SAINT CLOUD | AREA PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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TO: Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)
FROM: Alex McKenzie, Associate Transportation Planner
RE: Welcome to CTAC and Member Guide
DATE: Sept. 22, 2026

Thank you for volunteering to be part of the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization's Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC). CTAC is a one-year pilot designed to bring residents' day-to-day transportation experiences into regional planning. You do not need to be a transportation expert; the value of this committee comes from the different ways members experience walking, biking, driving, transit, safety, and accessibility.

Attached is the 2026 CTAC Member Guide. The guide provides a brief overview of the APO, explains how CTAC fits into the planning process, and describes what to expect at meetings. It is meant to be a reference, not homework. We will cover the key information together at the first meeting.

First CTAC Meeting

Our first CTAC meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2026. We are offering two sessions: 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Both sessions will cover the same material, so please attend the time that works best for you.

During the meeting, we will:

- Introduce the APO and CTAC.
- Review CTAC's advisory role and the one-year pilot.
- Talk about how meetings will work and how member input will be used.
- Hear from members about their transportation experiences.
- Discuss possible topics for future CTAC meetings.

A Few Things to Keep in Mind

CTAC is a discussion-based advisory group. It does not vote on projects, score funding requests, or make final transportation decisions. APO staff will summarize discussion themes and key takeaways and share them with staff, the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Policy Board to help inform the broader regional planning process.

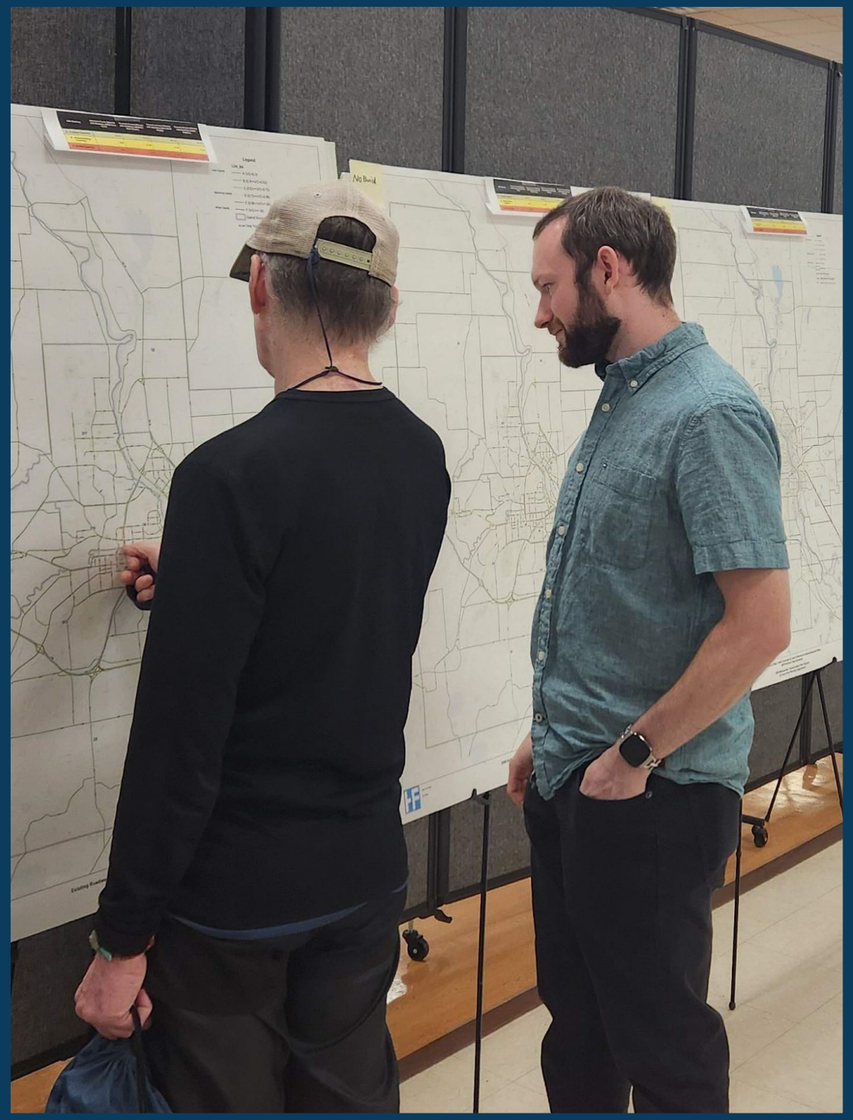
No preparation is required. If you have a few minutes before the meeting, please look through the guide and think about one transportation issue you notice in your day-to-day life and one topic you would like CTAC to discuss during the pilot year.

