



## **SAINT CLOUD APO SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN**

As found in Appendix D of the APO's Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) is a comprehensive, intergovernmental transportation planning agency for the Saint Cloud metropolitan area. The organization is committed to coordinating long-range planning, in a fair and mutually beneficial manner, on selected issues transcending jurisdictional boundaries for the betterment of the entire Saint Cloud area. The APO provides technical assistance to members and facilitates problem solving through constant, cooperative, intergovernmental communication.

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.316, as part of the APO's public outreach efforts to solicit comments and discussion on pertinent transportation issues, information must be available in electronically accessible formats. Through the use of social media, the APO is further able to comply with these federally mandated regulations.

The Saint Cloud APO operates and maintains its social media sites as a way to provide information about APO programs, projects, issues, events, and activities. It is the intent the APO will utilize social media to interact with residents and gain insight into the important issues facing the Saint Cloud metropolitan area. This effort is in addition to the comments and interaction that currently occurs through the [organization's website](http://www.stcloudapo.org) ([www.stcloudapo.org](http://www.stcloudapo.org)), [surveys](#), and [other public engagement activities](#). Information for social media will be provided in simple, easily understood language.

Social media sites that may be used are (but not limited to): Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

### **Disclaimer**

Comments expressed in this social media plan or on the Saint Cloud APO's social media sites do not necessarily reflect the opinions and positions of the Saint Cloud APO, its individual members, or its administrators, officers, or employees. The Saint Cloud APO reserves the right to remove or hide a comment that is in violation of the APO's policy, without prior notification. The Saint Cloud APO does not endorse any content, viewpoint, product, or service linked from its social media sites and shall not be held liable for any losses caused by reliance on the accuracy, reliability, or timeliness of shared information.

In addition to information provided by the APO, the social media sites may contain comments and opinions from unrelated third parties which are being provided as a convenience to the public and for informational purposes only. These comments or opinions do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by the APO of any of the views or comments posted on the APO's website. Furthermore, the APO bears no responsibility for the accuracy or legality of these materials.

Communications with the APO, whether through social media, email, or traditional mail are subject to Minn. Stat. Chapter 13, the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The APO takes public comments seriously and will consider all comments received. Removal of data from a social media post does not mean that the comments were not given appropriate consideration.

## **Internal Terms of Use**

### **Purpose**

This document defines the social networking and social media policy for the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization. To address the fast-changing landscape of the way MPA residents communicate and obtain information online, the APO aims to use social media tools in conjunction with traditional outreach methods to reach a broader audience. The APO encourages the use of social media to further the goals, vision, and mission of the APO. The APO also seeks to maintain immediate, open, honest dialogue with members of the public through the use of social media platforms. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media.

### **Professional Use**

All official APO-related communication through social media, Web 2.0 (sites that allow users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators of user-generated content in a virtual community), and social networking outlets should remain professional in nature and should always be conducted in a professional manner. Employees must not use official agency social media, Web 2.0, or social networking sites for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities.

APO employees should be mindful that inappropriate usage of official agency social media, Web 2.0, and social networking sites can be grounds for corrective action from APO management. Only individuals authorized by the APO Executive Director may publish content to the APO's social media platforms.

### **Oversight and Enforcement**

Employees representing the APO through social media outlets or participating in social media features on agency websites must maintain a high level of ethical demeanor and professional modesty. Failure to do so is grounds for revoking the privilege to participate in APO social media sites or other social media features. Information must be presented following professional standards for good grammar, spelling, brevity, clarity and accuracy; and avoid jargon and obscure terminology. Special care must be used to limit the usage of acronyms.

APO employees recognize the content and messages they post on social media websites are public and may be cited as official statements from the organization and subject to Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

APO social media sites shall only be used by the organization employees for APO professional use only not for their personal use or for the personal use of the public. APO employees and the public may not publish information on agency social media sites that includes:

- Confidential information.
- Copyright violations.
- Profanity, racist, sexist, or derogatory contents or comments.
- Partisan political views.
- Commercial endorsements.
- Spam comments.

## **External Terms of Use**

### **Limited Public Forum**

All social media sites used by the APO are designated as Limited Public Forums. The APO welcomes a person's right to express their opinion and encourages participants to keep comments relevant to the topic in question. Posting of any content on any social media site used by the APO, by any visitor, follower, subscriber, or fan constitutes acceptance of the terms of use described here in this policy.

### **Comments and Interactions**

Public comments on APO-generated content should be limited to comments related to the posted topic. APO social media channels are not the proper place to express opinions or beliefs not directly related to subjects/areas in which the APO conducts its business (i.e., transportation policies and programs). If comments left on our social media postings are constructive, we view those posts as an opportunity to discuss, clear up misunderstandings, or otherwise work through whatever issues the person is having. We encourage comments on content shared via our social media channels, as all viewpoints are welcome, but citizen participation must be constructive. We reserve the right to make editorial decisions regarding submitted comments, including but not limited to, the removal of comments.

The APO uses social media platforms to inform residents and stakeholders about important relevant issues and to solicit public input on draft plans, policies, and other products of the APO. Public comments on posts made by the APO are highly encouraged. Individual users are fully responsible for anything they post in comments including links, videos/photos and other material.

The APO Executive Director reserves the right to remove comments and/or block users if users engage in the following behaviors:

- Threats of violence or other potentially criminal behavior.
- Hate speech.
- Profanity, obscenity, or vulgarity.
- Nudity in pictures or videos.
- Defamation to a person or people.
- Name calling and/or personal attacks.
- Comments that are promotional in nature.
- Comments that infringe on copyright.
- Spam comments.

The number of daily posts to the Saint Cloud APO social media page(s) will vary. Responses to comments will occur 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CST/CDT Monday through Friday with the exception of holidays.

### **User Privacy**

The APO does not collect or store the personal information of social media users except when required by law. Social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter may have their own privacy policies that may differ from the APO's.

This policy statement is subject to amendment or modification at any time to ensure its continued use is consistent with its intended purpose. Questions or concerns regarding APO presence on various social media channels should be directed to the APO Executive Director.