

**ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ATAC) AND AGE-
FLOURISHING SAINT CLOUD – TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY WORK
GROUP JOINT MEETING**

Wednesday, January 22 @ 9:00 a.m.

A meeting of the ATAC and Age Flourishing Saint Cloud – Transportation and Mobility Work Group Joint Meeting was held at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at the Whitney Senior Center in Saint Cloud. Chairperson Alex McKenzie presided with the following people in attendance:

Zoom Attendees

Andrea Nistler	Citizen/Advocate
Keith Piskur	Citizen/Advocate
Mariah Klien	Community Health Specialist – Benton County
Emma Hanson	Community Health Specialist – Benton County
Brian Gibson	Executive Director - Saint Cloud APO
David Broxmeyer	Senior Planner – City of Saint Cloud

In-Person Attendees

George Schoepfoer	Co-Chair of Age Flourishing Taskforce
Joe Chovan	Natural Trails and Parks Coalition
Debbie Anderson	Community Outreach Mobility Manager – Metro Bus

Introductions were made.

Transportation Alternatives (TA) Project Rankings

Alex McKenzie provided an overview of how the Transportation Alternatives (TA) program aligns with the APO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects. He also explained the distribution of TA funding in Minnesota and within the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP). Additionally, he described how regional priority points are used to elevate the region's top projects for funding consideration.

George Schoepfoer asked whether the various grants are mandates or how they function. Alex McKenzie responded that it depends on the amount allocated by legislators, as programs and grants can fluctuate in availability and funding levels based on legislative decisions.

George Schoepfoer also inquired about the frequency of the TA process, to which Alex McKenzie replied that it occurs annually.

Joe Chovan asked if the 12 applications submitted by MnDOT District 3 were discarded. Alex McKenzie clarified that 12 applications were submitted across the four different development committees within District 3, including two from the APO.

Alex McKenzie then explained the rubric developed by the APO to evaluate TA

project applications.

Alex McKenzie presented on City of Saint Cloud's 22nd Street S project. The current conditions along 22nd Street S reveal a lack of active transportation facilities, such as sidewalks or bike lanes. A six-foot shoulder exists on the north side of the street, but transit users are often forced to wait in unsafe conditions, particularly during winter months. Students attending Oak Hill Community School lack safe routes for walking or biking, and speeding is a notable concern, with vehicles reaching up to 40 MPH on a roadway posted with a 30 MPH speed limit.

To address these challenges, several improvements have been proposed. These include the installation of sidewalks and bike lanes to support pedestrian and cycling access, along with street lighting to enhance visibility and safety. Marked crosswalks will facilitate safer pedestrian crossings, and the infrastructure will be designed to be ADA-compliant, ensuring accessibility for all users.

Key destinations within close proximity to the project area include Oak Hill Community School, Kwik Trip, and Calvary Hill Park, all located within half a mile. St. Cloud Church of Christ is approximately one mile away, Coborns grocery store is within two miles, and St. Cloud Tech High School is roughly 2.25 miles from the project site. The project area also provides connections to various neighborhoods and multi-family residential complexes, enhancing overall community connectivity.

The area's demographic data highlights several important considerations. The disability population accounts for 9.8%, people of color represent 19.1%, and foreign-born residents make up 7.0%. Youth comprise 13.7% of the population, while 8.8% are older adults. Approximately 40.0% of households fall below 185% of the poverty rate, and 2.8% are zero-vehicle households, emphasizing the importance of accessible transportation options.

Transit data from Metro Bus Route 5 indicates that over 4,000 passengers utilized the route between June 2024 and November 2024. Within the project limits, approximately 2,500 passengers boarded or exited, highlighting the significance of enhancing transit access and safety in this area.

The project will also enhance connectivity with surrounding infrastructure. Along County Road 136 and Oak Grove Road, sidewalks connect 22nd Street S to the south of Oak Hill School, and bike lanes run from 25th Avenue S to 33rd Street S. Sidewalks also link 22nd Street S to County Road 75 and further north. On 22nd Street S itself, sidewalks extend west from Oak Grove Road to Highway 15, and bike lanes run from Oak Grove Road to W St Germain Street. Additionally, Cooper Avenue S offers bike lanes and sidewalks that connect from County Road 75 to 38th Street S.

Andrea Nistler asked how many students cut through the wooded area behind Oak Hill Community School to access the school. Alex McKenzie responded that he did not have data on how many students use the woods to walk or bike to school, but noted that the paths are unpaved, unlit, and unplowed in winter, making them difficult to navigate.

Keith Piskur commented that the shoulder width on 22nd Street S is approximately the size of a wheelchair and a service dog. He also noted that speeding is an issue

along the corridor.

Joe Chovan asked whether bike lanes exist at either end of the corridor, to which Alex McKenzie confirmed that they do.

George Schoephoer inquired about the source of the demographic data, and Alex McKenzie explained that it comes from the U.S. Census for the surrounding area.

Joe Chovan then asked if it was common for sidewalks to be excluded from road designs, such as along this section of 22nd Street S. Alex McKenzie explained that when the roadway was originally constructed, it may have been under township jurisdiction, and at that time, there was no policy requiring sidewalks. However, the City of Saint Cloud now has a policy mandating that new or reconstructed roadways include sidewalks on at least one side.

