff and consultants performing work on behalf of the APO used to engage and inform the community on regional transportation planning and programming processes.

Chapter 3 provides detailed insight into various outreach activities employed by APO staff and consultants in 2024. This includes everything from meetings and events to online surveys and social media engagement. Emphasizing the importance of inclusivity, Chapter 3 compares the demographic makeup of outreach participants to the demographic makeup of the region. This is done to assist APO staff in gauging the effectiveness of current public outreach activities among the community and as well to assist staff in identifying opportunities to improve public engagement for underrepresented populations. Recognizing the commitment to obtaining feedback from participants, APO staff surveyed outreach participants on how staff can work to improve APO-sponsored events and activities.

Chapter 4 provides insight into the social media platforms utilized by the APO to connect with the public.

Chapter 5 contains the APO's evaluation on engagement efforts to those individuals with limited English proficiency in accordance with the APO's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) portion of the SEP.

Finally, this report concludes with a review of past recommendations to improve upon public engagement in addition to new strategies to be deployed over the next calendar year to assist in effective community outreach.

Appendices to this report include:

- A detailed calendar of public engagement events occurring in 2024.
- A summary of social media activity by platform.
- APO staff training certifications for LEP, Title II, and Title VI compliance.
- A summary of past public engagement improvement recommendations, a year-end assessment, and an outline for implementing new recommendations for improved public involvement.

We remain committed to ensuring that our work reflects the priorities, needs, and voices of the community we serve. By conducting this annual report, we evaluate our outreach efforts, assess representation in public engagement, and identify areas for improvement. Understanding who we reach—and who we may be missing—allows us to refine our strategies and create more inclusive opportunities for participation. We recognize that effective transportation planning requires meaningful public input, and we will continue to enhance our processes to ensure that all community members have a voice in shaping the future of transportation in our region. Through ongoing evaluation and adaptation, the APO strives to build a transportation system that is equitable, accessible, and representative of the diverse needs of the people it serves.

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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 Metropolitan Planning Organization (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 West 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 does 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 a Metropolitan Planning Organization (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: An MPO is the policy board of an organization created and designated to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process. MPOs are required to represent localities in all urbanized areas with populations over 50,000 as determined by the U.S. Census. 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 Metropolitan Planning Organization, including the Saint Cloud APO.

PWD/HD - Stearns County Public Works Department/Highway: The location where Technical

Advisory Committee (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.

SEPAR – Stakeholder Engagement Plan Annual Report: This report serves as a comprehensive evaluation of the APO's public stakeholder engagement activities in a given year. It reviews strategies, platforms, and initiatives used to inform and involve the public in transportation planning efforts, analyzes engagement metrics and outcomes, and provides actionable recommendations for improvement.

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.

Title VI: A portion of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

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.

UPWP - Unified Planning Work Program: A Federally-required statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out by the staff of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). It is also the MPO's annual budget, and it identifies any special studies and consultant contracts for the fiscal year

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) (SEP) (<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 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).
- 3) The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

The SEP also provides general guidance for all other planning products done by the APO, such as regional 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 improve upon current public outreach strategies.

Since the first SEPAR 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), the SEPAR reporting period was adjusted in 2023 to align with the calendar year.

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, a portion of Lynden 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.

As a comprehensive, intergovernmental transportation planning agency for the Saint Cloud MPA, the APO receives local, state, and federal funds to administer programs and transportation-related studies.

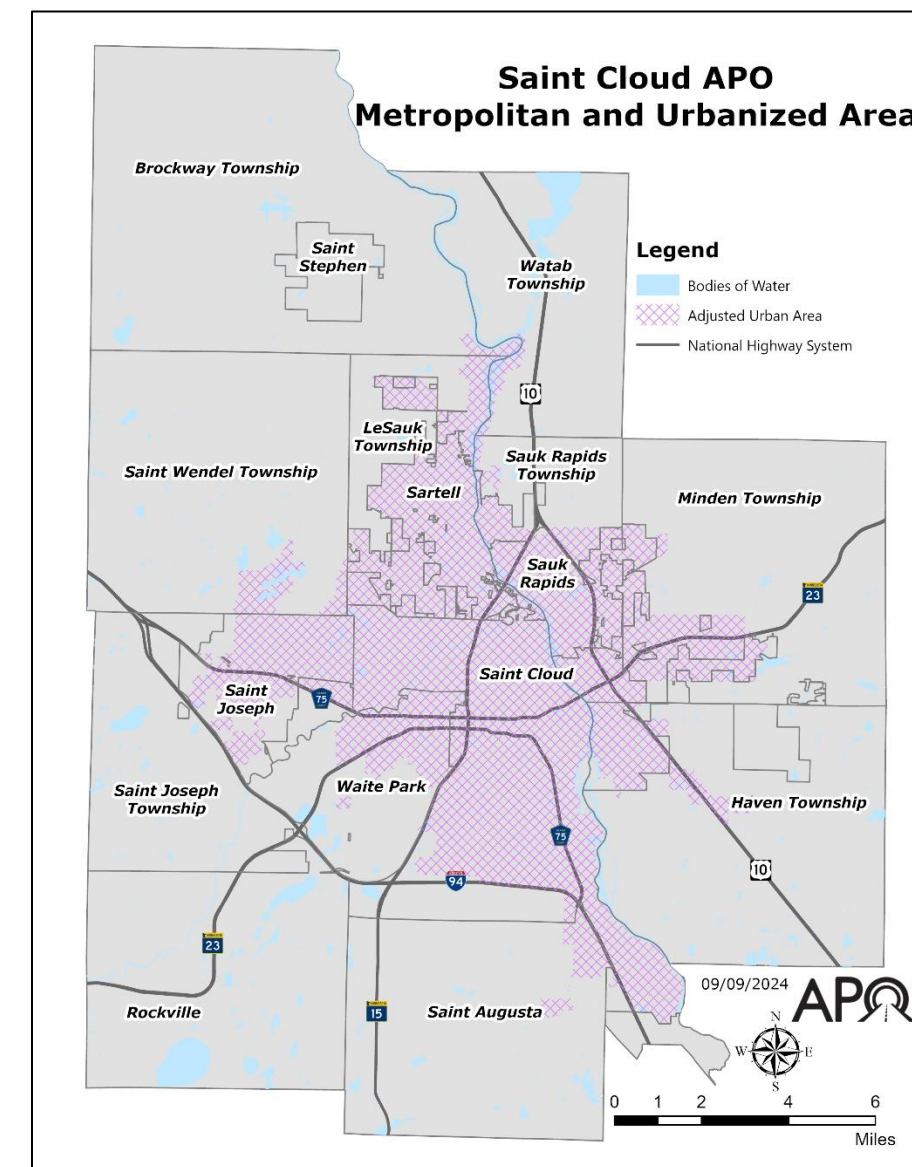


Figure 1.1. Saint Cloud APO Metropolitan and Urbanized Area.

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).

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.



**Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization
Mission Statement**

"The Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization 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."

This mission is accomplished through professional planning initiatives, the provision of objective information, and building collaborative partnerships that foster consensus.



Figure 1.2. The Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization Mission Statement.



Figure 1.3. Public engagement event at the Roosevelt Boys & Girls Club.

2 – Community Participation Approaches

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. Opportunities for Involvement.** We strive to offer early, accessible, and continuous opportunities for public involvement, embracing diversity among stakeholders.
- 2. Access to Information.** We are committed to providing reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in planning and project development.
- 3. Review of Materials.** Ensuring transparency, we provide sufficient time for the community to review materials and offer comments before plan adoption.

Public Involvement Techniques

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.



Figure 2.1. A photo of a Policy Board Meeting.

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.

Interested Persons List: APO staffers 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, Black Indigenous and People-of-Color (BIPOC), 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.

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.



Figure 2.2. An example of a Facebook post of a KNSI News story about the APO.

Citizen Surveys: On a project-specific basis, citizen surveys are 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 are available both online and in hard copy.

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.

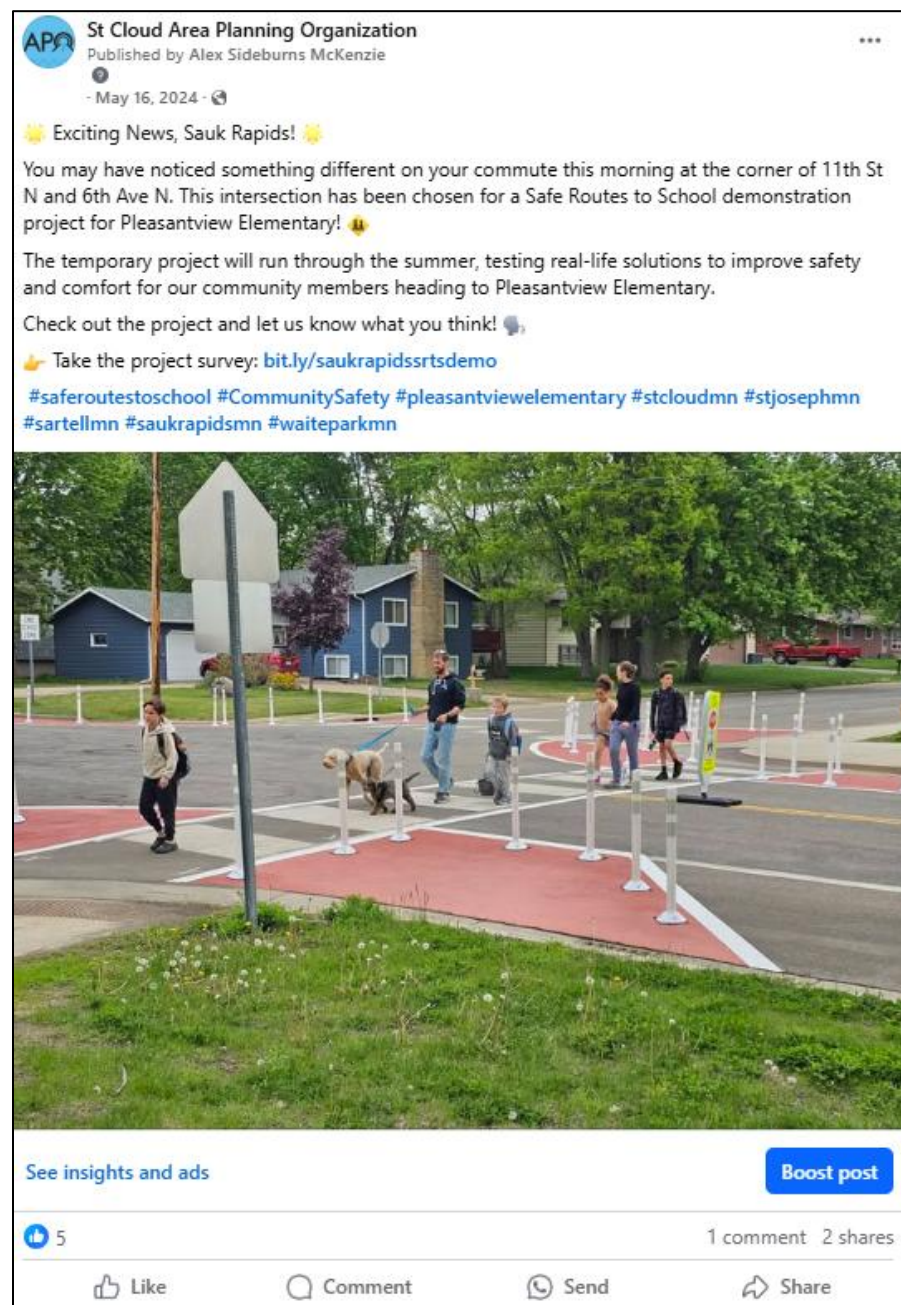


Figure 2.3. An example of a social media post on Facebook.

Citizen Surveys: On a project-specific basis, citizen surveys are 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 are available both online and in hard copy.

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.



Figure 2.4. An photo of a public engagement event at the downtown Metro Bus Transit Center.

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.

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 reasonable good-faith efforts to provide auxiliary services if requested.



2.5. A photo of an MTP public engagement event at the CARIO Event.

3 – Public Outreach

During the calendar year 2024, the APO actively engaged with the public through a variety of channels, hosting a total of 31 in-person outreach events, 13 hybrid meetings, one radio interview, and five online virtual engagement meetings. Key topics for 2024 included efforts related to:

- Both amending and developing the APO’s TIP.
- The finalization of the APO’s 2050 MTP Looking Ahead 2050.
- Consultant-led work pertaining to the APO’s Regional Future Arterials and Collectors Study.
- Consultant-led work pertaining to the APO’s Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) plan.

Additionally, regular public meetings of the APO’s Policy Board, TAC, and ATAC were also held to address various aspects of APO business as well as project and plan development.

When the APO needs public input, APO staff design a public engagement strategy that includes a variety of techniques outlined in Chapter 2.

When it comes to hosting public meetings, APO staff advertise these events through a variety of channels, including social media. To gauge the effectiveness of social media posts, the APO utilized the concept of impressions, interactions, reach, and link clicks found in Figure 3.1.

APO staff document community members who attend all in-person and hybrid meetings. For the purpose of this analysis, a "member of the public" is defined as:

1. Someone who does not work for the APO or its member jurisdictions/agencies.
2. An elected or appointed official not serving on the APO Policy Board.
3. Staff of an organization attending for employment purposes.

