

Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) Meeting
Saint Cloud Public Library Bremer Room
Aug. 11, 2021

Attendees:

- Todd Holman
- Chelle Benson
- Brian Gibson
- Alex McKenzie
- Vicki Johnson
- Fred Sandal, Chairperson
- Sarah Weed
- Dave Broxmeyer
- Kurt Franke
- Nate Keller
- Jenny Lezer
- Joe Chovan

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. with Chairperson Fred Sandal presiding. Introductions were made.

Review Draft ATP, Chapter 4

Mr. Sandal provided a recap of what staff has been working on since the last ATAC meeting in January 2021. He stated the vision statement, goals, and objectives of the APO's Active Transportation Plan (ATP) were presented at and approved by the APO's Policy Board in April 2021.

Mr. Sandal stated APO staff have also developed performance measures relative to the goals and objectives. In addition, staff have also included a methodology as part of Chapter 4 to explain the process of how APO staff have identified areas of need within each of the five cities.

Discuss the Draft Active Transportation Plan Profiles

Mr. Sandal explained the needs assessment methodology and how APO staff utilized goals 1 through 4 of the ATP to identify focus areas within each of the cities. This broad-based analysis was based upon the following: safety and comfort; connections to destinations; improvement of facility conditions; and equity. Areas within each city that met multiple criteria were identified as focus areas. Mr. Sandal said it was important to note this analysis would not identify every problem area within each municipality but would instead focus on areas with the greatest need for improvement/active transportation facilities.

After APO staff had identified focus areas within each of the cities, a detailed analysis for each city was prepared. This also included project recommendations for those focus areas within the cities. Mr. Sandal said the recommendations were based upon the following: needs and local context; Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) guidelines; and recommendations from city staff.

It is important to note that the elected officials have not had the opportunity to review these recommendations as of yet. That is anticipated to occur in September 2021.

Mr. Keller had asked if off-road trails such as single-track mountain bike trails were considered as part of the needs analysis/focus areas. Mr. Gibson said that due to the nature of the analysis, these facilities and the apparent gaps they present were not included in the ATP.

Mr. Franke asked if bike lanes and routes were considered as part of the focus areas for each city. Mr. Sandal said yes.

Mr. Holman had asked if land use, particularly service to residential areas, was included as part of the analysis. Mr. Sandal indicated that land use was closely analyzed.

Mr. Sandal also indicated that meetings with local staff seemed to indicate APO staff did a good job at identifying areas of needs.

Mr. Sandal continued the discussion with a review of the regional active transportation network. After staff completed the in-depth analysis for each city, Mr. Sandal said staff conducted an evaluation of the network on the basis of Goal 5's objectives which include: Improving connectivity between communities within the MPA and improving connectivity outside the MPA boundaries.

Staff's determination of the regional network was based upon the following guidelines:

- Completing network gaps.
- Utilizing existing facilities when feasible.
- Approximate spacing of two miles between facilities.
- Preference for shared use paths over on-road facilities.
- Consideration of current local and statewide plans.
- Early vetting with staff from local jurisdictions.

Mr. Sandal presented a map of the proposed regional bikeway network. Part of this network, he said, also includes the proposed beltline.

Mr. Holman had asked why the active transportation improvements along the US 10/MN 23 interchange (to be constructed in 2023) were not included as part of the regional network. He stated that he would strongly consider this due to the connection to Benton CSAH 8 would make this a highly used corridor. Mr. Gibson said this was considered as part of planned city improvements, but was not considered as part of the "regional" network due to the lack of connectivity to the rest of the region.

Mr. Franke asked about the abandoned railroad corridor north of MN 23 and if APO staff considered using land as part of the regional bikeway network. Mr. Gibson said this was vacated several years ago and both Benton County and the City of Saint Cloud were approached about the possibility of a rails to trails project, however neither party was interested. Ms. Benson said that once the corridor is outside of the Saint Cloud area, the vacated railroad property has gone back to private land owners so not a lot of this corridor is currently available. Mr. Franke said he would still encourage the city to explore this option within city limits due to vehicle congestion as a way to make it safer for people who cycle.

Ms. Lezer asked if the City of Sauk Rapids was involved in the determination of the preliminary regional network. Mr. Sandal said yes.

Mr. Sandal said the regional network will more than likely be modified once presented to both the APO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Policy Board.

Timelines and Next Steps

Mr. Sandal reviewed the timeline to complete the ATP. This includes a presentation of the draft ATP city and regional profiles to both the APO's TAC (Aug. 26) and Policy Board (Sept. 9). Mr. Sandal said APO staff will be finalizing the draft ATP by the end of the year.

Mr. Sandal indicated the possibility of including another section regarding best practices/policy recommendations. He said this section may include examples from other

communities and recommendations on Complete Streets and similar supporting ordinances with the goal being to create a tool kit for planners and policy makers.

Mr. Sandal said the next ATAC meeting would be in January 2022 where staff will present a completed draft for the ATAC to review. He anticipates final adoption of plan in May-June 2022.

Other Announcements

Mr. Franke asked about the TAC presentation of the ATP. Ms. Johnson said the TAC presentation will be a discussion item.

Mr. Franke also asked for an update on the speed limit working group. Ms. Johnson said there was not a consensus from the cities on how to move forward. She plans on reconvening this working group of the TAC once she returns from maternity leave in November.

Mr. Holman asked if ATAC members would be allowed to comment on the last chapter of the ATP. Mr. Gibson said yes.

Ms. Johnson discussed the APO's visioning process and encouraged ATAC members to participate.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Vicki Johnson.