

Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) Meeting
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Nov. 2, 2020

Attendees

- Fred Sandal, Chairperson.
- Vicki Johnson.
- Alex McKenzie.
- Brian Gibson.
- Kurt Franke.
- Katherine Erickson.
- Hannah Dockendorf.
- Chelle Benson.
- Sarah Weed.
- Larry Hosch.
- Allison Dudek.
- Ben Anderson.
- Jenny Lezer.

Meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. Chairperson Fred Sandal presided. Introductions were made.

Active Transportation Plan (ATP) Status

Mr. Sandal discussed the progress of the APO's regional Active Transportation Plan (ATP). Effort to develop this plan began last October with the creation of the Active Transportation Plan Development Committee – a group of volunteers who acted as a sounding board for and provided guidance to APO staff. Due to low attendance, Mr. Sandal said this group has been dissolved and staff will utilize the full ATAC.

Since the May 2020 ATAC meeting, APO staff worked on collecting data on the region's active transportation network. This also included concluding a three-month long online survey and Wikimap outreach which ended in June 2020. From this research, APO staff developed draft chapters one, two, and three, along with the goals and objectives for the plan.

Final Survey Results and Public Comment

Mr. Sandal discussed the results of the APO's initial public engagement. A total of 127 individuals took the APO's SurveyMonkey and 27 individual responses were received by the APO's online interactive mapping tool, Wikimap. Key findings presented included:

- Top destinations by area active transportation users: Parks/trails/nature (89%) and food/groceries (71%).
- Top barriers to biking: Don't feel safe because of vehicle traffic (62%) and lack of facilities (55%).
- Top barriers to walking: Distance to shopping and other services (52%) and lack of sidewalks (45%).
- Top improvement needs: Paved shared use paths (83%), safer road crossings at intersections (57%), and dedicated bicycle lanes along road (53%).

Review Draft ATP

Mr. Sandal presented on the contents of each of the draft ATP chapters developed to date.

Chapter One serves as the introduction to the plan which includes the ATP's purpose along with bringing attention to active transportation needs across the region. The chapter also outlines the need for active transportation planning.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the network which includes discussion on facility types (on-road, off-road, sidewalks, and transit routes/stops), mileage, and condition. Mr. Sandal

said this chapter discusses regionally significant active transportation facilities such as the Beaver Island Trail, the ROCORI Trail, the Lake Wobegon Trail, and the Mississippi River Trail. The chapter also discusses facilities of local significance at the jurisdictional level. Mr. Sandal said Chapter Two also includes a review of state and regional plans. One of those plans, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) District 3 Bicycle Plan, outlines the state's regional priority corridors for bicycle facilities which converge in the Saint Cloud region.

Mr. Sandal said Chapter Three provides an overview of the area's demographics, the types and number of users of the local system, a conversation on trip purpose and destination, and safety. Mr. Sandal reiterated the primary trip purpose and destinations as found in the ATP survey include recreation/exercise, shopping/errands, work/school, and access to transit. Mr. Sandal also stated there has been a growing concern among both bicycle and pedestrian involved crashes with the number of collisions trending up.

Chapter Four lists the APO's draft goals for the ATP. These include:

- Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and comfort.
- Improve connections to desired destinations.
- Improve condition of active transportation facilities.
- Provide equitable access.
- Provide interconnectivity between regional priority corridors.

Mr. Sandal said this chapter also includes objectives and factors for these five goals and will include an overview of the needs assessment methodology.

Mr. Sandal outlined yet to be developed components of the ATP including a financial analysis, projects and priorities identification, and implementation. He also stated the plan will include – as appendices – jurisdictional profiles (mini ATPs for each of the five cities) along with design guidelines/best practices, and public comments.

Mr. Franke said people not feeling safe is an indication that education is a big component that should be included in this plan. He also discussed that safety concerns could also be addressed through lowering speed limits. Mr. Gibson said within the framework of the plan education can be identified as a need however the APO's transportation funding cannot be spent on education. Ms. Johnson provided clarification on the speed limit working group that members of the APO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) are working on.

Mr. Hosch asked if there will be a best practice for roadway and facility design included in the actual text of the plan. Mr. Sandal it will be in the appendices but there may be room for inclusion in the text of the plan.

Mr. Franke asked about the reason why trip purpose was included in this plan. Mr. Gibson said by identifying key destinations people go using active transportation it would help in determining regional priorities.

Ms. Dockendorf stated CentraCare has debuted its social determinates of health survey. This survey will be used to screen patients for a variety of issues such as access to food, shelter, and transportation. She indicated the area's Community Health Needs Assessment – done every three years – may include some questions on transportation as well.

Review Needs Assessment Methodology

Mr. Sandal demonstrated the process APO staff is using to identify needs and priority areas within the APO's planning area. This process included:

1. Evaluate active transportation facilities and service needs by jurisdiction.
2. Map results of the needs analysis for all jurisdictions.
3. Identify connectivity and other needs across communities and the region.
4. Review analysis with ATAC and planning partners.
5. Prioritize needs and projects.

Using Sauk Rapids as an example, Mr. Sandal walked through four of the five draft ATP goals. This analysis included a look at maps representative of a variety of factors. From the initial needs analysis Mr. Sandal identified the following areas in need of further analysis within the City of Sauk Rapids:

- Downtown Sauk Rapids due to a large concentration of crashes.
- 11th Avenue N and Summit Avenue due to a lack of adjacent bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- River Avenue due to its under designed bicycle facilities and fair to poor pavement quality.
- Industrial parks due to the lack of facilities in close proximity to employment areas and transit stops.

Mr. Sandal also met with Sauk Rapids city staff and additional areas of concern were identified. Those included Benton CSAH 1/Mayhew Lake Road south of CSAH 3/Golden Spike Road and a US 10 pedestrian crossing.

Mr. Sandal said once this type of analysis is completed for each jurisdiction, staff will begin to evaluate possible connection points for regional active transportation priority corridors. To do this, Mr. Sandal said staff will evaluate possible locations for connections between "collector" paths and regional priority corridors.

Mr. Sandal said the next steps in the plan development include the completion of the jurisdictional profiles (the "mini" ATPs), identification of and further study of focus areas from the analysis, and additional coordination with local planners and engineers. Mr. Sandal hopes to have the ATAC review the areawide needs analysis at its January meeting.

Mr. Franke had concerns that staff were missing intersections that can be perceived as dangerous. He brought up Second Street S and South Benton Drive in Sauk Rapids as a prime example given its severe angle and double railroad tracks. He was surprised that intersection was missed.

Mr. Franke and Ms. Benson indicated the need for APO staff to look at interjurisdictional connections.

Announcements and Other Business

Mr. Sandal discussed the need to fill the ATAC representative vacancy on the APO's TAC left by Mr. Franke. Ms. Johnson and Mr. Gibson provided some background on the TAC meetings and the role this individual would play. Mr. Hosch volunteered to serve as the ATAC representative.

Mr. Sandal and Ms. Johnson briefly discussed the fiscal year 2025 Transportation Alternatives program and the role APO ATAC members will have in the regional prioritization process.

Mr. Sandal said the next ATAC meeting will be in January. He will be sending out a Doodle Poll with more information about dates and times.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Vicki Johnson