Thank you again for being willing to participate. If you have questions, need an accommodation, or have trouble accessing Microsoft Teams, please contact me at mckenzie@stcloudapo.org. I look forward to meeting you on Sept. 30.

Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee Member Guide

Prepared by the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization

September 2026







CTAC
2026 Guide

About This Guide

This guide is designed to introduce you to the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) and the Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC).



Figure 0-1. What's included in this guide.

Welcome to the Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee

Thank you for joining the APO's CTAC.

Transportation affects all of us. Whether you walk, bike, drive, ride transit, use a mobility device, or simply travel around the region in your daily life, your experiences provide valuable insight that helps us better understand how our transportation system works for the people who use it every day.

That's why CTAC exists.

The committee brings together residents from across the Saint Cloud area to discuss transportation topics, share ideas, and provide feedback that helps inform regional transportation planning. Your role is not to be a transportation expert. Instead, you're here because your experiences, perspectives, and knowledge of your community matter.

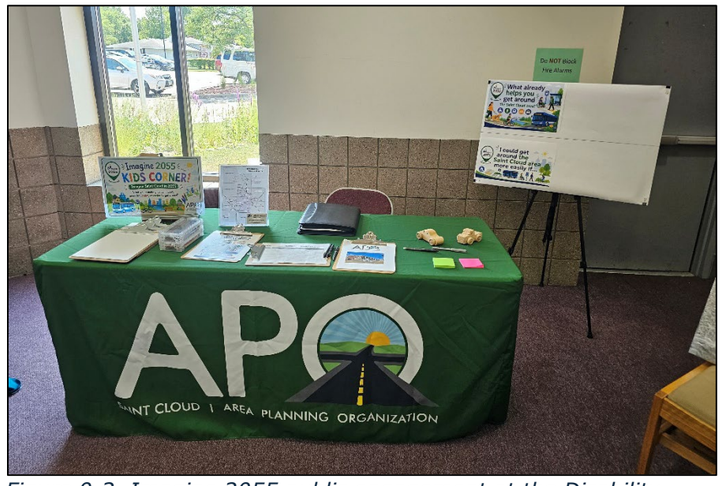


Figure 0-2. Imagine 2055 public engagement at the Disability Pride Celebration.

The CTAC will explore topics such as transportation safety, accessibility, walking, biking, driving, transit, and future transportation needs. Discussions and ideas from CTAC will be shared with APO staff, the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Policy Board to help inform future planning efforts.



Figure 0-3. Stronger Communities Move Together.

We encourage you to ask questions, share your experiences, and listen to the perspectives of others. Every community is different, and every voice helps us build a better understanding of transportation throughout the region.

Thank you for being part of this exciting new committee. We look forward to learning from you and working together to help shape the future of transportation in the Saint Cloud area.

Welcome to CTAC!

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Chapter 1 - The Communities We Serve

The Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) helps communities across the greater Saint Cloud area work together to plan for the future of transportation.

Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau identifies urban areas based on population and development. Using that information, the APO and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) establish a planning area that looks ahead about 20 years to account for future growth. This helps ensure transportation plans consider not only today's needs, but also the communities that are expected to grow in the future.

Member Jurisdictions

The APO is made up of representatives from:

- Benton County.
- Sherburne County.
- Stearns County.
- City of Saint Cloud.
- City of Saint Joseph.
- City of Sartell.
- City of Sauk Rapids.
- City of Waite Park.
- LeSauk Township.
- Saint Cloud Metro Bus.

