

SAINT CLOUD AREA PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD
Thursday, February 13, 2020 – 4:30 p.m.
Great River Regional Library, St. Cloud, MN

A regular meeting of the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization Policy Board was held on Thursday, February 13, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. at the Great River Regional Library. Chair Rick Miller presided with the following members present:

Mayor Rick Miller	Waite Park
Matt Glaesman (Alt)	Saint Cloud
Council Member Paul Brandmire	Saint Cloud
Council Member Jeff Goerger	Saint Cloud
Council Member Tim Elness (Alt)	Sartell
Council Member Dottie Seamans	Sauk Rapids
Mayor Rick Schultz	Saint Joseph
Supervisor Jeff Westerlund	LeSauk Township
Commissioner A. Jake Bauerly	Benton County
Commissioner Joe Perske	Stearns County
Ryan Daniel	Metro Bus
Brian Gibson, Exec Director	Saint Cloud APO
Dorothy Sweet	Saint Cloud APO
Vicki Johnson	Saint Cloud APO
Alex McKenzie	Saint Cloud APO
Fred Sandal	Saint Cloud APO
Frank Loetterle	MnDOT Passenger Rail Office & Guest Speaker
Steve Foss	TAC member, Saint Cloud
Anne Buckvold	Community Member
Jodi Teich	TAC member, Stearns County
Chris Byrd	TAC member, Benton County
Absent:	
Danielowski (Excused)	Sherburne County

Chair Miller led the board members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mayor Schultz motioned to approve the agenda, and Mr. Goerger seconded the motion. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: Anne Buckvold, community member from Saint Joseph, commented that she was attending because she was interested in the Northstar presentation by Mr. Loetterle.

CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS: (Approve Minutes of Jan 9, 2020 Policy Board Meeting, Bills Lists for January and February, Tort Liabilities Issue, Area Transportation Partnership Staff Report, and the Technical Advisory Committee Staff Report)

Mr. Goerger motioned to approve the Consent Agenda items, and Mr. Bauerly seconded the motion. Motion carried.

PRESENTATION – UPDATE ON NORTHSTAR:

Frank Loetterle, from the MnDOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations and Manager of the Rail and Freight Planning Section, spoke about the ongoing study to determine the feasibility of extending Northstar to Saint Cloud. He reviewed the background history of Northstar going back to its creation in November of 2009. The original plans called for Northstar coming to Saint Cloud. In the ten years since Northstar was created, several proposals have been made for extending it to Saint Cloud without success. In 2019 State legislature appropriated \$650,000 in general fund revenue to study the extension of Northstar Commuter Rail service to Saint Cloud.

Study Objectives

- Develop alternative operating plans that reflect the provision of passenger rail service between Saint Cloud and Target field Station
- Engage BNSF Railway in discussions at each step of the process to ensure that alternative plans are feasible
- Present a set of alternative plans that BNSF is willing to operate along with estimated cost

Study Approach

- Develop operational scenarios that represent a range of additional service
- Establish schedules, equipment, cycling, crew rotation and blocking diagrams for each scenario
- Consult with BNSF to determine viability of scenario and make appropriate adjustments
- Identify infrastructure requirements
- Estimate Capital and Operating Costs
- Present options to public, stakeholders and legislature

Current Status:

- Simulation model has been developed and tested
- Completing evaluation of five preliminary operating plans with BNSF input
 - Two of five scenarios have been determined to be unworkable
 - Three scenarios are being advanced for further analysis
- Initiate operational modeling

Public Input

- Stakeholder meeting held by Chamber of Commerce in Nov, 2019 and Public open house held at Saint Cloud Library on Jan 30, 2020
- Formal stakeholder and public engagement process will be initiated once options are complete

Next Steps

- Public Engagement Program
- Select and fund preferred alternative
- Negotiate with BNSF Railway for track access and operations
- Negotiate with Amtrak for station access
- Purchase/lease equipment
- Conduct environmental review
- Design and construct track and signal improvements

BNSF has been involved in these discussions from the start of this process. Once an option is chosen, it will need to be determined who will operate this. Board members raised questions/comments/concerns pertaining to the importance of reliable and on-time schedules,

convenience, reasonable cost to riders, how will the extension be paid for, who will own it, and the advantages of extending it to Sartell. The positive impact on lifestyle and increased economic activity was acknowledged. Extending the Northstar has been on our Regional Priorities list for several years. Since current Representative O'Driscoll does not seem to be an advocate for this extension, it was suggested that we coordinate our lobbying efforts with Senator Jerry Relph and Rep. Dan Wolgamott.