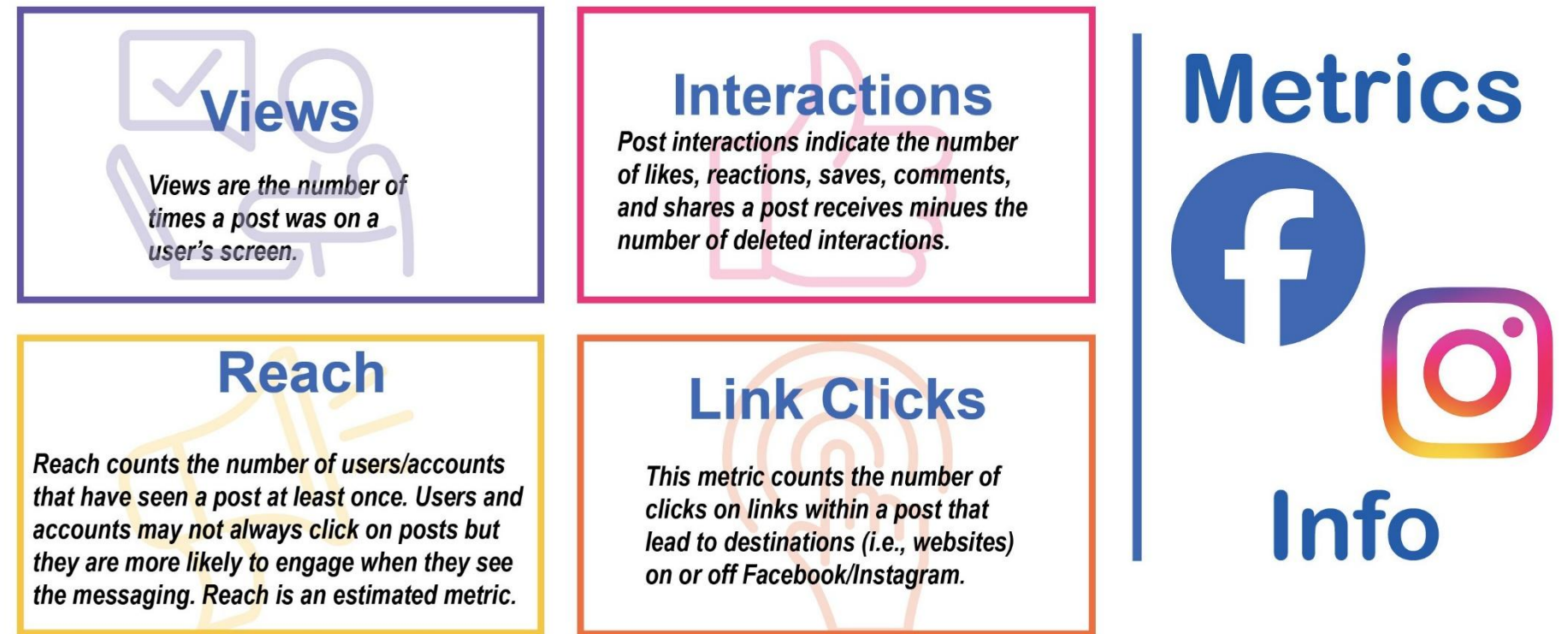


Figure 3.1. Social media metrics definitions.

Part of the participant documentation also includes providing an optional demographic survey. As part of all APO online surveys, participants are presented with nine demographic questions. These questions cover gender, city of residence, age, ethnicity, household size, household income, physical disability, place of birth (inside or outside the U.S.), and primary language spoken at home. Responding to these demographic questions is optional. Any information collected is utilized to assist APO staff in identifying the types of demographic groups being represented (or not represented) in current outreach activities.

The intention behind collecting demographic data is to ensure equal and equitable opportunities for all community members to participate in the process. By understanding the demographics of participants, the APO can develop targeted strategies to reach traditionally underrepresented populations.

Concluding each public outreach event, APO staff gather feedback on participants’ experience engaging in APO-led/APO-sponsored events. Following each public engagement opportunity, APO staff distribute an online survey to gather feedback on the usefulness of provided information and participant perception of staff responsiveness to comments and feedback. Participants are presented with a series of statements related to their experiences before, during, and after the event, and are asked to express agreement or disagreement. Additionally, the survey assesses participants' likelihood to engage in future events or recommend participation to others.

This comprehensive approach to public engagement and feedback collection reflects the APO's commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and continuous improvement in serving the community's diverse needs.

TAC Meetings

The APO's TAC consists of planners and engineers from member agencies and jurisdictions. TAC representatives focus on providing technical expertise and recommendations to the Policy Board on various transportation issues.

In 2024, 11 hybrid TAC meetings were held at the Stearns County Public Works/Highway Department, in Waite Park – 455-28th Ave. S. These meetings offered both in-person and online participation via Microsoft Teams to provide flexibility for participants. Participation on Teams was reserved for community members or ex-officio TAC members (non-voting TAC representatives). All primary TAC representatives attending virtually were not counted toward quorum requirements and were ineligible to vote.

No members of the public attended the meetings in person or online.

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
Hybrid	2/1/2024	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0
Hybrid	2/29/2024	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0
Hybrid	3/28/2024	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0
Hybrid	4/25/2024	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0
Hybrid	5/30/2024	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0
Hybrid	6/27/2024	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0
Hybrid	7/25/2024	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0
Hybrid	8/29/2024	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0
Hybrid	9/26/2024	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0
Hybrid	10/31/2024	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
Hybrid	11/20/2024	Stearns Co PWD/HD	0

Figure 3.2. A table of TAC 2024 meeting dates, locations, and the number of participants who attended.

To inform the public, meeting agendas and details were posted on the APO's website homepage to ensure accessibility.



Figure 3.3. Photo of a TAC Meeting.

Social Media

Throughout the year, the APO shared ten Facebook posts and ten Instagram posts, as detailed in Figures 3.4 and 3.5. These posts included photos of meeting agendas to encourage engagement.

While these posts reached varying audiences, Facebook engagement peaked in June with a reach of 349 people, and Instagram performance was more modest, with reach peaking at 24 people in both January and March.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
1/25/2024	Photo	62	49
2/22/2024	Photo	36	29
3/19/2024	Photo	78	70
4/17/2024	Photo	62	57
5/28/2024	Photo	56	48
6/21/2024	Photo	380	349
8/21/2024	Photo	62	56
9/18/2024	Photo	82	70
10/23/2024	Photo	61	109

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
11/14/2024	Photo	39	79

Figure 3.4. A table of TAC-related Facebook posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
1/25/2024	Photo	19	24
2/22/2024	Photo	22	22
3/19/2024	Photo	23	24
4/17/2024	Photo	16	16
5/28/2024	Photo	10	11
6/21/2024	Photo	16	16
8/21/2024	Photo	12	9
9/18/2024	Photo	11	10
10/23/2024	Photo	11	10
11/14/2024	Photo	16	14

Figure 3.5. A table of TAC-related Instagram posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

Past Recommendations

The 2023 SEPAR recommended consistency in posting public meetings on Facebook, Instagram, and the APO website. While the APO followed this recommendation for most of the meetings, one agenda in July 2024 was not posted on social media. Overall, the APO remains committed to improving transparency and outreach efforts to foster meaningful public participation at TAC meetings.



Figure 3.6. Photo of a TAC Meeting.

Policy Board Meetings

The APO Policy Board held ten in-person meetings in 2024, nine at the Saint Cloud branch of the Great River Regional Library (GRRL) – 1300 West Saint Germain Street, and one in February at the Sartell Community Center (SCC) – 850 19th Street S. These meetings, designed to guide policy decisions and planning efforts, were advertised on the APO website to encourage public attendance. Despite these efforts, public participation remained minimal, with four meetings recording a single public attendee each.

It should be noted that a virtual option to attend the Policy Board meetings was not made available.

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
In-Person	1/11/2024	GRRL	0
In-Person	2/7/2024	SCC	1
In-Person	3/14/2024	GRRL	1
In-Person	4/11/2024	GRRL	1
In-Person	6/13/2024	GRRL	0
In-Person	7/11/2024	GRRL	0
In-Person	9/12/2024	GRRL	0
In-Person	8/8/2024	GRRL	0
In-Person	10/10/2024	GRRL	1
In-Person	11/14/2024	GRRL	0

Figure 3.7. A table of Policy Board 2024 meeting dates, locations, and the number of participants who attended.

Social Media

Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor were utilized by APO staff to bring attention to Policy Board meetings.

Facebook

On Facebook, 11 posts were shared to advertise Policy Board meetings (the October meeting was accidentally posted twice). Engagement on Facebook varied significantly throughout the year, with posts in June and October generating the highest reach and impressions. The June post reached 333 individuals with 387 impressions, and the second October post

achieved a reach of 132 and 75 impressions. Other months recorded more modest engagement levels.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
1/9/2024	Photo	58	48
2/5/2024	Photo	54	46
3/5/2024	Photo	57	43
4/2/2024	Photo	81	73
6/7/2024	Photo	387	333
7/2/2024	Photo	79	68
8/1/2024	Photo	58	48
9/3/2024	Photo	62	54
10/3/2024	Photo	59	99
10/3/2024	Photo	75	132
11/6/2024	Photo	51	109

Figure 3.8. A table of Policy Board-related Facebook posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.



Figure 3.9. Photo of a Policy Board Meeting.

Instagram

On Instagram, ten posts were made to promote the Policy Board meetings. Engagement on this platform was generally lower compared to Facebook, with both views and reach peaking in January with numbers of 29 and 32, respectively. Despite high performance on Facebook, the June Instagram post saw only 13 views

and 15 reaches, indicating differences in audience viewing across platforms.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
1/9/2024	Photo	29	32
2/5/2024	Photo	22	24
3/6/2024	Photo	21	23
4/2/2024	Photo	20	20
6/7/2024	Photo	13	15
7/2/2024	Photo	21	20
8/2/2024	Photo	11	11
9/3/2024	Photo	9	8
10/3/2024	Photo	15	11
11/6/2024	Photo	14	14

Figure 3.10. A table of Policy Board-related Instagram posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

Nextdoor

Two posts were made on Nextdoor in June and July, which significantly outperformed other platforms in terms of impressions. The June post accumulated 1,361 impressions, and the July post achieved 1,091 impressions, highlighting the platform's potential for reaching a broader local audience.

Date	Post Type	Impressions
6/6/2024	Photo	1,361
7/8/2024	Photo	1,091

Figure 3.11. A table of Policy Board-related Nextdoor posts, including the date, post type, and impressions.

Past Recommendations

While the APO followed the 2023 SEPAR recommendation to post meeting information across platforms consistently, the variation in engagement highlights the need to evaluate and potentially optimize messaging strategies to capture public attention better on each platform.

ATAC Meetings

The Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) brings together citizen volunteers and professionals dedicated to promoting active transportation within the APO planning area. In 2024, members of the Age-Flourishing St. Cloud Transportation and Mobility Taskforce were also invited to participate, aligning with the task force’s mission to foster a community where individuals of all ages can thrive. This collaboration aimed to elevate active transportation initiatives while addressing the diverse needs of the Saint Cloud region.

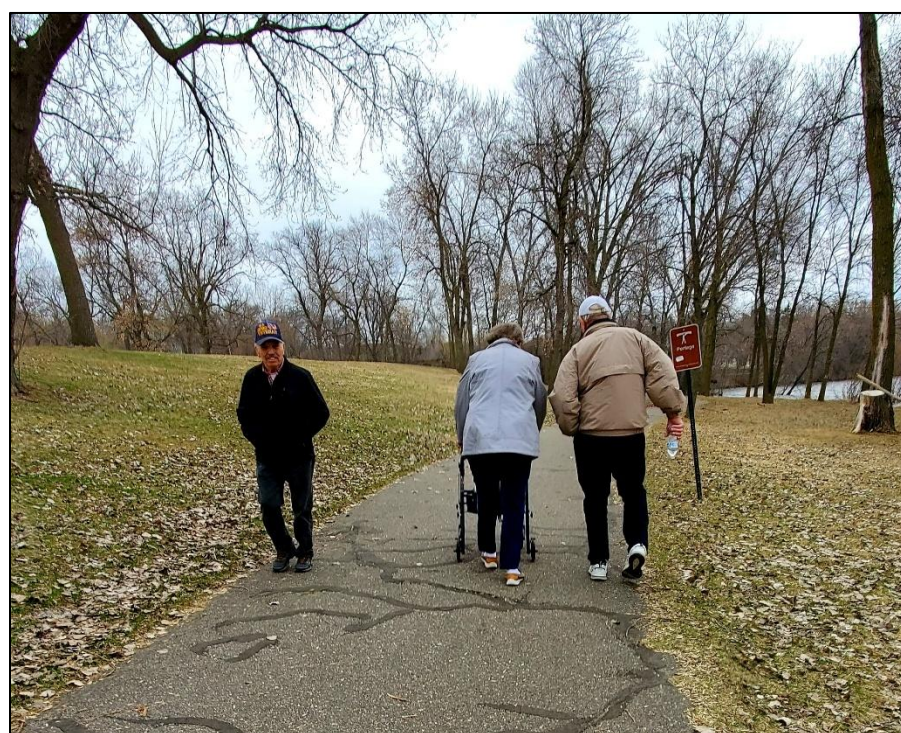


Figure 3.12. Photo of older adults walking.

The APO hosted one hybrid ATAC meeting on Jan. 26, at the St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce – 1411 West Saint Germain Street. The meeting was attended by three members of the public and four non-public members, indicating moderate engagement for a specialized advisory committee. The meeting was advertised on the homepage of the APO’s website to ensure accessibility and transparency.

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
Hybrid	1/26/2024	St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce	3

Figure 3.13. A table of the ATAC 2024 meeting dates, and the number of participants who attended.

Social Media

Social media outreach for the ATAC meeting included one post each on Facebook and Instagram, both published on Jan. 23.

