

**SAINT CLOUD AREA PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD
Thursday, August 14, 2025 – 4:30 PM**

A regular meeting of the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization Policy Board was held on Thursday, August 14, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. Chairman Jared Gapinski presided with the following members present:

Mayor Jake Anderson	City of Saint Cloud
Scott Brodeen	City of Saint Cloud
Mike Conway	City of Saint Cloud
Tim Elness	City of Sartell
Dottie Seamans	City of Sauk Rapids

Frank Theisen	City of Waite Park
Joe Perske	Stearns County
Raeanne Danielowski	Sherburne County
Jeff Westerlund	Le Sauk Township
Michael Kedrowski	Metro Bus (Alternate for Ryan Daniel)

Also in attendance were:

Brian Gibson	Saint Cloud APO
Vicki Johnson	Saint Cloud APO
Alex McKenzie	Saint Cloud APO
Trina Ness	Saint Cloud APO

Absent:

Mayor Adam Scepaniak	City of Saint Joseph
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- 1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 2. INTRODUCTIONS**
- 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Ms. Danielowski motioned to approve the agenda. Mr. Westerlund seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- 4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:**

No members of the public were present.

- 5. CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:**

- a. Approve Minutes of June 12, 2025, Policy Board Meeting
- b. Approve Bills List
- c. Receive Cost-Sharing Agreement Progress Report
- d. Receive Staff Report of June 26, 2025, Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- e. Receive Staff Report of July 31, 2025, Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- f. Receive Staff Report of June 12, 2025, Area Transportation Partnership (ATP-3) Meeting

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

6. CONSIDER CHANGES TO SCORING RUBRIC FOR SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (STBGP)

Ms. Johnson reviewed the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) by explaining the program's role in funding the region's roads and bridges and that it is managed by the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP-3). Solicitation runs from October through January. The application and guidebook are provided by the ATP. The categories included in the current process include:

- Access and Mobility
- Connectivity
- Multimodal
- System Condition
- Safety
- Economic Vitality

The APO also includes two additional categories that need to be addressed:

- Energy and Environmental Conservation
- Public Engagement, Plan Identification, Project Readiness

The current process for evaluating the APO's STBGP projects was formally adopted in September 2019. As of October 2024, the APO has a new Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) "Looking Ahead 2050." At the June TAC meeting, Ms. Johnson presented proposed changes to the current scoring criteria to address the changing priorities at the regional, state, and national level, and the opportunities for improvement in the overall process to better align the STBGP funding with the goals of the 2050 MTP.

Ms. Johnson went on to provide an in-depth review of the proposed scoring rubric changes and revisions. She stated that TAC members had no changes or amendments to the proposed scoring rubric that was presented and recommended Policy Board approval.

Mr. Theisen motioned to Approve the Suggested Changes to the STBGP Scoring Rubric. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

7. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF 2026 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

Mr. Gibson stated the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is both the APO's budget and work plan. It identifies funding sources, revenues, expenditures, and the tasks we expect to accomplish each calendar year. The approved UPWP needs to be provided to MnDOT by September 1st of each year to ensure our funding is properly obligated prior to January 1st of the following year.

For 2026, the APO is expecting \$692,988 from our USDOT planning grant, also called our Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) which consists of Federal funds. These are formula funds and require a 20% local match. The APO is also expecting \$59,910 from our state grant.

The APO's consultant-lead projects proposed for 2026 include:

- Continuing our Community Liaison Program to help ensure that we are reaching all segments of the community (\$5,000).
- Regional Traffic Management Study (\$105,000), which will gather information on existing conditions, operational performance, and technological capabilities for managing traffic flow on existing arterial and collector roadways. Then, it will develop a set of prioritized recommendations for short-term (1-5 years) and long-term (5-20 years) improvements, including but not limited to operational strategies, ITS deployment, signal system enhancements, data management, interagency coordination, and staffing and training

needs.

Overall local assessments would be about 19% higher than in 2025. This is due to the fact that in 2025 the APO issued a credit to jurisdictions on assessments for the Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A) planning study. In 2024, the APO assessed jurisdictions for the local match component needed to leverage the federal funding for the program. Once the APO secured that federal grant, staff applied to the state to seek out funds to provide the local match (instead of having the locals pay the match). The APO was successful in receiving the local match from the state and Policy Board members opted to have the funds that were assessed in 2024 become a credit on the jurisdictional assessments for 2025. Note that despite the increase from 2025 to 2026, the 2026 request is still lower than the 2024 and 2023 request. More information can be reviewed at <https://stcloudapo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2026-27-UPWP-DRAFT.pdf>.

Mr. Gibson went on to present the four resolutions included in the request which consist of:

- Authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a grant agreement for our Federal planning funds.
- Authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a grant agreement for the State planning funds.
- Certifying APO compliance with relevant Federal procurement regulations (2CFR Part 200).
- Certifying APO compliance with other relevant Federal regulations, including, but not limited to:
 - Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - Non-discrimination (49 USC 5332)
 - Equal Employment Opportunity Employer
 - Americans with Disabilities Act

Mr. Gibson stated that an amendment is likely as MnDOT found more grant money for us and MnDOT is also considering cost participating in our Traffic Operations Study. He went on to state that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) unanimously recommended approval of the 2026 UPWP at their July 31, 2025, meeting.