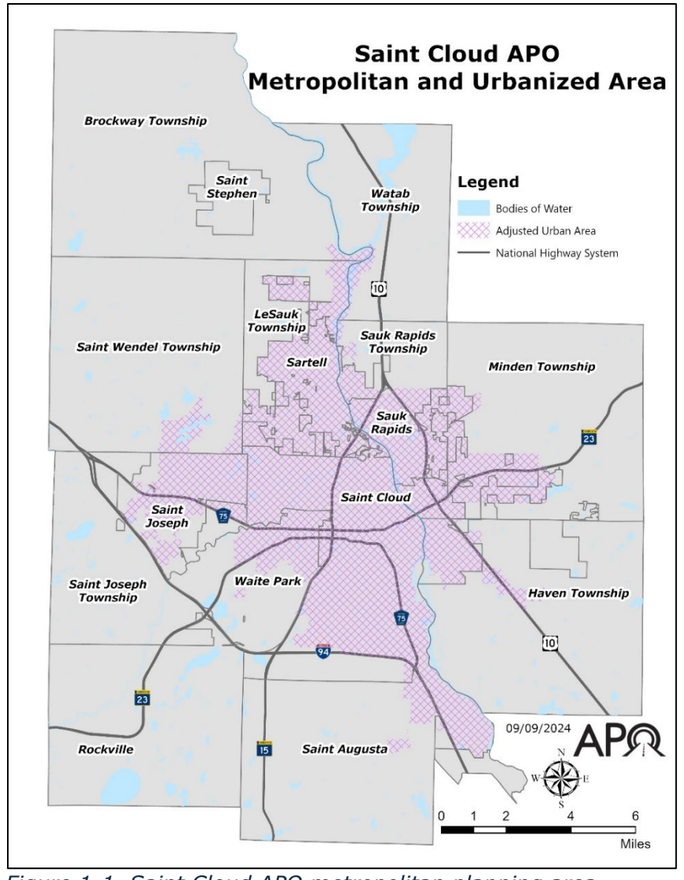


Figure 1-1. Saint Cloud APO metropolitan planning area.

Planning Area Communities

The APO's planning area also includes the cities of Rockville, Saint Augusta, and Saint Stephen, along with Brockway Township, Haven Township, part of Lynden Township, Minden Township, Saint Joseph Township, Saint Wendel Township, Sauk Rapids Township, and Watab Township. These communities participate in regional transportation planning through their respective county representatives.

Together, these communities make up the region the APO serves.

What the APO Does

The APO brings together local governments, transportation agencies, and community members to plan for a transportation system that is safe, connected, and accessible. The organization receives local, state, and federal funding to develop transportation plans, conduct studies, coordinate regional planning efforts, and engage the public in shaping the future of transportation.

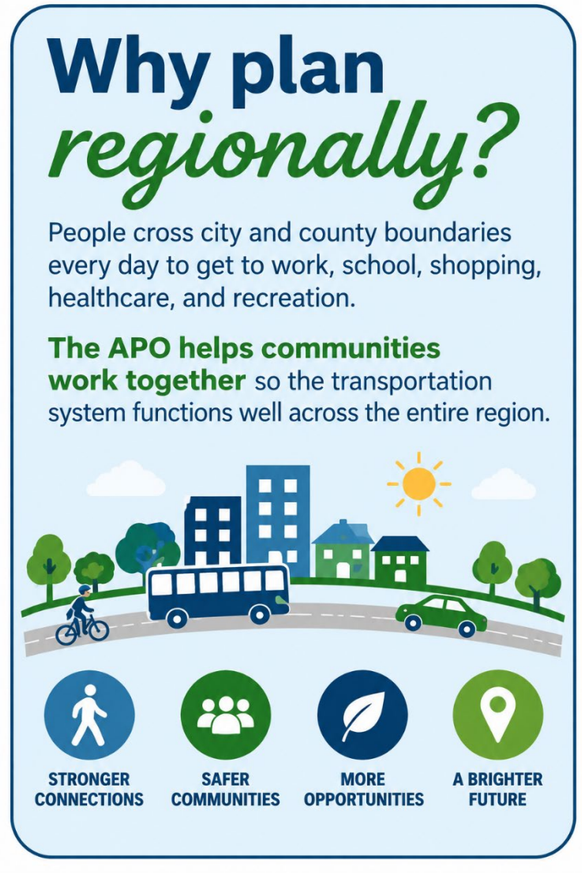


Figure 1-2. Why regional transportation planning matters.

Chapter 2 - How the APO is Organized

The APO brings together elected officials, transportation professionals, and community members to help plan the future of transportation in the Saint Cloud area.

Each group has a different role, but they all work together.