On Facebook, the post reached 41 individuals and gathered 55 impressions, demonstrating a modest level of engagement. The corresponding Instagram post achieved slightly lower metrics, with 27 views and a reach of 31. While these numbers reflect limited reach compared to other APO outreach efforts, they are consistent with expectations for niche committee meetings.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
1/23/2024	Photo	55	41

Figure 3.14. A table of ATAC-related Facebook posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
1/23/2024	Photo	27	31

Figure 3.15. A table of ATAC-related Instagram posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

Past Recommendations

The 2023 SEPAR emphasized the importance of consistently promoting public meetings on social media, and the APO successfully fulfilled this recommendation for the 2024 ATAC meeting. Future efforts could explore additional promotional strategies to boost public awareness and participation, such as cross-promotion with other active transportation or community-based initiatives.



Figure 3.16. Photo of a person riding a bicycle.

Transportation Improvement Program

The TIP is a compilation of significant surface transportation improvements scheduled for implementation in the APO's planning area during the next four years.



Figure 3.17. Example of the 2025-2028 TIP.

As part of its ongoing commitment to public engagement, the APO hosted nine TIP open houses in 2024. Five were held in-person at the Great River Regional Library (GRRL) in Saint Cloud, while the remaining four occurred online via Facebook Live. Attendance at these events varied, with three members of the public participating in person across the year.

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
Online	1/9/2024	Online	NA
In-Person	1/11/2024	GRRL	0
Online	2/23/2024	Online	NA
In-Person	2/27/2024	GRRL	0
Online	4/26/2024	Online	NA
In-Person	4/29/2024	GRRL	2
In-Person	7/15/2024	GRRL	0

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
Online	7/18/2024	Online	NA
In-Person	7/30/2024	GRRL	1

Figure 3.18. A table of 2024 TIP meeting dates, locations, and the number of participants who attended.

The TIP open houses were publicized on the APO's website homepage, published in our newspaper of record, and sent to our interested persons/stakeholders list to maximize visibility and accessibility.

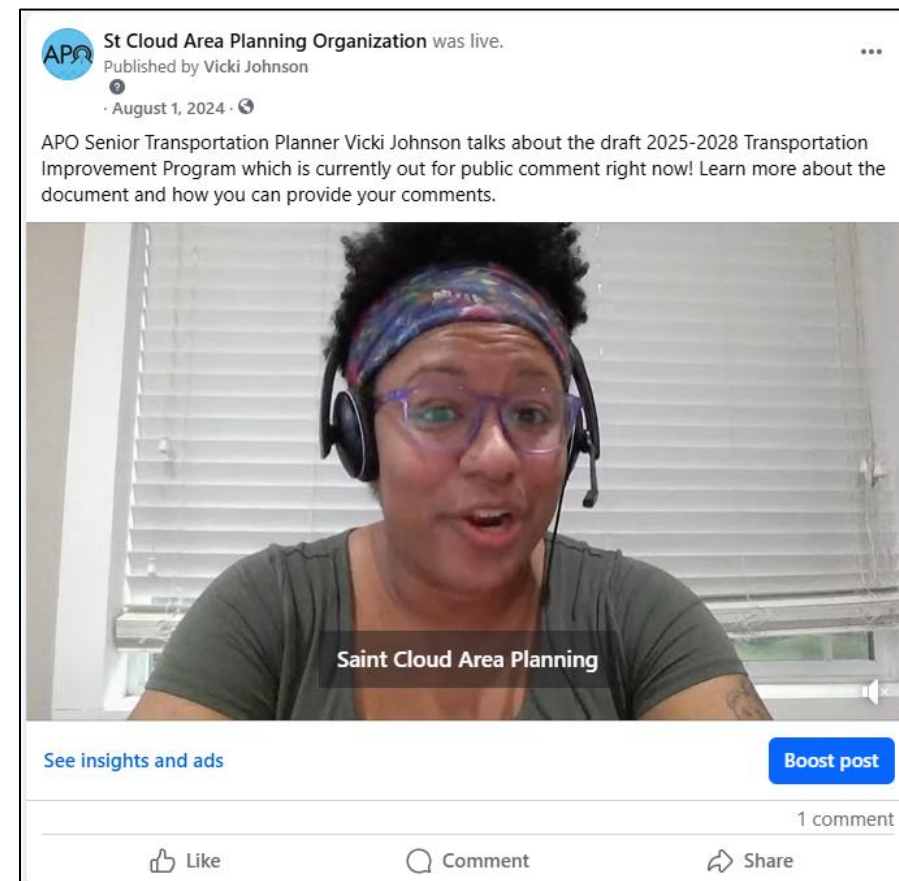


Figure 3.19. Example of a Facebook Live Event.

Social Media

There were 28 Facebook and 22 Instagram posts pertaining to the TIP created in 2024. These posts employed a mix of photos, videos, and survey links to engage the public. Facebook posts demonstrated varying levels of reach and impressions, with some

posts significantly outperforming others. For instance, an Aug. 2 post reached 794 individuals and generated 889 impressions, while others, such as a Jan. 9 video, saw more modest results with a reach of 22 and 33 impressions.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
1/2/2024	Photo	137	113
1/5/2024	Photo	68	59
1/8/2024	Link	82	69
1/9/2024	Video	33	22
2/14/2024	Video	37	21
2/23/2024	Photo	68	54
2/23/2024	Video	46	33
4/14/2024	Video	34	20
4/22/2024	Photo	157	138
4/24/2024	Photo	218	203
4/26/2024	Video	26	20
7/3/2024	Video	49	26
7/17/2024	Video	83	61
7/18/2024	Video	53	40
7/22/2024	Photo	490	435
7/24/2024	Photo	95	80
7/26/2024	Photo	115	106
7/27/2024	Photo	115	107
7/29/2024	Photo	89	79
7/31/2024	Photo	92	85
8/1/2024	Video	42	34
8/2/2024	Photo	889	794
8/4/2024	Photo	114	100
8/6/2024	Photo	110	100
8/8/2024	Photo	118	108
8/10/2024	Photo	61	53
8/13/2024	Photo	77	70
12/18/2024	Video	21	18

Figure 3.20. A table of TIP-related Facebook posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

Instagram post-performance varied, with the highest reach recorded at 36 on Jan. 2 and the lowest at six on Aug. 13.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
1/2/2024	Photo	33	36

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
1/5/2024	Photo	24	25
2/14/2024	Video	16	18
2/23/2024	Photo	20	20
4/17/2024	Video	15	15
4/22/2024	Photo	14	14
4/24/2024	Photo	12	13
7/3/2024	Video	13	11
7/17/2024	Video	23	16
7/22/2024	Photo	13	12
7/24/2024	Photo	14	11
7/26/2024	Photo	12	11
7/27/2024	Photo	20	17
7/29/2024	Photo	16	14
7/31/2024	Photo	14	12
8/2/2024	Photo	20	17
8/4/2024	Photo	14	13
8/6/2024	Photo	17	15
8/8/2024	Photo	9	8
8/10/2024	Photo	16	15
8/13/2024	Photo	6	6
12/19/2024	Video	8	8

Figure 3.21. A table of TIP-related Instagram posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

Oxcart

TIP updates were also featured in the March and June editions of The Oxcart, the APO’s newsletter. This multi-channel approach indicates a deliberate effort to ensure broad awareness of TIP-related activities.

Demographic Questionnaire

There were five separate demographic surveys for the TIP ending in the calendar year 2024, with 92 participants. The surveys were conducted from Dec. 20, 2023, to Jan. 19, 2024; Feb. 14 to March 15; April 17 to May 17; and July 3 to Aug. 2; and July 17 to Aug. 16. The average participant in TIP-related engagements can be found in Figure 3.22.

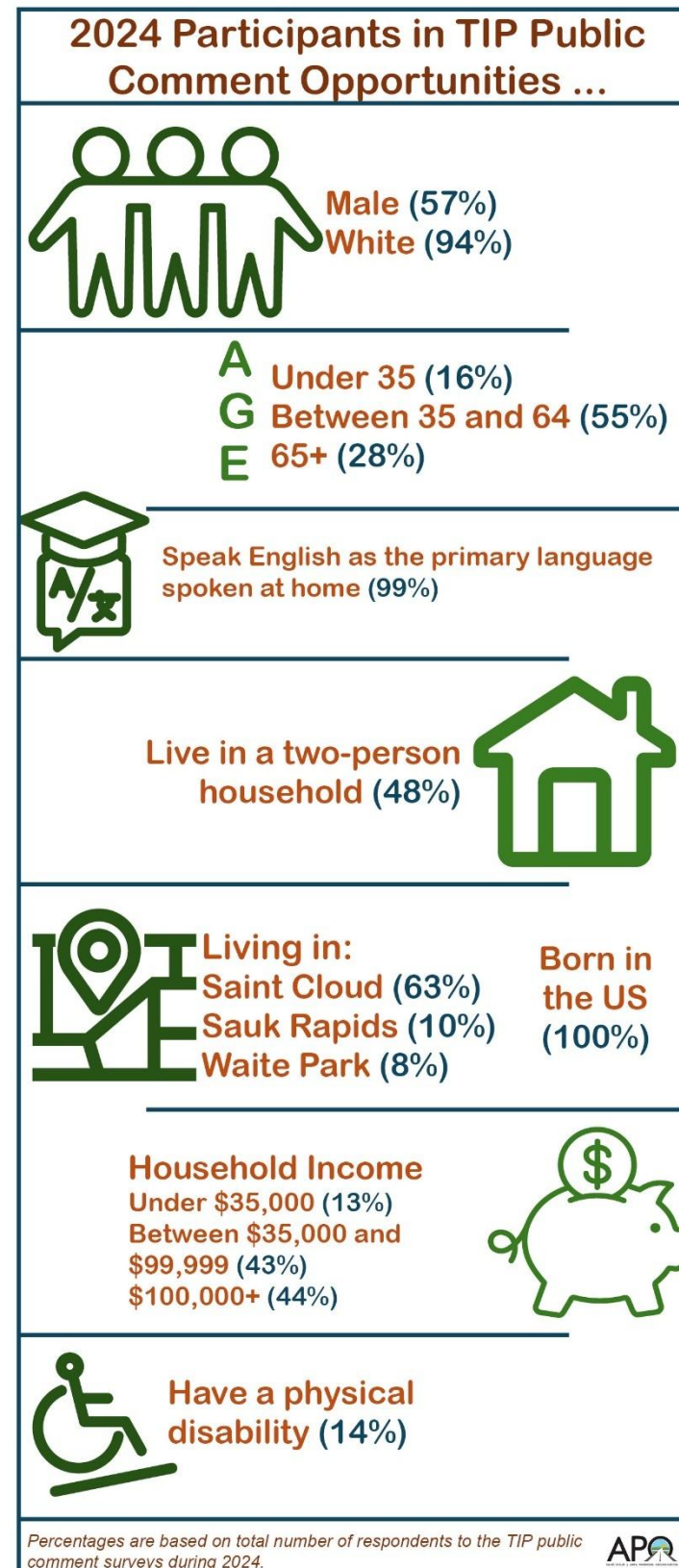


Figure 3.22. TIP participant demographics.

Survey of Participants

In 2024, the APO sent out five surveys of participants regarding the TIP. These surveys were conducted from Jan. 23 to Feb. 23, March 19 to April 18, May 23 to June 22, Aug. 8 to Sept. 7, and Aug. 20 to Sept. 19. A total of four individuals participated in these surveys.

Overall, the participants had similar feelings before the event. All participants either strongly or somewhat agreed that the notice was clear and welcoming, that the information helped prepare the participants effectively, that the purpose of the event was clearly defined, and that APO staff would take the view offered by the participants seriously.

During the event, all participants either strongly or somewhat agreed that there was sufficient opportunity to express their views, that the staff provided a safe, fair, and well-managed environment, and that the staff heard their opinions.

After the event, all participants either strongly or somewhat agreed that, given the chance, they would participate in an outreach activity again and would encourage another resident to participate in similar events.

Opportunities for Improvement

The 2023 SEPAR recommended reviewing the TIP public engagement process, including analyzing methods for publishing and conducting notices and researching best practices from other MPOs. While this review was not completed in 2024, it remains a goal for the coming year. Considering the limited public participation data from online events and the consistency of in-person attendance, exploring innovative and inclusive engagement strategies will be essential for improving public involvement in future TIP activities.

Looking Ahead 2050 MTP – Final Round Public Engagement

Public input for the final draft of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) officially launched on Aug. 8, 2024, and concluded on Sept. 7, 2024. APO staff utilized two primary platforms for collecting public feedback: a StoryMap powered by ArcGIS Survey123, which enabled participants to submit comments interactively, and SurveyMonkey. Additional outreach efforts included promoting the plan through The Oxcart newsletter, YouTube, direct email campaigns, updates to the APO’s website, flyers, press releases, and collaboration with a community liaison.



Figure 3.23. A photo of an MTP public engagement event at the Southside Boys and Girls Club.

In 2024, the APO hosted 11 public engagement events for the MTP. Eight events were held in-person at the following locations:

- Resource Training and Solutions—137-23rd St. S in Sartell.
- Whitney Senior Center—1527 Northway Drive in Saint Cloud.

- Nelson Mandela Center—3333 W Division St. in Saint Cloud.
- Roosevelt Boys & Girls Club – 345-30th Ave. N in Saint Cloud.
- Waite Park branch of the Great River Regional Library—253 Fifth Ave. N in Waite Park.
- Southside Boys & Girls Club –1205 Sixth Ave. S in Saint Cloud.
- Saint Cloud branch of the Great River Regional Library (GRRL)-- 1300 W Saint Germain St. in Saint Cloud.
- Metro Bus Downtown Transit Center--510 First St. S in Saint Cloud.

The Whitney Senior Center event on July 26 was held in a hybrid format, with some participants attending in person and others joining online via Zoom.

In addition to the in-person events, APO staff also held two virtual meetings on the MTP (one via Facebook Live and one via Zoom). Staff also conducted a radio interview on WJON Radio.