Mr. Anderson motioned to Approve the 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and corresponding Resolutions. Mr. Theisen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

8. CONSIDER 2026 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

Mr. Gibson stated that each year the APO Board Chair and Executive Director travel to Washington D.C. to meet with members of Congress (or their senior staff) to present our regional transportation priorities. He reviewed the priorities that were presented to legislative staff in 2024 for 2025 funding and asked members what regional priorities should be emphasized for 2026. Mr. Gibson reminded the board that members of Congress want:

- Major, regional-level projects
- Projects for which there is a broad regional consensus
- Projects which cannot be funded through “normal” means, such as formula programs
- A list of the top 2-4 projects, not a list of 20

Legislators want to know what the very highest priorities are.

Mr. Perske asked if we could get Mr. Bill Towle from the Saint Cloud Regional Airport to come to the next meeting.

All Board members felt that the regional project that should be presented to legislators in Washington D.C. should be:

- 1) South-Eastern quadrant improvements
 - a. US-10 Improvements

- b. Mississippi Bridge Crossing (CR75 and US-10)
 - c. St. Cloud Regional Airport Improvements
 - Consider change in designation
- 2) MN Hwy-15/MN Hwy-23 Improvements

Members discussed dates for the Washington D.C. trip and decided they would fly out on October 21, 2025.

Ms. Seamans motioned to Approve the Regional Transportation Priorities as previously stated to be lobbied for during the October 2025 Washington D.C. Trip. Mr. Theisen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

9. UPDATE ON SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLANNING

Mr. McKenzie gave a review of the process and outcomes of creating a Safe Routes to School plan for the Sartell-Saint Stephen School District.

Mr. McKenzie stated that Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an effort to improve walking, biking, and rolling to school so that it is safe, comfortable and fun for all students. This plan focuses on three schools in the Sartell-Saint Stephen School District:

- Pine Meadow Primary
- Riverview Intermediate
- Sartell Middle School

APO staff collaborated with school principals, city and county staff, public health, law enforcement, and other community partners. They conducted site visits during arrival/dismissal times, reviewed crash data, traffic volumes, and existing infrastructure, conducted walking audits for one half mile around the schools, and conducted a parent/caregiver survey and interactive mapping tool which 388 families participated in. The **key issues** identified were:

- Unsafe crossings, high traffic volumes, and speeding
- Gaps in the sidewalk and shared use path network
- A need for better signage and crosswalk visibility
- Inconsistent driver behavior and a lack of enforcement in school zones

Mr. McKenzie explained that these findings resulted in the following recommendations:

- Projects categorized into High, Medium, and Low priority
- Each recommendation was evaluated based on needs, feasibility, and impact
- Includes existing projects programmed in Capital Improvement Plans (CIP)
 - School zone signage improvements
 - Added crosswalks and other pavement markings
 - Sidewalk gap closures
 - Shared use path and sidewalk reconstruction

Mr. McKenzie went on to explain that planned projects which are already programmed into the city's CIP are expected to be implemented within 1-5 years. A high priority example would be Audible Pedestrian Signals (APS) at specific intersections. An example of the medium priority projects would be ADA ramp upgrades and sidewalk gap closures at specific locations. An example of a low priority project would be streetscape enhancements and traffic calming measures.

Proposed school projects consist of:

- ADA ramp upgrades
- Lighting
- Shared use paths
- Bike racks

Programmatic recommendations consist of:

- Education and encouragement campaigns

- National Bike to School Day (over 200 bikes)
- Safety Town
- Walk! Bike! Fun! Curriculum
- Crossing guard support and training
- Enhanced Police enforcement

Mr. McKenzie stated that altogether, this plan is designed to serve as a guide for the city, school district, and broader community to create safer, more accessible, and more inviting routes to school. It offers a shared vision and a clear set of priorities for helping students lead active, healthy lives, one safe trip at a time. Once you have an SRTS plan in place you're eligible for grants/funding. SRTS funding has not been funded for FY 2026-2028, however there are Active Transportation (TA) grants available.

Mr. McKenzie stated that Benton County SHIP is assisting the Sartell school district with getting bike racks. Ms. Johnson stated they are also making buildings for the Safety Town demonstrations.

Mr. McKenzie and Ms. Johnson stated that the APO has several Safety Town events scheduled with Sauk Rapids, Sartell, and will be conducting a Safety Town Week where APO staff, City of Saint Cloud Public Works staff, and volunteers will host the Safety Town demonstration at several schools within the APO's jurisdiction within one week's time frame.

Mr. Conway recommended getting the plans for making the bike racks, ask area businesses to donate materials, and ask the area welding classes within the High Schools and possibly SCTCC construct them.

10. OTHER BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mr. Perske stated the ATP-3 is promoting for Corridors of Commerce funding for a Highway 23 study from Foley to I-35. There are a few of the communities that are concerned about having their town bypassed and don't want to be part of the study. We need to have the study done to make any safety corrections. The Highway 23 Coalition is looking at putting passing lanes on each side of Mora.
- Mr. Perske also stated that there is a possible national change in Wetland replacement on transportation projects becoming 1:1 instead of 2:1, the current cost is \$90,000/acre.
- Mr. Gibson asked if the members would like to change the date of the September 2025 meeting as it is currently on 9/11. Members discussed among themselves and opted to change the September Policy Board meeting to September 4, 2025.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Gapinski adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m.