CONSIDER AMENDMENT TO TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP):

Senior Planner Vicki Johnson reported that the APO is currently on a schedule to amend the TIP four times a year. The FY 2020-2023 TIP was previously approved by the Policy Board in August, 2019. Fiscal constraint has been maintained for all proposed changes. The changes are as follows:

Stearns County:

2020: Project funding source changed from STBGP to NHPP and project cost increased.

2022: a) Advance Construction Payback increased

b) Project number and description assigned. Project undergoing a funding swap. Local funds have increased to account for the funding difference. Overall project cost remains the same.

2023: Project number and description updated.

WACOSA:

2020: Added purchase of one replacement bus.

Metro Bus:

2020: a) Project funding source (STBGP to FTA) and project number changed.

b) Project funding source (STBGP to FTA) and project number changed.

c) Project description changed and project cost decreased.

d) Reduced number of buses to be purchased from three to one, and project cost dropped.

e) Project funding source (STBGP to FTA) and project number changed.

2021: Project funding source changed from local funds to FTA/LF split.

2023: Changed work type status from transit vehicle purchase to facility improvements.

MnDOT:

2021: Adding project to TIP per MnDOT District #3.

Mrs. Johnson reviewed the projects, the feedback received from a survey monkey and an open house, and the APO's response to the comments received. The public comment period was completed on February 3. The TAC recommended approval of the proposed changes at their January 30, 2020 meeting. **Mr. Westerlund motioned to accept the TAC's recommendation and approval of the Amendments, and Mr. Goerger seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

CONSIDER PROJECT PRIORITIZATION FOR 2024 SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (STBGP):

Mrs. Johnson reviewed the background histories and the requirements of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the process required to complete each document, funding sources, and how transportation projects are included in those documents. One source of transportation funding used is the STBGP, which provides flexible funding that may be used for projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects, including intercity bus

terminals. States and localities are responsible for a minimum 20 percent share of project costs funded through this program. Mrs. Johnson reviewed the funding MnDOT received for this program, as well as how the funds are divided in Minnesota. With the formula used, the APO received 20.53% of the \$10,400,000 allotment, which amounts to \$2,135,120. A project solicitation process was initiated for the funds in the APO area. The applications included technical criteria: Access & Mobility; System Connectivity; Multimodal; System condition; Safety; Economic Vitality Energy & Environmental Conservation; and Public Engagement, Plan Identification, and Project Readiness. Five applications for these funds in the APO planning area were received. The APO did the initial review and ranking of the projects. The TAC members reviewed the APO's ranking, and came to a consensus and recommendation for the Policy Board. The projects are listed below:

- ❖ Sauk Rapids: a) Benton CSAH 1 (Mayhew Lake Road) Trail
b) 2nd Avenue South from Benton Drive to 10th Street South Reconstruction
- ❖ Benton Co: Mayhew Lake Rd (Pavement preservation) CSAH 1 from CSAH 29 to CR 78
- ❖ Stearns Co: a) CSAH 133 – Expansion
b) CSAH 81 – Roadway Reclamation, Reconditioning and Resurfacing

Jodi Teich, Stearns County, Chris Byrd, Benton County, and Steve Foss, City of Saint Cloud, all TAC members, presented their projects and responded to questions and concerns from the board members.

Mrs. Johnson stressed that the TAC's recommendation is based on technical merit, and they felt that any equity issues should be left up to the Policy Board. The TAC's recommendations (one TAC member abstained and one TAC member opposed) are as follows:

- 1) Stearns County's CSAH 133 project from CSAH 75 to 19th Ave in Saint Joseph: Expand to 4 lanes and intersection improvements at Elm Street, Dual Left Turn Lanes from EB CSAH 75 to NB CSAH 133 be funded in full \$1,440,000.
- 2) Benton County CSAH 1: Full depth reclamation and resurfacing funded in the amount of \$695,120.

Mr. Goerger motioned to approve the TAC's recommendation of Stearns County CSAH 133 project - \$1,440,000 and Benton County's CSAH 1 project - \$695,120. Motion carried. Mr. Byrd from Benton County said that Benton County could come up with the additional funds (\$24,880) for their project since it was not fully funded.