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
In-Person	7/17/2024	Resource Training and Solutions	20
Hybrid	7/26/2024	Whitney Senior Center	7
In-Person	8/13/2024	Whitney Senior Center	24
Online	8/9/2024	Facebook Live	NA
In-Person	8/13/2024	Nelson Mandela Center	50
Radio	8/15/2024	It Matters with Kelly Cordes	N/A

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
In-Person	8/15/2024	Roosevelt Boys & Girls Club	7
In-Person	8/20/2024	Metro Bus Mobility Training Center	7
In-Person	8/22/2024	GRRL – Waite Park	4
In-Person	8/22/2024	Southside Boys & Girls Club	8
In-Person	8/22/2024	GRRL	0
In-Person	8/29/2024	Metro Bus Transit Center	12
Online	9/3/2024	Zoom	0

Figure 3.24. A table of MTP engagement dates, locations, and the number of participants who attended.



Figure 3.25. A photo of an MTP public engagement event at the CARIO Event.

The most successful public engagement event was the community listening session hosted by CAIRO at the Nelson Mandela Center. As part of the community liaison contract, CAIRO staff facilitated the session to engage the region’s Somali-speaking and Limited English Proficient (LEP) population. CAIRO representatives provided interpretation for both the

presentation and the subsequent Q&A session, ensuring accessibility and meaningful participation with approximately 50 attendees.

Social Media

Facebook

The APO posted 14 times on Facebook about MTP in 2024. The two posts with the highest performance were published on Aug. 16 and Oct. 11, achieving the most reach and impressions. These posts benefited from being shared or having notable engagement, such as likes or comments, which amplified their visibility.

The Aug. 16 post (photo) gathered 638 reaches and 686 impressions—the highest of all MTP-related posts.

The second highest was the Oct. 11 post (photo) had 252 reaches and 127 impressions.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
8/8/2024	Link	58	45
8/9/2024	Photo	99	91
8/9/2024	Video	56	45
8/12/2024	Photo	79	68
8/16/2024	Photo	686	638
8/20/2024	Photo	69	62
8/21/2024	TikTok	35	28
8/21/2024	TikTok	40	33
8/26/2024	Photo	95	87
8/28/2024	Photo	80	74
8/30/2024	Photo	81	74
8/31/2024	Photo	58	51
9/4/2024	Photo	54	44
10/11/2024	Photo	127	252

Figure 3.26. A table of MTP-related Facebook posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

Instagram

The APO shared 10 posts on Instagram in 2024, with the Oct. 11 post standing out as the top performer. This post got 46 views and 22 reaches.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
8/8/2024	Photo	17	15
8/9/2024	Photo	10	7
8/12/2024	Photo	12	7
8/16/2024	Photo	12	9
8/20/2024	Photo	10	10
8/28/2024	Photo	15	13
8/30/2024	Photo	5	5
8/31/2024	Photo	12	11
9/4/2024	Photo	7	6
10/11/2024	Photo	46	22

Figure 3.27. A table of MTP-related Instagram posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

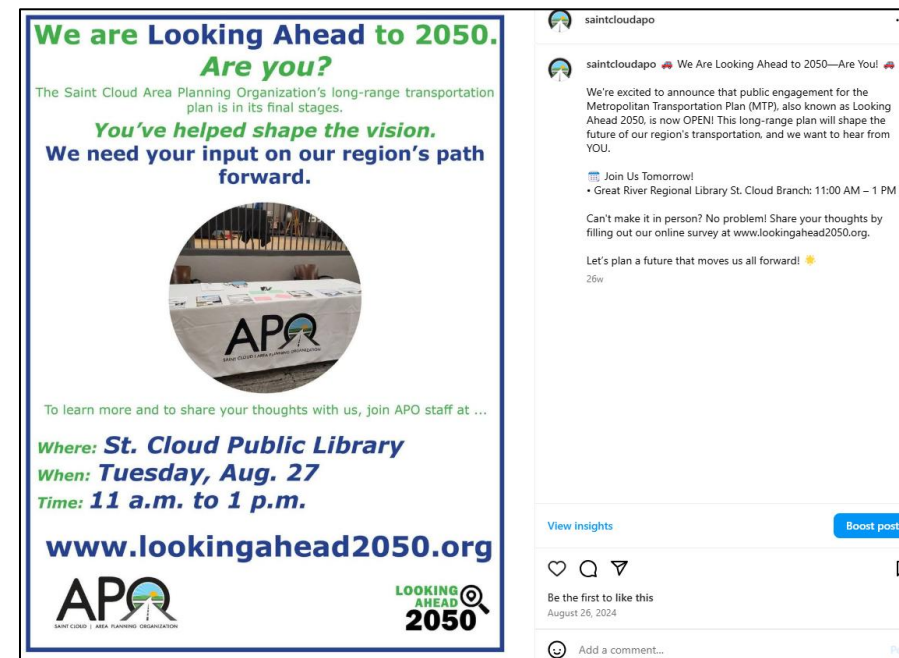


Figure 3.28. Example of an Instagram post.

Nextdoor

Nextdoor posts consistently outperformed Facebook and Instagram in terms of impressions, with a total of seven posts. All MTP-related posts on the platform achieved over 1,000 impressions.

The most successful post, published on Aug. 30 (photo), received 1,622 impressions, indicating strong community engagement on this platform.

Date	Post Type	Impressions
8/8/2024	Photo	1,348

Date	Post Type	Impressions
8/12/2024	Photo	1,188
8/15/2024	Link	1,243
8/20/2024	Photo	1,456
8/22/2024	Photo	1,372
8/28/2024	Photo	1,475
8/30/2024	Photo	1,622

Figure 3.29. A table of MTP-related Nextdoor posts, including the date, post type, and impressions.



Figure 3.30. Example of a Nextdoor post.

TikTok

In August, the APO posted one TikTok video that received only 171 views, significantly lower than the average performance of other videos shared on the platform.

Date	Post Type	Views
8/21/2024	Video	171

Figure 3.25. A table of MTP-related TikTok posts, including the date, post type, and views.

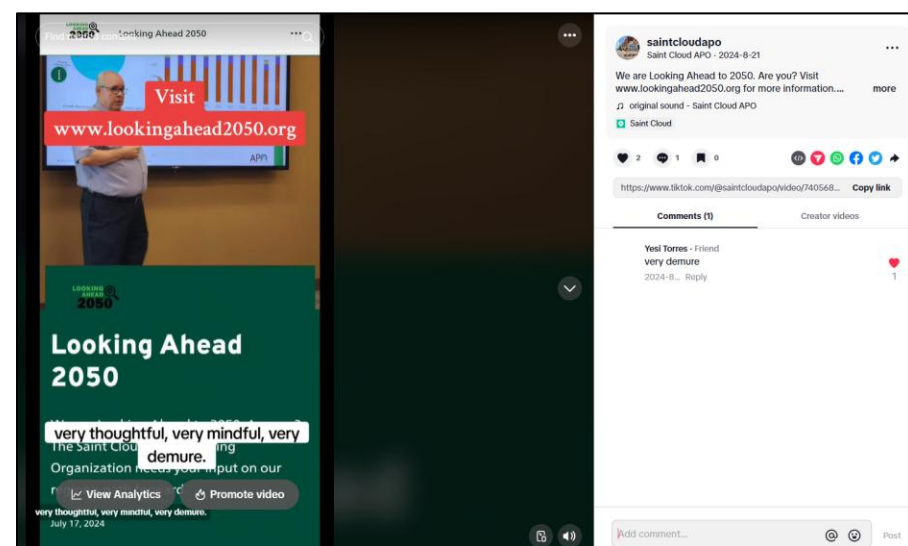


Figure 3.31. Example of a TikTok post.

YouTube

In August, 11 videos related to the MTP were posted on YouTube. One video featured the WJON Radio interview, while the others provided summaries of the chapters.

Date	Video Name	Views	Impressions
8/21/2024	Senior Spotlight – WJON Radio Interview	8	29
8/21/2024	Looking Ahead 2050 – An Overview	6	26
8/21/2024	Looking Ahead 2050 Chapter 1 Introduction	7	31

Date	Video Name	Views	Impressions
8/22/2024	Looking Ahead 2050 MTP Chapter 2 Existing Conditions	9	123
8/22/2024	Looking Ahead 2050 MTP Chapter 3 Environmental Conditions	7	68
8/22/2024	Looking Ahead 2050 MTP Chapter 4: 2050 Regional Vision	5	58
8/23/2024	Looking Ahead 2050 MTP Chapter 5: Travel Demand Modeling	5	147
8/23/2024	Looking Ahead 2050 Chapter 6: Transportation Funding	26	275
8/23/2024	Looking Ahead 2050 Chapter 7: Transportation Infrastructure Investments	4	52
8/23/2024	Looking Ahead 2050 Chapter 8: Urban Beltline Corridor	17	51
8/23/2024	Looking Ahead 2050 Chapter 9: Transportation & Technology	5	203

Date	Video Name	Views	Impressions
8/23/2024	Looking Ahead 2050 Chapter 10: Implementation	9	47

Figure 3.32. A table of MTP-related YouTube posts, including the date, video name, views, and impressions.

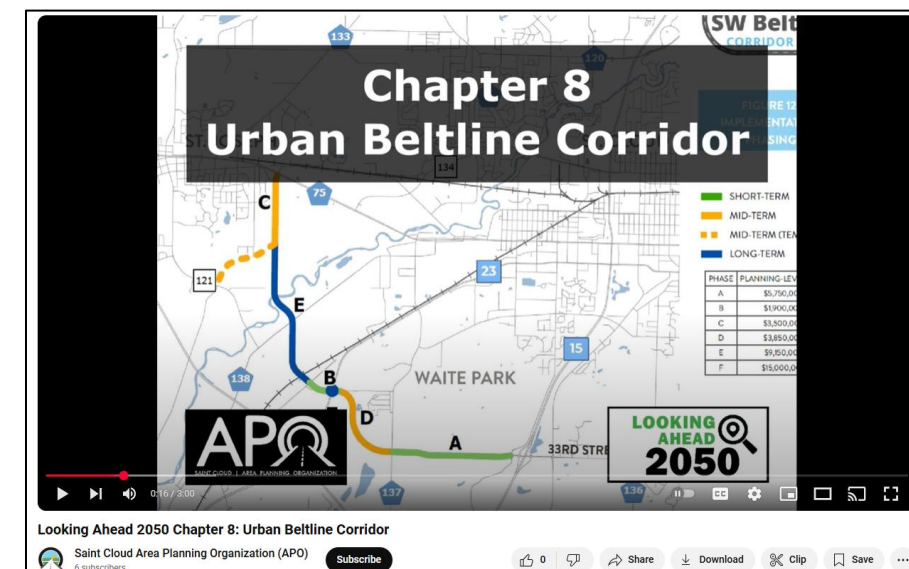


Figure 3.33. Example of a YouTube post.

Demographic Questionnaire

There were ten separate demographic surveys for the MTP ending in the calendar year 2024, with 158 participants. The surveys were conducted from Aug. 8 through Sept. 7. The average participant in MTP-related engagements can be found in Figure 3.34.

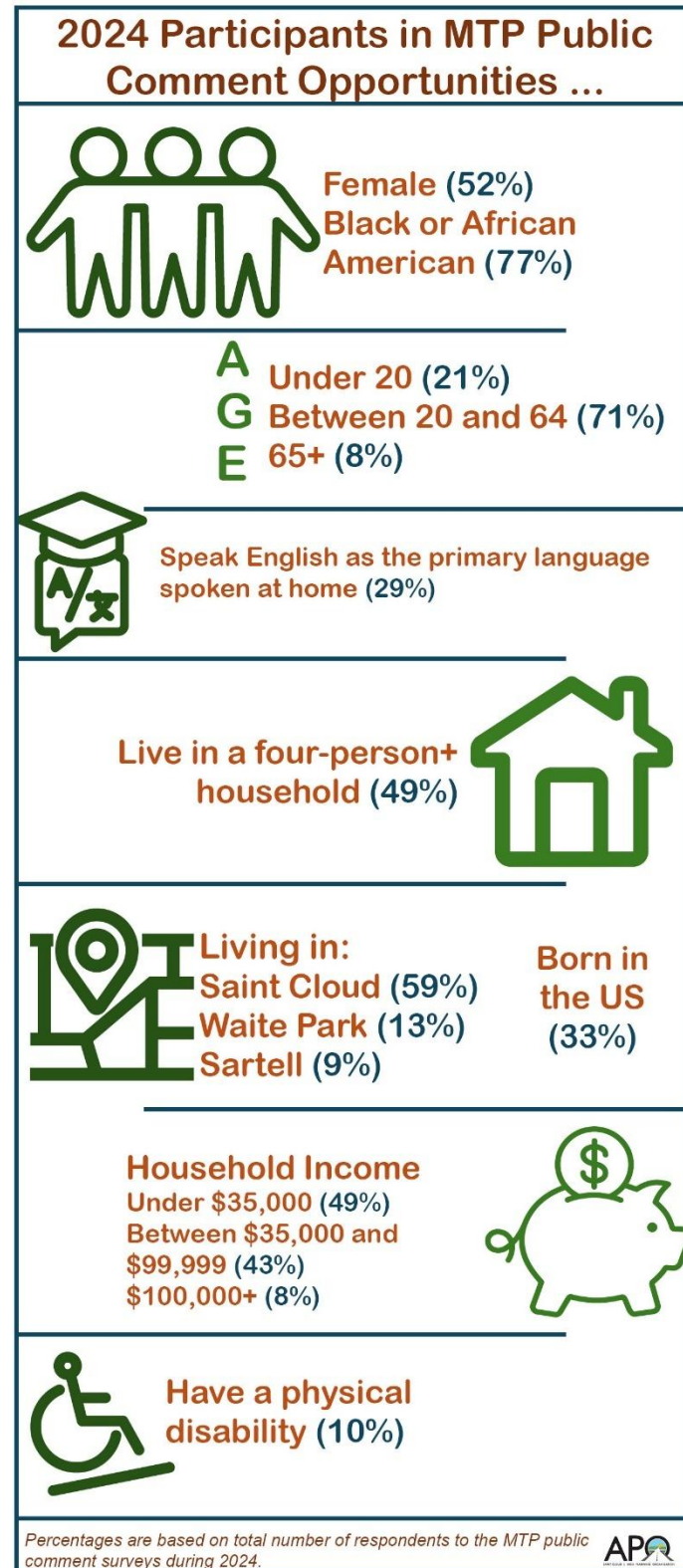


Figure 3.34. MTP participant demographics.