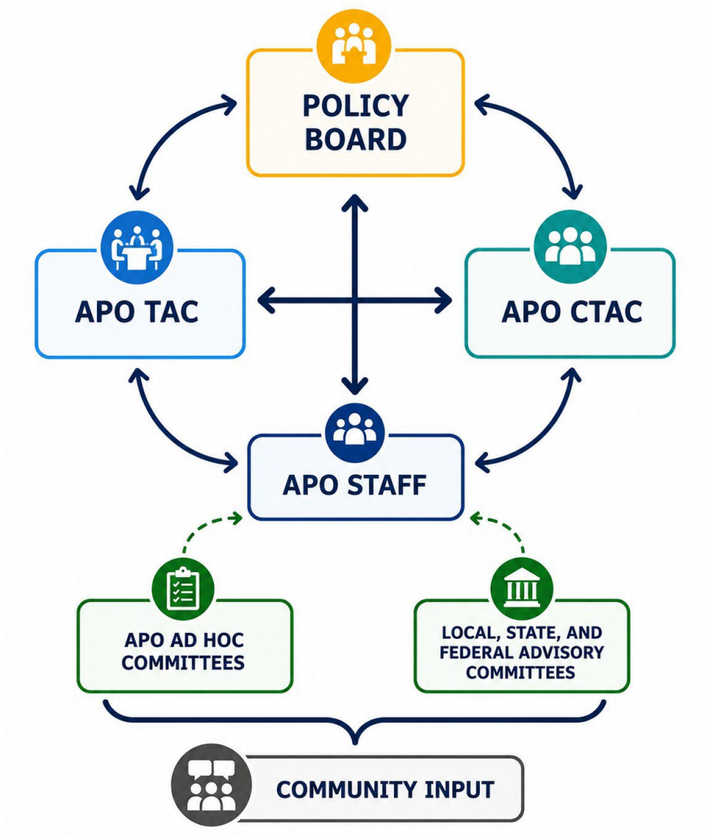


Figure 2-1. Saint Cloud APO organizational structure.

Policy Board

Makes the final decisions

The Policy Board is the APO's governing board. It is made up of elected officials from the APO's member communities and a representative from Metro Bus.

The Policy Board:

- Adopts transportation plans and policies.
- Approves the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Sets the overall direction of the APO.
- Makes final decisions on regional transportation planning.

Typically meets the second Thursday of each month.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Provides technical expertise

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) includes planners, engineers, transit professionals, and other transportation staff from the APO's member agencies.

The TAC:

- Reviews transportation plans and studies.
- Provides technical recommendations.
- Advises the Policy Board.
- Works closely with APO staff.

Typically meets the last Thursday of each month.

Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)

Provides the community perspective

The Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) brings together residents from across the region to share their experiences and ideas about transportation.

CTAC members:

- Share lived experiences.
- Discuss transportation challenges and opportunities.
- Help improve public engagement.
- Provide feedback that helps inform regional planning.

CTAC is advisory only. It does not vote on projects or funding. Instead, discussion themes are shared with APO staff and the TAC to help inform regional transportation planning.

Typically meets quarterly



Figure 2-2. Saint Cloud APO mission statement.

Chapter 3 - What the APO Does and Doesn't Do

The APO plays an important role in transportation, but it is only one part of the process. We work with local governments, transportation agencies, and community members to plan for the future, while other organizations design, build, maintain, and operate the transportation system.



Figure 3-1. What the APO does.



Figure 3-2. What the APO does not do.



Figure 3-3. Imagine 2055 public engagement at Sartell National Night Out.

Who Makes Transportation Decisions?

Transportation is a shared responsibility.

No single organization is responsible for every part of the transportation system. A roadway may pass through several communities, connect to a county road or state highway, serve a Metro Bus route, and include sidewalks or trails. That is why coordination between agencies is so important.

- **Cities** maintain city streets, sidewalks, and many local trails.
- **Counties** maintain county roads and bridges.
- **MnDOT** maintains state highways and interstate highways.
- **Metro Bus** operates public transit.

The APO helps bring these partners together so transportation plans and investments consider how the system works across community boundaries. Public input, including feedback from CTAC, helps inform that planning process.



Figure 3-4. The APO helps communities plan for transportation projects.

Chapter 4 – About the Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee

The CTAC brings together residents from across the Saint Cloud area to share their experiences, ideas, and perspectives on transportation.