During the public hearing for this project, some residents along the corridor raised concerns about tree removal within the right-of-way. Brian Gibson explained that when a roadway transitions from a rural to an urban section, ditches are typically replaced with curb and gutter storm sewers. Many homeowners mistakenly believe they own these ditches, but they are actually within the public right-of-way, meaning additional property acquisition is likely unnecessary.

David Broxmeyer shared his personal experience of nearly being hit by a vehicle multiple times along this corridor. He then asked about the functional classification of the roadway.

Alex McKenzie presented on the City of Sauk Rapids Mayhew Lake Road NE (CSAH 1) project. The current conditions along Mayhew Lake Road NE (CSAH 1) reveal an absence of active transportation facilities, such as sidewalks or bike lanes. Students attending Sauk Rapids-Rice High School lack safe routes for walking or biking, and the high-speed limit of 50-55 mph further contributes to safety concerns.

To address these issues, a 10-foot-wide shared-use path for bicycles and pedestrians has been proposed. This path will connect directly to the high school parking lot and is designed to separate active transportation users from vehicular traffic, enhancing safety and accessibility for all users. Key destinations served by this project include Sauk Rapids-Rice High School and Mayhew Creek Park, a 60-acre regional park. Planned amenities for the park include additional trails, baseball fields, multi-purpose fields, a playground, a sledding hill, and an aquatic center. The shared-use path will also provide connections to nearby neighborhoods and multi-family residential complexes, promoting broader community access.

The estimated daily usage of the shared-use facility is approximately 1,120 users, demonstrating the potential demand and impact of the project. Demographic data for the area indicates that 12.9% of the population has a disability, 6.5% are people of color, and 1.2% are foreign-born. Youth make up 16.6% of the population, and seniors account for 12.9%. Additionally, 1.4% of households have zero vehicles, and 31.1% fall below the 185% poverty rate, with 16.4% living in poverty. These figures highlight the critical need for accessible transportation infrastructure in the area.

The proposed shared-use path will extend along Mayhew Lake Road from Osauka

Road NE to Golden Spike Road NE. It will also connect with Golden Spike Road NE/Second Street N, providing a shared-use path from Mayhew Lake Road to downtown Sauk Rapids. This will facilitate further connections to various sidewalks and neighborhoods, enhancing overall transportation accessibility and safety for the community.

Joe Chovan asked whether Mayhew Lake Road is part of the Beltline. Alex McKenzie responded that it is not, as the Beltline is located farther east. However, in the future, Mayhew Lake Road is planned to be designed as a four-lane divided arterial.

Debbie Anderson asked when the expansion of Mayhew Lake Road would occur. Alex McKenzie stated that the timeline is undetermined, as the City of Sauk Rapids and Benton County will likely need state bonding funds and possibly federal funding to complete the project. Brian Gibson added that the city and county have lobbied for federal funds but have not been successful so far.

Alex McKenzie then asked the group to score their projects. Brian Gibson emphasized that while a technical evaluation will be conducted, the ATP needs input on priorities from a public perspective. He explained that if funding is limited to one project, they want to know which project the group believes should be prioritized based on their experiences as system users.

Andrea Nistler commented that deciding is difficult. She believes the 22nd Street S project would create a strong connection but would personally still avoid it due to high traffic speeds. She also noted that widening the roadway may encourage faster vehicle speeds.

Keith Piskur emphasized the need for crosswalks along 22nd Street S, especially given the hill, which can obstruct visibility for both students and wheelchair users. He pointed out that wheelchairs are lower to the ground, making them harder for drivers to see as they crest the hill.

George Schoepfoer asked whether the sidewalk on 22nd Street S would be set far enough back from the roadway to ensure safety. He also stated that 22nd Street S is an immediate need, while the Mayhew Lake Road project is more of a future necessity.

Keith Piskur supported prioritizing the 22nd Street S project and appreciated previous upgrades to nearby roadways such as Oak Grove Road.

Joe Chovan asked if there were any plans for a bikeway from Sauk Rapids to Foley. Alex McKenzie responded that the APO's Regional Active Transportation Plan identifies a corridor for an on-road facility, but there are currently no plans for construction.

When scoring the projects, Andrea Nistler, Debbie Anderson, Joe Chovan, Mariah Klein, Keith Piskur, George Schoepfoer, and Emma Hanson all awarded their 10 priority points to the 22nd Street S project, citing immediate safety concerns and the potential for more elementary students to walk or bike to Oak Hill Community School. Joe Chovan also noted that a trail along Mayhew Lake Road could be included when the roadway is eventually widened.

Alex McKenzie confirmed that the group's recommendation would allocate 10

regional priority points to the 22nd Street S project and five points to the Mayhew Lake Road project. He explained that their recommendation would go before the APO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which would then make a recommendation to the Policy Board, which has the final authority over regional priority points. The ATP will score all projects based on technical merit and then add the regional priority points to those scores.

Other Business and Announcements

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 a.m.