Figure 3.35. A photo of an MTP public engagement event at the Whitney Senior Center.

Past Recommendations

In response to the APO's 2022 mid-year annual report recommendation to hire a community liaison to engage with hard-to-reach populations, the APO successfully collaborated with two community liaisons in 2023. To sustain this initiative, the 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) allocated \$8,000 to support the community liaison program, which was implemented through a partnership with the organization CARIO. This recommendation has been fully implemented.



Figure 3.36. A photo of an MTP public engagement event at the St. Cloud Area Associate of REALTORS.

Consultant Led Public Meetings

To assist APO staff, consultants are hired to conduct various planning activities. In 2024, the APO hired consultants to lead various activities including: the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) study and the Future Regional Arterials and Collectors study. 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. APO staff requires consultants to follow the same guidelines and procedures in the APO's SEP.



Figure 3.37. A photo of the tabling event for the SS4A event at Summertime by George.

Safe Streets and Roads for All

The SS4A program aims to address critical roadway safety issues by developing and implementing comprehensive safety strategies tailored to each community's unique needs. Under the program, planning grants focus on creating detailed safety action plans to prevent roadway fatalities and severe injuries. Once these plans are finalized, communities can apply

for implementation grants to fund projects that directly tackle identified safety concerns.

To support the development of a safety action plan, the consulting firm Bolton & Menk was contracted for the development of the plan. The firm conducted a series of public engagement activities in 2024, ensuring local input shaped the plan's priorities.

During calendar year 2024, the consultant conducted six in-person events at the following locations:

- Waite Park National Night to Unite – 408 Park Meadows Drive.
- Summertime by George! in Saint Cloud.
- Sartell Farmers Market at the Sartell Community Center.
- Rock the Riverside – 195 River Ave. S in Sauk Rapids.
- Saint Joseph Farmers Market at the Lake Wobegon Trailhead.
- Metro Bus Downtown Transit Center – 510 First St. S in Saint Cloud.

Figure 3.38 below details the dates and number of public participants for each of these events.

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
In-Person	8/6/2024	Waite Park National Night Out	25
In-Person	8/7/2024	Summertime By George	30
In-Person	8/12/2024	Sartell's Farmer's Market	15
In-Person	8/15/2024	Rock the Riverside	8
In-Person	8/16/2024	Saint Joseph Farmers Market	20

Method of Event	Date Held	Location	Public Participants
In-Person	9/6/2024	Metro Bus Transit Center	12

Figure 3.38. A table of SS4A engagement dates, locations, and the number of participants who attended.

The SS4A engagement collectively reached 110 participants. While attendance varied across locations, events tied to larger community gatherings, such as "Summertime by George!," attracted the highest participation, emphasizing the value of partnering with popular local activities.

Social Media

Community organizations, including the cities of Saint Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Waite Park, Saint Joseph, the St. Cloud Chamber, and the Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation, shared information about the SS4A project via social media and newsletters. The APO also leveraged its own platforms, posting four times on Facebook and Instagram.

Facebook

The most successful Facebook post (Aug. 15) achieved a reach of 272 users and 311 impressions, boosted by two shares.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
7/16/2024	Photo	311	272
8/5/2024	Photo	86	76
8/15/2024	Photo	269	238
8/16/2024	Photo	182	169

Figure 3.39. A table of SS4A-related Facebook posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

Instagram

Engagement was lower on Instagram, with the top post (July 18) reaching just 14 users.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
7/18/2024	Photo	16	14
8/5/2024	Photo	5	4

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
8/15/2024	Photo	6	6
8/16/2024	Photo	17	10

Figure 3.40. A table of SS4A-related Instagram posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

Nextdoor

Three posts on Nextdoor performed significantly better, with each gathering over 1,000 impressions.

Date	Post Type	Impressions
7/16/2024	Photo	1,203
8/5/2024	Link	1,347
8/15/2024	Photo	1,169

Figure 3.41. A table of SS4A-related Nextdoor posts, including the date, post type, and impressions.

Website

The project website, launched on June 7 and updated with the survey link on Aug. 1, served as a central hub for project information, detailing opportunities for public involvement, access to draft plans, and a digital version of the final plan. Visitors could share feedback directly through an online comment form or by completing the survey. By Oct. 1, the website had garnered 806 views.

Survey

Online surveys provided an efficient method for gathering insights on project concerns and understanding the audience and conditions in the region. The survey, designed to collect input on existing regional conditions, was made available in English, Spanish, and Somali. It was widely distributed through the project website, email, social media, and QR codes. While online distribution served as the primary channel, paper copies in all three languages were also available at pop-up events. By the survey's close on Oct 1, a total of 93 responses had been collected.

Interactive Map

An interactive comment map, INPUTiDTM™, was featured on the project website to enhance public engagement. This tool enabled users to drop pins on specific locations and provide comments, while others could contribute by responding to comments or expressing agreement or disagreement through thumbs-up or thumbs-down reactions. By the end of the engagement phase on Oct. 1, the map had collected 115 comments.

Oxcart

An article about SS4A appeared in the August edition of The Oxcart, resulting in 40 link clicks to the website link.

Demographics

There was one demographic survey for SS4A ending in the calendar year 2024. The surveys were conducted from Aug. 1 through Oct. 1. The average participant in SS4A-related engagements can be found in Figure 3.42.

Past Recommendations

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. 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. The APO did not send a survey after the SS4A events.

To address this in future years, APO staff should ensure that all consultant agreements include a requirement to collect participant contact information (with consent) and provide it to the APO after each engagement event. Additionally, APO staff should consistently request participant contact information

after all engagement events to facilitate the distribution of post-event surveys.

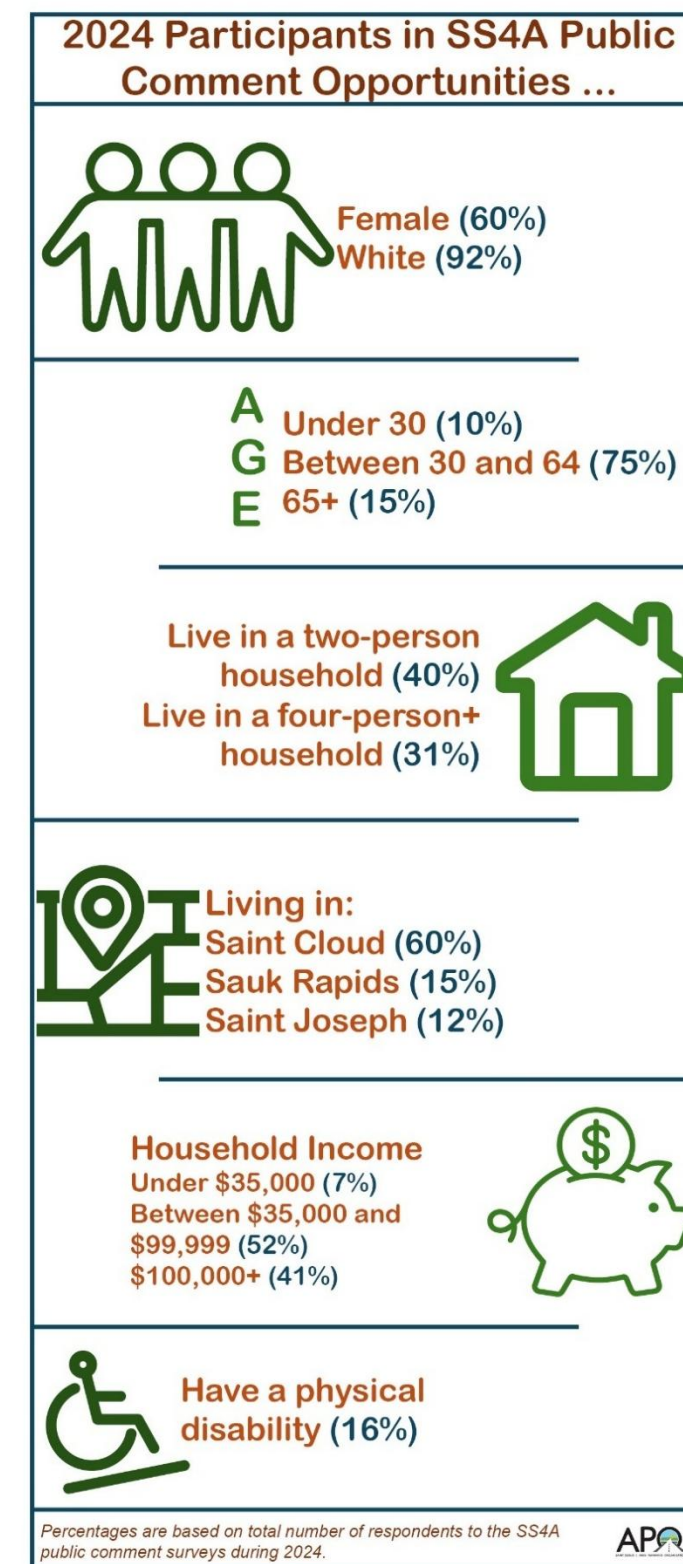


Figure 3.42. SS4A participant demographics.

Future Regional Arterials and Collectors Study

The APO's Future Regional Arterials and Collectors study was designed to identify areas across the region where future roadway corridors will be needed. By understanding the locations of where these future roadways are likely to be placed, today's transportation planners, engineers, and ultimately local developers will have a better grasp on where and how the cities and counties intend to grow. This will help ensure that when the time comes, enough land can be preserved to allow for these additional corridors. In addition to outlining general areas where roadways will be needed, this study also focused on identifying the future function of those roadways.



Figure 3.43. A photo of the open house held at the Saint Cloud library.

To support this effort, the APO hired consulting firm Bolton & Menk to lead the study's development. In 2024, the consultant facilitated several outreach activities.

The first events were two virtual focus groups held on Oct. 8 and 9. These sessions included members of the APO Technical Advisory Committee and one dedicated

group of environmental agency representatives, with a combined attendance of 40 participants.

An open house was held on Nov. 14 at the Great River Regional Library in Saint Cloud. Four APO Policy Board members attended this event. No one from the general public, however, was in attendance.

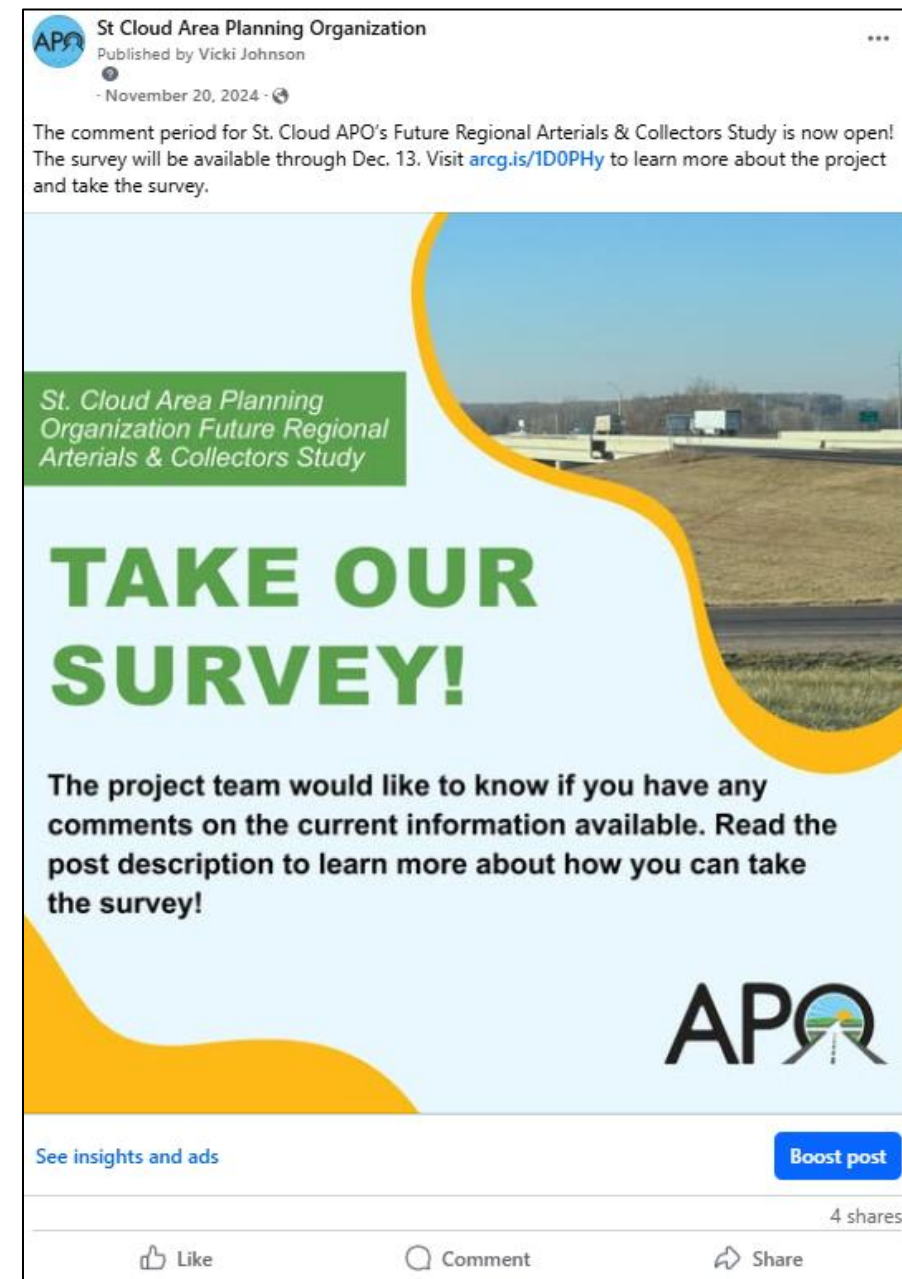


Figure 3.44. Example of a Facebook post.