CONSIDER PROJECT PRIORITIZATION FOR 2024 TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM:

Mrs. Johnson reviewed the Transportation Alternatives Program, how projects get funding from this program, and the process used for solicitation of projects. Projects eligible for funding from this program are typically facilities for bike and pedestrians, environmental mitigation or habitat protection as related to highway construction or operations, as well as infrastructure and non-infrastructure related to Safe Routes to School activities. States and localities are responsibility for a minimum 20 percent share of project costs funded through this program. MnDOT District 3 staff received 13 applications for projects competing for \$1.6 million with two projects from the APO planning area. The APO's responsibility is to determine which of the projects receives 10 additional regional priority points and which receives 5 points. The two projects are described below:

- 1) City of Saint Cloud – County Road 136 (Reconstructing 1.6 miles of multimodal roadway (CR 136) including 6’ wide sidewalk and 6’ wide bike lanes curb and gutter from 22nd St. S to Oak Hill Elementary to 33rd Street S.
- 2) City of Sauk Rapids – CSAH 1 Trail (Construct a 10 foot wide bituminous trail from the existing trail at CSAH 3 along CSAH 1 to the existing trail at Osauka Road.

Mr. Foss, TAC member, reviewed and advocated for the County Road 136 project.

Mr. Goerger motioned to approve the TAC’s recommendation of the Saint Cloud project receiving 10 points and the Sauk Rapids project receiving 5 points. Mr. Schultz seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mrs. Johnson said that the APO has typically done quite well in receiving funding for their projects in this program. She also noted that jurisdictions can continue to apply for this funding if their project is not chosen.

CONSIDER AMENDMENT TO 2020 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP):

Mr. Gibson reviewed the three primary reasons for the amendment to the 2020 UPWP.

- 1) An error in a formula in one cell of the spreadsheet resulting in an under-estimate of budgetary needs
- 2) APO staff are currently writing a regional Active Transportation Plan and have discovered that the Parks & Trails Council of MN has a Research Bicycle which can collect bike-path pavement roughness. The estimated cost for collecting pavement condition for all 105 miles of bike-paths is \$12,000; and
- 3) At the time of creating the 2020 budget, one transportation planner salary was based on someone just out of college. Since then, that employee has left and has been replaced by a new planner with over three decades of experience, which requires a higher salary.

The total budget adjustment request totaled \$63,250. Mr. Gibson responded to questions about the Research Bicycle data, and proposed that the required local match of \$12,650 would come from the APO Savings account.

Mr. Bauerly motioned to approve the Amendment to the 2020 UPWP, and Mr. Goerger seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CONSIDER 2020 REGIONAL PROJECT PRIORITIES:

Mr. Gibson presented the Regional Project Priorities booklet which will accompany Mr. Gibson and Chair Rick Miller on their annual Washington DC trip to lobby for the APO transportation priorities. Other members are welcome to attend, but will need to do so at their own expense. The briefing booklet was reviewed at the TAC meeting and a few recommendations were made. Mr. Gibson will update Northstar language with our current planning effort, insert the CSAH 1 project based on Ms. Jodi Teich’s recommendation, look for other jurisdictions who support the I-94 widening, break beltline projects into specific pieces, update the airport with the taxiway project, and change Sartell’s Roberts Road project to Scout/Dehler. The revisions will be brought to the board next month.

ELECT POLICY BOARD 3RD VICE-CHAIR FOR 2020:

Mr. Gibson announced that because several officers were not in attendance at the January meeting, it was decided to wait to elect a third Vice-Chair until this meeting. A list of Policy Board members and their jurisdictions who held offices in the past ten years was distributed. Since it has been ten years since a Sartell representative has held an office, it was motioned by

Mayor Schultz and seconded by Mr. Elness to have Mayor Fitzthum fill the 3rd Vice-Chair position. It was also decided that since Mr. Goerger had recently been Chair, he agreed to swap Vice-Chair positions with Mr. Perske. Mr. Perske will move up to 1st Vice-Chair, and Mr. Goerger would move back to the 2nd Vice Chair position.

Officers for 2020: Mayor Miller – Chair; Joe Perske – 1st Vice Chair; Jeff Goerger – 2nd Vice Chair; Mayor Fitzthum – 3rd Vice Chair

Mr. Perske motioned to approve Mayor Fitzthum taking the 3rd Vice-Chair position, and Mr. Goerger and Mr. Perske swapping Vice Chair positions. Mr. Bauerly seconded the motion. Motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Gibson introduced Fred Sandal, Associate Transportation Planner, to the board members.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.



Mayor Rick Miller
St. Cloud APO Chair

3-12-20
Date