

SAINT CLOUD AREA PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD

Thursday, September 21st, 2023 – 4:30 PM

A regular meeting of the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization Policy Board was held on Thursday, September 21, 2023, at 4:30 PM. APO Chair Raeanne Danielowski presided with the following members:

Raeanne Danielowski	County of Sherburne
Jeff Westerlund	Town of LeSauk
Mike Conway	City of St. Cloud
Jeff Goerger	City of St. Cloud
Frank Theisen	City of Waite Park
Dottie Seamans	City of Sauk Rapids
Jake Anderson	City of Saint Cloud
Ryan Daniel	Metro Bus
Leigh Lenzmeier	Stearns County

Also in attendance were:

Brian Gibson	Saint Cloud APO
Vicki Johnson	Saint Cloud APO
Alex McKenzie	Saint Cloud APO
James Stapfer	Saint Cloud APO
Mike	Member of the public

Absent:

Tim Elness	City of Sartell
Jared Gapinski	County of Benton
Rick Schultz	City of St. Joseph

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mr. Goerger motioned to approve the agenda with the addition of the 33rd Street Bridge to the UPWP in 2025 under Other Business and Announcements, and Mr. Conway seconded the motion. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: No members of the public had comments.

CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

- a. Approve Minutes of August 10, 2023 Policy Board Meeting (Attachment A)
- b. Approve Bills Lists (Attachments B1 – B3)
- c. Receive Staff Report on Aug. 31, 2023 Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (Attachment C)

Ms. Seamans motioned to approve the consent agenda items, and Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mr. Goerger abstained.

Consider the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Johnson presented on the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is the document that programs federal funds for transportation improvements in the APO's Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). Decisions about transportation investments require collaboration and cooperation between different levels of government and neighboring agencies and jurisdictions. As a document, the TIP reports how the various agencies and jurisdictions within the MPA have prioritized using limited Federal highway and transit funding.

Mr. Anderson asked if the TAC had any comments or concerns about the TIP, and Ms. Johnson replied no.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Westerlund seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Consider Looking Ahead 2050 Existing Conditions Chapter

Ms. Johnson presented on the Looking Ahead 2050 Existing Conditions Chapter. One of the key components in developing the MTP – or any planning process really – is understanding the existing conditions. Over the past two years, APO staff have worked to update the region's existing conditions from our previous planning base year 2015 (for MAPPING 2045) to base year 2020. The existing conditions section provides a comprehensive overview of the region. Included in this are the following:

- Demographics
- Land Use
- Commuting/Travel.
- Time of Day.

Existing Infrastructure. This section is further divided into roadways, urban transit, active transportation, other transportation options, and freight.

- Roadways.
- Urban Transit.
- Active Transportation.
- Other Transportation Options.
- Freight.

Mr. Conway asked how many commuters go into the office every day versus once or twice per week. Ms. Johnson stated that the household travel survey data later in the presentation will cover those types of trips and how people's travel habits have changed since COVID. Mr. Westerlund asked if Amtrak is still in operation and if the depot is still on the east side of Saint Cloud. Ms. Johnson confirmed.

Mr. Goerger motioned to approve the Looking Ahead 2050 existing conditions chapter. Mr. Conway seconded. Motion carried.

Consider Looking Ahead 2050 Environmental Chapter

Mr. McKenzie presented the Looking Ahead 2050 Environmental Chapter. This section lays out the role the transportation sector plays in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – which have been known to cause detrimental effects on air quality and human health – to the indirect connections it has to the deterioration of water quality and wildlife habitats, the relationship between transportation and the environment is one transportation planners must be mindful of when considering future infrastructure needs. This chapter investigates the relationship between the existing environment and transportation within the Saint Cloud MPA. By reviewing air quality, water quality, wildlife and habitat, and soil health within the MPA, we have a baseline understanding of the existing conditions of the natural environment. From there, we can look directly at transportation's impact on the natural environment. Coupled with the natural environment, this chapter also looks at the cultural and historic properties within the planning area. Like the natural environment, transportation planners must be mindful of minimizing adverse effects infrastructure might have on cultural and/or historically significant areas. Lastly, this section examines the projected impacts of climate change in the Saint Cloud region, including warmer temperatures, increased precipitation, challenges to the transportation network, and environmental consequences such as air and water pollution.

Ms. Danielowski asked if bad air quality days from the Canadian wildfire could be excluded from the data. Mr. McKenzie said looking at the days individually and excluding data is possible. Mr. Conway stated that the last year of data for GSP per capita was 2016, and the economy has changed since then, so newer data would be helpful. Ms. Danielowski agreed.

Mr. Goerger motioned to approve the Looking Ahead 2050 Environmental Chapter. Mr. Conway seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Consider Personnel Policies Updates

Mr. Gibson presented on personnel policy updates. Several recent changes in state law require the APO to update its personnel policies. The significant proposed changes include adding Juneteenth (June 19th) as an official holiday and updating our sick leave policies to conform with the Earned Sick and Safe Leave law. In addition, he proposed updates to the employee salary ranges based on market research that he recently conducted, looking at similar positions at other Metropolitan Planning Organizations across the country. He also updated the language to be gender-neutral, updated language about the number of pay periods per year (24 instead of 26), updated language to reflect the possibility of staff working from home and made various other minor corrections or clarifications.

Ms. Seamans asked if this update would affect participants' costs in 2025. Mr. Gibson stated no.

Mr. Daniel motioned to approve the personnel policy updates. Ms. Seamans seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Consider Saint Cloud Urban Area Boundary Adjustments

Mr. Stapfer presented on the Saint Cloud Urban Area Boundary adjustments. Following suggestions from jurisdictions, further adjustments were made. Some key implications of these boundaries relate to how MnDOT reports data to the Federal Highway Administration and which roadways are eligible for federal funding. Urban roads classified as minor collectors or above are eligible for federal funding. Rural roads classified as major collectors or above are eligible for federal funding.

Mr. Gibson stated that if the urban area boundary includes Anderson's Trucking, we may need to bring part of Lynden Township into the APO planning area at a later date. Mr. Lenzmeier asked if they would need to join the APO. Mr. Gibson stated that the only township that joined is LeSauk Township; the other townships are covered through their respective counties. Regarding assessments, Stearns County would pick up the bill for the added township.

Mr. Goerger asked how often the urban area boundaries are adjusted, and Mr. Stapfer replied every 10 years. Mr. Goerger added that the 33rd Street bridge connection isn't considered in the urban area, though there will be development if the bridge is built.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the Saint Cloud Urban Area Boundary Adjustments. Mr. Goerger seconded the motion. Motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. Danielowski reminded the group that the Policy Board will meet on October 12th.

Mr. Goerger motioned to include the 33rd Street bridge connection at the top of the work plan for 2025. Mr. Goerger argued that this bridge would help all area jurisdictions and has been a priority for the APO for many years. If the funding is turned back, this group will never receive this type of federal funding again. Ms. Danielowski replied that the discussion was not centered around not supporting the bridge but on how each jurisdiction is assessed.

Mr. Goerge motioned to include the 33rd Street bridge connection at the top of the 2025 UPWP. Ms. Seamans seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted.

- Ms. Danielowski - Aye
- Mr. Westerlund - Aye
- Mr. Conway - Aye
- Mr. Goerger - Aye
- Mr. Theisen - Aye
- Ms. Seamans - Aye
- Mr. Anderson - Aye
- Mr. Daniel - Aye

Mr. Lenzmeier - Aye

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Conway motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Motion carried.