Social Media

Facebook

The APO posted about the study four times on Facebook. The most successful post, published on Nov. 20, achieved a reach of 1,773 users and 1,114 impressions, likely boosted by four shares. Other posts saw significantly lower engagement, ranging from 262 users reached on Nov. 8 to just 37 users on Dec. 12.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
11/8/2024	Photo	161	262
11/20/2024	Photo	1,114	1,773
12/2/2024	Photo	59	54
12/12/2024	Photo	40	37

Figure 3.45. A table of Future Regional Arterial and Collector Study-related Facebook posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

Instagram

Engagement was lower on Instagram, the top post, on Nov. 8, reached 22 users and gathered 25 views. Other posts ranged between five to 15 users reached, indicating lower overall visibility compared to Facebook.

Date	Post Type	View	Reach
11/8/2024	Photo	25	22
11/20/2024	Photo	13	11
12/2/2024	Photo	15	15
12/12/2024	Photo	5	5

Figure 3.46. A of Future Regional Arterial and Collector Study-related Instagram posts, including the date, post type, view, and reach.

Nextdoor

Two posts on Nextdoor performed significantly better, with each gathering over 1,000 impressions.

Date	Post Type	Impressions
11/8/2024	Photo	1,328
12/2/2024	Photo	1,225

Figure 3.47. A table of Future Regional Arterial and Collector Study-related Nextdoor posts, including the date, post type, and impressions.

Website

The project website, launched in October 2024, functioned as a central resource for sharing project details, presenting study recommendations, and highlighting opportunities for public participation. Visitors were encouraged to provide feedback by completing an online survey.



Figure 3.48. Example of the website project page.

Survey

An online survey ran from Nov. 13 to Dec. 13. During that period, there were 25 responses.

Oxcart

An article about the Future Regional Arterials and Collectors study appeared in the November edition of The Oxcart, resulting in 22 link clicks directing viewers to the study webpage.

Demographics

There was one demographic survey for the Future Regional Arterials and Collectors Study ending in the calendar year 2024. The surveys were conducted from Nove. 12 through Dec. 13. The average participant in Regional Future Arterials and Collectors study-related engagements can be found in Figure 3.50.

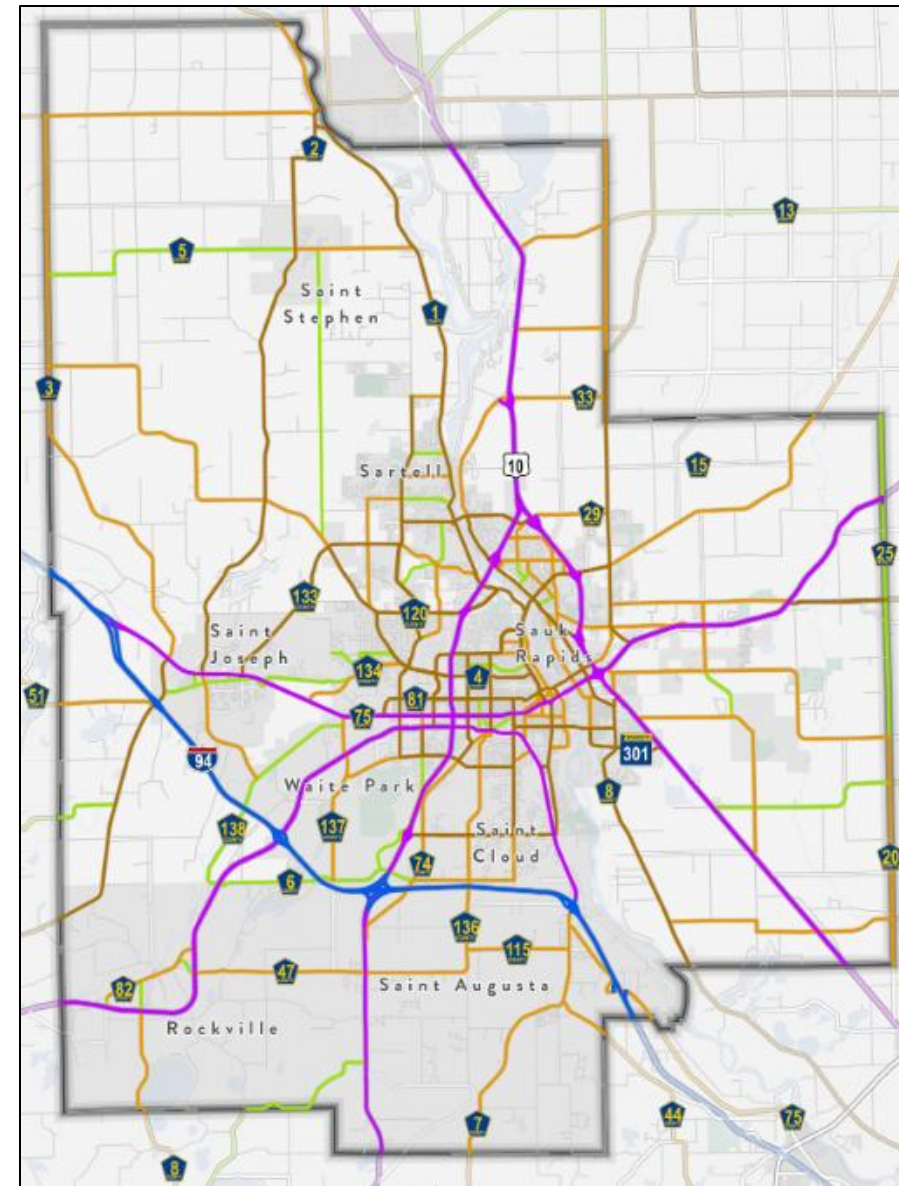


Figure 3.49. Example of the map on the website.

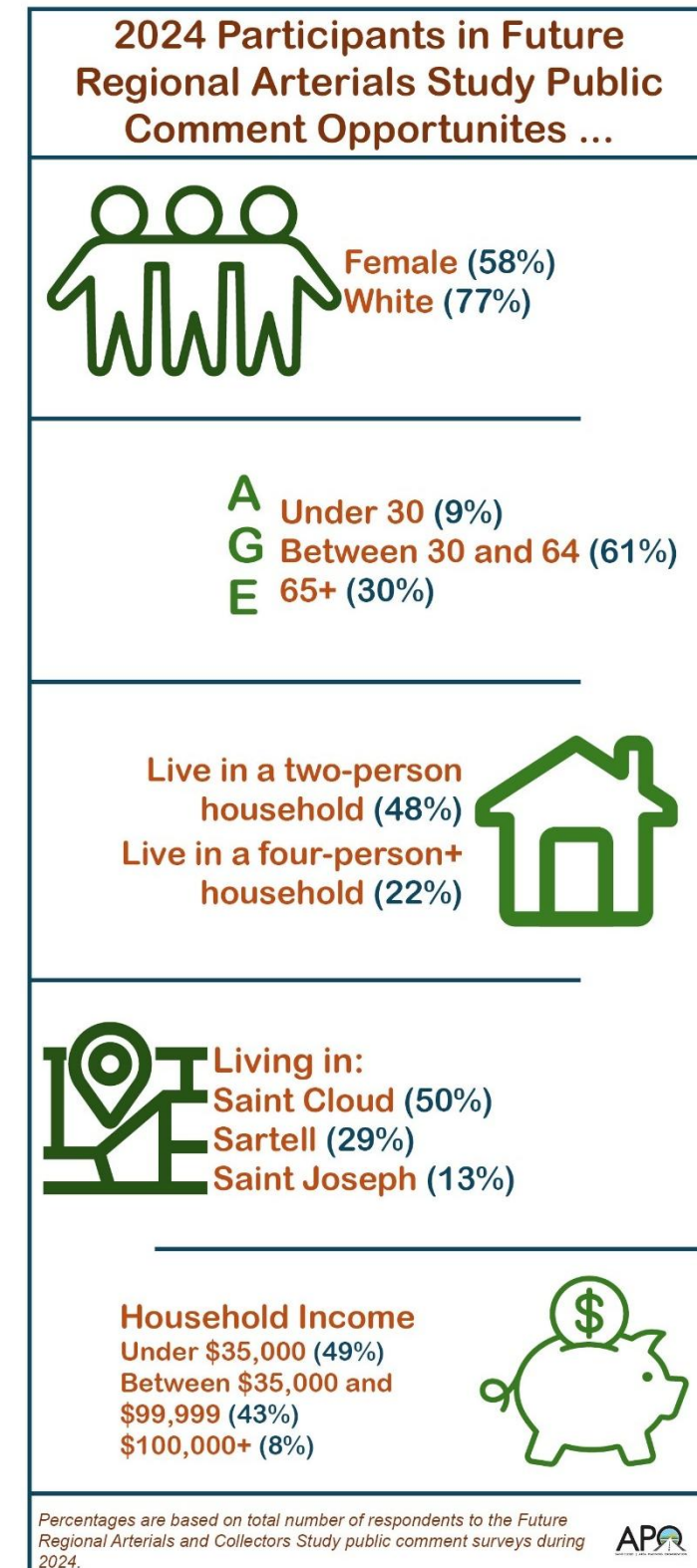


Figure 3.50. Future Regional Arterial and Collector Study participant demographics.

Demographic Comparison

Understanding who participates in APO-related public engagement opportunities is essential to ensuring equitable representation in transportation planning. By comparing survey demographics to overall population data, APO staff can identify gaps in participation and adjust outreach efforts to better reflect the diverse communities in our region. This helps to ensure all voices are considered when making transportation decisions. These insights are used to guide future engagement strategies, helping the APO, its staff, and its consultant partners create more inclusive and accessible opportunities for public input.

The following demographic results reflect surveys taken by TIP and MTP participants. These results are based on 128 participants.

Gender

The survey results reveal notable demographic differences in certain categories compared to the general Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) population. Gender distribution closely mirrors the MPA, with slightly more female respondents (51.6%) than the regional percentage (50.2%).

Gender	Survey Percentage	MPA Percentage
Male	46.8%	49.8%
Female	51.6%	50.2%

Figure 3.51. Gender population estimates within the Saint Cloud MPA compared to survey participants. Population data courtesy of 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted.

City of Residence

Representation by city shows an overrepresentation of Saint Cloud residents (59.4% vs. 49.7%) and Waite Park (12.5% vs. 5.9%), while Sartell (9.4% vs. 14.0%) and Sauk Rapids (6.3% vs. 9.9%) are underrepresented. The remaining cities were underrepresented overall.

City of Residence	Survey Percentage	MPA Percentage
Rockville	3.1%	1.8%
Saint Augusta	0.0%	2.5%
Saint Cloud	59.4%	49.7%
Saint Joseph	6.3%	5.0%
Saint Stephen	1.6%	0.5%
Sartell	9.4%	14.0%
Sauk Rapids	6.3%	9.9%
Waite Park	12.5%	5.9%
Other	1.6%	10.7%

Figure 3.52. City of residence population estimates within the Saint Cloud MPA compared to survey participants. Population data courtesy of 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity results show a stark contrast, with White or Caucasian respondents significantly underrepresented (13.3% vs. 76.0%), while Black or African American respondents are heavily overrepresented (76.7% vs. 11.6%). The overrepresentation is a direct result of the success of the community liaison focus group. The Some Other Race category was overrepresented by nearly five percentage points, while the Two or More Races category closely aligned with its overall population representation. Other racial groups, including Hispanic or Latino (0.0% vs. 4.5%) and Asian or Asian American (0.0% vs. 2.7%), were either absent or underrepresented.

Ethnicity	Survey Percentage	MPA Percentage
White or Caucasian	13.3%	76.0%
Black or African American	76.7%	11.6%
Hispanic or Latino	0.0%	4.5%
Asian or Asian American	0.0%	2.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.0%	0.3%

Ethnicity	Survey Percentage	MPA Percentage
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%
Some Other Race	5.0%	0.1%
Two or More Races	5.0%	4.7%

Figure 3.53. Ethnicity of population estimates within the Saint Cloud MPA compared to survey participants. Population data courtesy of 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted.

Number in Household

The survey results indicate an overrepresentation of larger households compared to the overall MPA population. Nearly half (49.2%) of survey respondents reported living in households with four or more people, significantly exceeding the MPA average of 20.9%. Conversely, single-person and two-person households were underrepresented, with 18.0% of survey participants living alone compared to 31.2% in the MPA, and 16.4% reporting two-person households compared to the MPA's 33.4%. Three-person households were slightly overrepresented (16.4% in the survey vs. 14.4% in the MPA).

Number in Household	Survey Percentage	MPA Percentage
1 Person	18.0%	31.2%
2 People	16.4%	33.4%
3 People	16.4%	14.4%
4 or More People	49.2%	20.9%

Figure 3.54. Number in household population estimates within the Saint Cloud MPA compared to survey participants. Population data courtesy of 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted.

Household Income

There is an overrepresentation of lower-income households compared to the overall MPA population. A significant portion of respondents reported household

incomes below \$25,000 (39.6%), which is notably higher than the MPA percentage (16.7%). The largest disparities appear in the lowest income brackets, with 14.3% of survey respondents earning less than \$5,000 compared to just 2.5% in the MPA. Mid-range income groups (\$35,000 to \$49,999 and \$50,000 to \$74,999) were slightly overrepresented, while higher-income households were significantly underrepresented. Only 1.6% of survey participants reported incomes between \$100,000 and \$149,999, compared to 16.2% in the MPA, and households earning \$150,000 or more were represented at less than half the MPA percentage (6.3% vs. 15.0%).

Household Income	Survey Percentage	MPA Percentage
Less than \$5,000	14.3%	2.5%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	6.3%	1.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.2%	4.1%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	6.3%	3.5%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	9.5%	4.0%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	9.5%	6.8%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	19.0%	12.3%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17.5%	18.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	6.3%	15.7%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1.6%	16.2%
\$150,000 or more	6.3%	15.0%

Figure 3.55. Household income population estimates within the Saint Cloud MPA compared to survey participants. Population data courtesy of 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted.

Age

The age distribution of survey respondents shows notable differences compared to the overall MPA

population. Younger individuals, particularly those under 20 (21.0% vs. 27.3%) and those aged 20 to 24 (6.5% vs. 11.0%), were underrepresented in the survey, indicating a potential gap in engagement with younger demographics. In contrast, respondents aged 25 to 49 were significantly overrepresented, particularly in the 45 to 49 age group (16.1% vs. 5.1%). Representation among older age groups (50 and over) was relatively aligned with the MPA percentages, though individuals aged 70 and older were slightly underrepresented.

Age	Survey Percentage	MPA Percentage
Under 20	21.0%	27.3%
20 to 24	6.5%	11.0%
25 to 29	9.7%	6.8%
30 to 34	8.1%	6.7%
35 to 39	8.1%	6.2%
40 to 44	8.1%	6.3%
45 to 49	16.1%	5.1%
50 to 54	4.8%	5.3%
55 to 59	3.2%	5.4%
60 to 64	6.5%	5.5%
65 to 69	3.2%	4.4%
70 to 74	1.6%	4.0%
75 to 79	1.6%	2.7%
80 to 84	1.6%	1.4%
85 and over	0.0%	1.9%

Figure 3.56. Age population estimates within the Saint Cloud MPA compared to survey participants. Population data courtesy of 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted.

Physical Disability

The survey results indicate that individuals with a physical disability were slightly underrepresented compared to the overall MPA population (10.0% vs. 12.5%).

Category	Survey Percentage	MPA Percentage
Yes	10.0%	12.5%
No	90.0%	87.5%

Figure 3.57. Physical disability population estimates within the Saint Cloud MPA compared to survey participants. Population data courtesy of 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted.

Country of Birth

Additionally, 66.7% of respondents reported being born outside the U.S., a striking contrast to the MPA's 9.2%.

Country of Birth	Survey Percentage	MPA Percentage
In the U.S.	33.3%	90.8%
Outside the U.S.	66.7%	9.2%

Figure 3.58. Where were you born population estimates within the Saint Cloud MPA compared to survey participants. Population data courtesy of 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted.

Primary Language Spoken at Home

Closely related to the Country of Birth question, information related to the primary language data indicates 71.0% of respondents speak a language other than English at home. This is significantly overrepresented compared to the broader region.

Primary Language Spoken at Home	Survey Percentage	MPA Percentage
English	29.0%	86.7%
Something Other than English	71.0%	13.3%

Figure 3.59. Primary language spoken at home population estimates within the Saint Cloud MPA compared to survey participants. Population data courtesy of 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted.

4 - Social Media

In 2024, the APO was active on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Nextdoor, and YouTube. Facebook and Instagram are the predominant platforms staffers use. Along with social media platforms the APO relied on their quarterly newsletter, The Oxcart, to engage members of the public.

Facebook

The APO's Facebook page experienced modest growth throughout 2024. As of Jan. 1, 2025, the page had 485 followers, marking a 3.8% increase from 467 followers in January 2024. This growth continues the upward trend observed over the past several years, though the rate of increase has slowed compared to earlier periods.

Time Period	Total Number of Followers	Percent Difference from the Previous Year
2018 - July	220	N/A
2019 - July	237	7.7%
2020 - July	272	23.6%
2021 - July	343	26.1%
2022 - July	428	24.8%
2023 - January	459	7.2%
2024 - January	467	1.7%
2025 - January	485	3.8%

Figure 4.1. Number of Facebook followers by year.

Reach

The total reach of the APO's Facebook posts decreased significantly in 2024, dropping by 73.3% compared to the previous year. In 2023, a boosted post about the Mississippi River Bridge Study in January generated substantial engagement, significantly contributing to the year's high reach metrics. No comparable boosted posts were made in 2024, which may account for the sharp decline.

Time Period	Reach	Percent Difference from the Previous Year
2023	48,112	NA
2024	12,845	-73.3%

Figure 4.2. The number of yearly Facebook reaches. *This metric is an estimate.



Figure 4.3. Example of a Facebook post about the urban beltline.

Visits

Despite the decline in reach, the number of visits to the APO's Facebook page increased significantly in 2024. The page saw 1,163 visits, a 59.3% increase

from the 730 visits recorded in 2023. This suggests that while fewer people may have encountered posts in their feed, those who did were more likely to visit the page directly to learn more.

Time Period	Visits	Percent Difference from the Previous Year
2023	730	NA
2024	1,163	59.3%

Figure 4.4. The number of yearly Facebook visits.

Demographics

The APO's Facebook follower demographics reveal some key differences compared to both the broader Facebook user base and the MPA population. In terms of gender, the APO's followers are predominantly female (59.4%), which is higher than the 43.3% female representation among Facebook users and the 50.2% of females in the MPA population. This suggests an opportunity to increase male engagement, as they represent 56.7% of Facebook users and 49.8% of the MPA population. In terms of age, the APO is underrepresented among younger adults, with only 0.9% of followers aged 18-24 (versus 23.0% of Facebook users and 11.0% of the MPA population) and 16.3% in the 25-34 age group (compared to 31.1% of Facebook users). However, the APO sees strong engagement from the 35-44 (34.0%) and 45-54 (22.8%) age groups, significantly higher than their share of Facebook users and the local population. Additionally, the 65+ age group makes up 11.6% of APO followers, which closely aligns with their 14.3% share of the MPA population and exceeds their representation among Facebook users (6.1%).

Category	% of APO Facebook Followers	% of Total Facebook Users	% of MPA Population Estimates
Gender			
Male	40.6%	56.7%	49.8%
Female	59.4%	43.3%	50.2%

Category	% of APO Facebook Followers	% of Total Facebook Users	% of MPA Population Estimates
Age			
18-24	0.9%	23.0%	11.0%*
25-34	16.3%	31.1%	13.5%
35-44	34.0%	20.2%	12.5%
45-54	22.8%	12.0%	10.5%
55-64	14.4%	7.6%	10.9%
65 and over	11.6%	6.1%	14.3%

Figure 4.5. Population estimates of various demographics within the Saint Cloud MPA compared to Facebook followers. Population data courtesy of 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted. *ACS data groups under 20 into one category. Percent of Facebook user's data courtesy of Hootsuite.

Instagram

The APO's Instagram page experienced steady growth in followers throughout 2024. By Jan. 1, 2025, the page had 216 followers, reflecting a 9.1% increase compared to the 198 followers recorded in January 2024. This marks a continued positive trend, building on the growth observed in previous years.

Time Period	Total Number of Followers	Percent Difference from the Previous Year
2023 - January	184	NA
2024 - January	198	7.6%
2025 - January	216	9.1%

Figure 4.6. Number of Instagram followers by year.

Reaches

Despite the growth in followers, Instagram reach decreased substantially in 2024, dropping by 60.5% compared to the previous year. This decline indicates fewer people saw APO content in their Instagram feeds, potentially due to post relevancy or reduced engagement with the post content.

Time Period	Reach	Percent Difference from the Previous Year
2023	4,570	NA
2024	1,807	-60.5%

Figure 4.7. Number of Instagram followers by year. *This metric is an estimate.

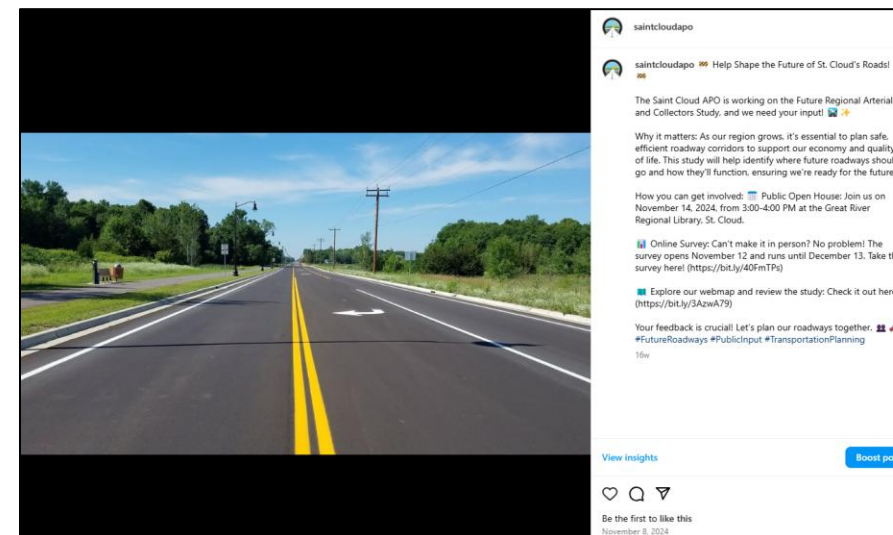


Figure 4.8. Example of an Instagram post.

Visits

While reach declined, Instagram page visits increased by 16.9% in 2024. The APO's Instagram page received 97 visits, up from 83 in the previous year. This indicates that although fewer users encountered posts organically, those who did were more inclined to directly visit the profile for more information.

Time Period	Visits	Percent Difference from the Previous Year
2023	83	NA
2024	97	16.9%

Figure 1.9. Number of Instagram followers by year.

Demographics

The APO's Instagram follower demographics reflect some notable differences when compared to both the broader Instagram user base and the MPA population.

In terms of gender, the APO's Instagram followers skew slightly more female (61.5%) than the general Instagram user base (49.4%). In terms of age, the APO's Instagram account is notably underrepresented among the 18-24 age group, with only 5.3% of followers compared to 31.7% of Instagram users. This is also below their 11.0% share of the MPA population. The 25-34 age group, however, makes up 14.6% of the APO's followers, which is well below the 30.6% share of Instagram users, but in line with the 13.5% representation in the MPA population. The APO sees strong engagement from the 35-44 (35.1%) and 45-54 (21.3%) age groups, which are both significantly higher than their representation in the MPA base (12.5% and 10.5%, respectively). Additionally, followers aged 65 and over make up 8.5% of the APO's Instagram audience, a higher percentage than their representation in the broader Instagram audience (2.9%) but still below their share of the MPA population (14.3%).

Category	% of APO Instagram Followers	% of Total Instagram Users	% of MPA Population Estimates
Gender			
Male	38.5%	50.6%	49.8%
Female	61.5%	49.4%	50.2%
Age			
18-24	5.3%	31.7%	11.0%*
25-34	14.6%	30.6%	13.5%
35-44	35.1%	16.0%	12.5%
45-54	21.3%	8.7%	10.5%
55-64	15.2%	4.6%	10.9%
65 and over	8.5%	2.9%	14.3%

Figure 4.10. Population estimates of various demographics within the Saint Cloud MPA compared to Instagram followers. Population data courtesy of 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted. *ACS data groups under 20 into one category. Percent of Instagram user's data courtesy of Hootsuite.

TikTok

APO staff created a TikTok account in October 2022 and posted five videos in 2024. The APO staff felt this platform was underutilized in 2023 and will make an effort to post at least monthly in 2024. The creation of a TikTok account came out of the 2022 SEPAR, which suggested creating a TikTok to reach a younger audience.

Time Period	Total Number of Followers	Percent Difference from the Previous Year
2023 - January	4	NA
2024 - January	3	-25%
2025 - January	9	200%

Figure 4.11. Number of TikTok followers by year.

Though the APO did not post frequently on TikTok, the number of reaches from 2023 to 2024 increased by 116%, yet the number of followers only increased by six.

Time Period	Views	Percent Difference from the Previous Year
2023 - January	288	NA
2024 - January	2,673	828%
2025 - January	5,794	116%

Figure 4.12. The number of yearly TikTok views.

Demographics

The demographics of TikTok users who viewed an APO video show a significant contrast compared to both the general TikTok user base and the MPA population. The majority of viewers were male (67.8%), which is notably higher than TikTok's overall user base (45.0%) and the MPA population (49.8%). Female viewers, on the other hand, were underrepresented at 31.0%, compared to 55.0% of TikTok users and 50.2% of the MPA population.

Age distribution also highlights key differences. Nearly half (48.4%) of APO video viewers were aged 18-24, significantly exceeding their representation in the general TikTok audience (25.0%) and their share of the MPA population (11.0%). Similarly, the 25-34 age group made up 40.4% of viewers, well above their presence in the general TikTok audience (30.0%) and the MPA population (13.5%). However, engagement drops off sharply among older age groups. The 35-44, 45-54, and 55+ age groups were all significantly underrepresented among viewers compared to both TikTok's general audience and their share of the MPA population. This suggests that APO's TikTok content is highly effective at reaching young adults but struggles to engage middle-aged and older demographics.

Category	% of TikTok users who viewed an APO video	% of Total TikTok Users	% of MPA Population Estimates
Gender			
Male	67.8%	45.0%	49.8%
Female	31.0%	55.0%	50.2%
Age			
18-24	48.4%	25.0%	11.0%*
25-34	40.4%	30.0%	13.5%
35-44	7.5%	19.0%	12.5%
45-54	2.6%	13.0%	10.5%
55 and over	1.2%	14.0%	25.25%

Figure 4.13. Population estimates of various demographics within the Saint Cloud MPA compared to TikTok users who viewed an APO video. Population data courtesy of 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates unless noted. *ACS data groups under 20 into one category. Percent of total TikTok users' data courtesy of Backlinko.

Banning TikTok

On April 24, 2024, President Joe Biden signed legislation requiring ByteDance, TikTok's parent company, to divest ownership of the app by Jan. 19, 2025. If ByteDance failed to comply by the deadline, TikTok will no longer be available for download, and

internet service providers would legally be required to block access to the app through U.S. internet browsers.

Due to this uncertain future, the APO limited its resources for creating TikTok videos in 2024 and plans to pause video production on the platform entirely in 2025 until the app's fate is determined.

YouTube

The APO's YouTube channel was reactivated in August 2024 to support public engagement efforts for the MTP. The channel had previously been deactivated in 2022 due to underutilization. In 2024, the channel posted 11 videos, which collectively garnered 109 views with an average view duration of 55 seconds. These videos achieved a total of 1,116 impressions. By the end of 2024, the APO's YouTube page had six subscribers.

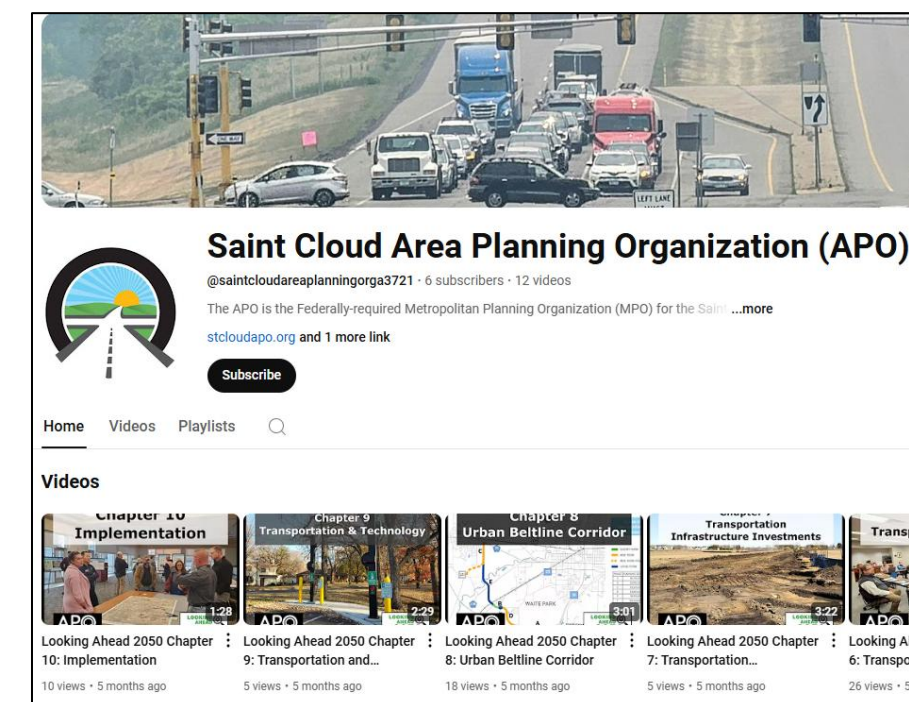


Figure 4.14. The APO's YouTube page.

Nextdoor

The APO created a Nextdoor account in May 2024 to engage directly with residents within its jurisdiction. Nextdoor is a free platform that connects neighbors

with each other, local businesses, and public agencies. Upon activating the account, all users in the APO’s jurisdiction were automatically subscribed to receive posts from the APO. By the end of the year, the APO had 22,885 followers on the platform.

Time Period	Total Number of Followers	Percent Increase from the Previous Year
2025 - January	22,885	NA

Figure 4.15. Number of Nextdoor followers by year.



Figure 4.16. Example of a Nextdoor post.

In 2024, the APO made 22 posts on Nextdoor covering various topics. Collectively, these posts generated 39,015 impressions, demonstrating strong engagement with residents. The top five posts contributed significantly to this success, gathering 16,547 impressions.

The Oxcart

The Saint Cloud APO publishes a quarterly newsletter titled The Oxcart. In 2024, four editions of the newsletter were released in March, June, August, and November.



Figure 4.17. Logo of The Oxcart.

March Issue

The March edition of The Oxcart was sent to 184 recipients. Of those, 37.1% opened the email, and 2.3% clicked on links within stories. A total of 19 link clicks were recorded, with the most-clicked stories being:

- ❖ The APO’s website (7 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s Instagram (4 clicks).
- ❖ Looking Ahead 2050 MTP (3 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s Facebook (3 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s TikTok (2 clicks).

One recipient unsubscribed from the newsletter after this edition.

June Issue

The June edition was sent to 180 recipients, achieving a 46.8% open rate and a 3.5% clicked on a link. A total of 31 clicks on stories with links were recorded, with the following stories receiving the most clicks:

- ❖ Looking Ahead 2050 MTP (12 clicks).

- ❖ Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) Annual Report (10 clicks).
- ❖ Regional Infrastructure Investment Plan (3 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s Facebook page (2 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s website (2 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s Instagram page (2 clicks).

August Issue

The August edition, also sent to 180 recipients, achieved a 43.0% open rate and a 7.6% click on a link. It collected 79 total clicks, with the top stories being:

- ❖ Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan (40 clicks).
- ❖ Looking Ahead 2050 MTP (22 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s Facebook page (6 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s website (6 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s Instagram page (5 clicks).

November Issue

The November edition was sent to 180 recipients, with the highest engagement of the year: a 49.1% open rate and a 12.3% click on a link. A total of 122 clicks were recorded, with the most-clicked stories being:

- ❖ Regional Future Arterials and Collectors Study (22 clicks).
- ❖ Safe Routes to School Planning in Action (19 clicks).
- ❖ Looking Ahead 2050 MTP (18 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s Instagram page (17 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s Facebook page (16 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s website (15 clicks).
- ❖ The APO’s YouTube page (15 clicks).

One recipient unsubscribed following this edition.

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 reviews 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 2024 LEP self-evaluation.

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

In the calendar year 2024, the APO did work specifically with CAIRO, who provided interpretive services during our MTP listening session (approximately 50 people).

Besides the CAIRO listening session, the APO 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.

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 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 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 al menos siete (7) días antes de la reunión.

During this time frame, APO staff did not provide any surveys in multiple languages. However, the APO's community liaison CAIRO did interpret the MTP survey to their clients.

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 2019-2023 ACS Five Year Estimates.

According to the estimates, approximately 86.7% of the Saint Cloud MPA population over the age of 5 speaks only English. About 13.3% of the people within the MPA over age 5 speak a language other than English at home. Of this, 5.2% speak English less than "very well." This is on par with the state (4.6%) and below the national (8.7%) threshold for people who speak English less than "very well."

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 (3,978 people or 3.0%); Spanish (1,051 people or 0.8%); and Vietnamese (652 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 reveals the most common languages excluding English are Somali (26.5%), Spanish (5.5%), and Vietnamese (0.8%).

Geographic Area	Population Estimates (Population 5 Years and Older)	Population (5+) Who Speak English Less than "Very Well"	Percent of Total Population
United States	316,581,199	27,606,796	8.7%
Minnesota	5,374,611	246,240	4.6%
Saint Cloud MPA	131,622	6,858	5.2%

Figure 5.1: A geographic breakdown of the 2019-2023 population estimates of people over age 5 who speak English less than "very well." Data courtesy of the 2019-2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

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 outside of contracted work with CARIO. 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 training sessions for each of the following: Title II, Title VI, and LEP training on Dec. 16, 2024.

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 2024, the APO has had no formal Title VI complaints filed against the organization.



Figure 2.2. Person boarding a Saint Cloud Metro Dial-a-Ride Bus. *Photo courtesy of Metro Bus.

6 - Recommendations

Response to Past Recommendations

During the development of the past SEPARs, APO staff have made numerous recommendations for improving public engagement. We must evaluate recommendations from the prior year's SEPAR and continue working on recommendations from all SEPARs. The APO aims 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.

Community Liaison for Hard-To-Reach Populations

APO staff annually evaluates its public input campaigns from previous years to determine their effectiveness. Past demographic questionnaire results have indicated low to no response rates to APO outreach efforts among traditionally underserved populations. 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 identified strategy was to hire people from within the various communities to convey 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 suggestions received from community organizations. As public input opportunities become available, the

APO will seek members of traditionally underserved populations, train them on the available product 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 keep a timesheet that includes descriptions of their actions 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: Achieved.** The APO did hire a community liaison (CAIRO) in 2024. The 2025-2026 UPWP allocates \$5,000 to continue the community liaison program.

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. 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.

- **Results: Poor.** The APO did not send a survey to participants for any consultant studies.

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.

- **Results: Did not complete.** Review the TIP Public Engagement Process and improve engagement in 2025.

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.

New Recommendations for Public Engagement

Leverage Nextdoor for Targeted Outreach for TIP Surveys and Planning Studies

Nextdoor is a free platform designed to connect neighbors with each other, local businesses, and public agencies. Upon activating the APO's account, all users within the APO's jurisdiction were automatically subscribed to receive posts, providing a built-in audience for outreach. One of the platform's key advantages is the ability to target specific neighborhoods, making it an effective tool for engaging residents directly impacted by proposed infrastructure improvements or planning studies, such as TIP projects or corridor studies.

To make the most of Nextdoor, the APO should share updates that matter to specific neighborhoods, like transportation projects, open houses, and surveys. Each post should clearly invite people to take action—whether that's filling out a survey or joining a meeting—so they know how their input makes a difference. It's also important to track how many people engage through Nextdoor to see what's working and adjust as needed. Posting regularly, especially during big project updates, will help keep the community informed. Finally, while posts mainly share information, responding to common questions or concerns can build trust and encourage more people to get involved.

- **Recommendation:** Integrate Nextdoor into existing public engagement strategies by using its neighborhood-specific targeting feature for outreach on infrastructure improvements and planning studies. Track engagement metrics

(e.g., survey responses) to measure success and adjust your approach as needed.

Grow Social Media Followers and Increase Engagement

As a government agency, the APO has a responsibility to share information with as many residents as possible. While we cannot mandate participation in surveys, open houses, or other activities, we must ensure every resident has the opportunity to engage with our content and participate in the planning process. The following strategies will guide our efforts in addressing stagnation in social media growth and increasing engagement.

Building a strong social media presence will include small, consistent efforts that can make a big impact. Simple graphics with project updates, event reminders, or fun facts about transportation can catch people's attention, while short videos featuring staff updates help personalize our work. Sharing stories about how local transportation projects benefit the community also makes the content more relatable.

Beyond posting, engagement is key. Responding to comments and questions shows we're listening, and tagging partners or local influencers can help expand our reach. Setting aside just 10 minutes a day to interact with followers can make a big difference in building connections.

Interactive content, like quick polls or community-focused questions, is another great way to encourage participation. Asking people about their transportation habits or what road improvements they'd like to see makes them feel involved.

Collaboration also plays a big role in reaching more people. Partnering with planning partners to share content can amplify messaging.

Finally, tracking what works ensures we're using our time effectively. Looking at social media insights can

show what types of posts get the most attention and which platforms are best for different audiences. Adjusting our approach based on these insights will help keep engagement strong.

- **Recommendation:** Implement these strategies to grow social media followers and boost engagement. Regularly evaluate their effectiveness and adjust as needed.

Post TAC, ATAC, and Policy Board Agendas on Nextdoor

The APO already shares TAC, ATAC, and Policy Board agendas on Facebook and Instagram. Expanding this practice to Nextdoor, where users in the APO's jurisdiction are automatically subscribed, could help reach a broader audience and engage more stakeholders.

- **Recommendation:** Share TAC, ATAC, and Policy Board agendas on Nextdoor to maximize outreach and stakeholder awareness.

Engage With Users on Relevant External Posts

To grow our social media following and inform the public about APO activities, APO staff will actively engage with users on relevant external social media posts. For instance, if a local government or news organization shares transportation-related content and a user asks a question or seeks more information, the APO will respond (as appropriate) with helpful, informative answers and direct them to relevant resources. While maintaining a professional and neutral tone, APO staff will focus on providing accurate information without engaging in debates or dismissing opinions.

- **Recommendation:** Actively engage with users on relevant external posts to build trust and awareness.

Add Question to Demographic Survey

Currently, the "How did you hear about the APO's public meeting or outreach event that you attended?" question is part of the Survey of Participants, but it has a low response rate due to limited participation. By moving this question to the demographic section for all surveys, we can gather more comprehensive data from a larger audience. Additionally, APO staff will update this question to reflect the diverse outreach methods currently used by the APO, including Instagram, Nextdoor, and The Oxcart Newsletter. This change will allow the APO to better track the effectiveness of various outreach tactics and adjust strategies for greater engagement in the future.

- **Recommendation:** Move the question "How did you hear about the APO's public meeting or outreach event that you attended?" to the demographic questionnaire, and add the choices Instagram, Nextdoor, and The Oxcart Newsletter.

Appendix A

Public Engagement Calendar of Events

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Appendix B

Social Media Public Engagement

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Appendix C

Staff Training Certifications

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Appendix D

Past Recommendations

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