CTAC members help the APO better understand how the transportation system works for the people who use it every day. Whether you walk, bike, drive, ride transit, or use a mobility device, your experiences help inform regional transportation planning.

CTAC is being launched as a one-year pilot. During the pilot year, the APO will learn what meeting formats, topics, and approaches work best and use that experience to help determine the committee's future.



Figure 4-1. Imagine 2055 public engagement at Barden Park.

CTAC serves as a community advisory group that supports the APO by:

- Discussing emerging transportation issues.
- Strengthening public engagement.
- Sharing lived experiences and community perspectives.
- Providing a regional perspective on transportation issues that cross community boundaries.

The committee is intended to provide community insight that complements the technical expertise of transportation professionals.



Figure 4-2. What CTAC does.



Figure 4-3. What CTAC does not do.

How CTAC Meetings Work

A Conversation, Not a Board Meeting

CTAC meetings are designed to be welcoming, informal, and discussion-based. You don't need any technical expertise or prior experience in transportation planning, just a willingness to share your ideas and experiences.

Meetings are facilitated by APO staff and focus on learning from one another while discussing transportation topics that affect communities throughout the region. Meetings are intended to be discussion-based, held quarterly, and typically last 60–90 minutes.

What to Expect

Quarterly Meetings

- Meetings are typically held four times each year.
- Most meetings last 60–90 minutes.

Open Discussion

- There are no presentations to memorize or tests to take.
- Everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Real-World Topics

Discussions may include:

- Walking and biking.
- Driving and traffic safety.
- Transit.
- Accessibility.
- Transportation trends.
- Regional transportation projects.
- Public engagement.

Respectful Conversations

- Members are encouraged to:
- Listen to different viewpoints.
- Share their own experiences.
- Ask questions.
- Be curious and respectful.

Every Voice Matters

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

Some members may speak often, while others prefer to listen before sharing. Both are valuable. The goal is to learn from one another and better understand how transportation affects people across the region.



Figure 4-4. CTAC meeting guidelines.



Figure 4-5. Imagine 2055 public engagement at the CAIRO Health Fair.

Chapter 5 – APO Staff and Resources

Have a question? We're here to help. Each member of the APO staff has different areas of expertise. This page introduces our team and highlights the plans, programs, and projects they help lead.

Executive Director

Brian Gibson - gibson@stcloudapo.org



Provides leadership for the APO and oversees regional transportation planning. Manages the organization's work program, coordinates major planning projects, and works with the Policy Board and regional partners to guide the APO's overall direction.

Primary Responsibilities

- Regional leadership.
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- Consultant projects.
- Regional transportation initiatives.
- Policy Board coordination.

Key Plans & Documents

- **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)** - The UPWP is the APO's annual work plan. It identifies the transportation planning projects, studies, and community engagement activities the APO will focus on over the next two years.

Senior Planner

Vicki Johnson - ikeogu@stcloudapo.org



Leads the development of the region's major transportation plans and programs. Coordinates the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and helps guide transportation planning efforts across the region.

Primary Responsibilities

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
- Regional transportation planning.
- Mentoring and supervising planning staff.

Key Plans & Documents

- **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)** - The MTP is the region's long-range transportation plan. It identifies transportation needs, future projects, and priorities for walking, biking, driving, transit, and freight to help guide transportation investments over the next 20 years.
- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** - The TIP is a four-year list of federally funded transportation projects planned for the Saint Cloud area. Updated each year, it identifies which road, bridge, trail, transit, and other transportation projects are expected to receive federal funding and move forward in the near future.
- **Regional Infrastructure Investment Plan (RIIP)** - The RIIP is a regional list of planned transportation projects from cities, counties, Metro Bus, and MnDOT. Unlike the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), it includes projects regardless of their funding source, giving a more complete picture of future transportation investments.

Associate Planner

Alex McKenzie – mckenzie@stcloudapo.org



Leads the APO's public engagement and active transportation efforts. Coordinates the Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC), community outreach activities, and stakeholder engagement while helping plan for walking, biking, and other transportation initiatives throughout the region.

Primary Responsibilities

- Active transportation planning.
- Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC).
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP).
- Public outreach and community engagement.

Key Plans & Documents

- **Regional Active Transportation Plan** - The Regional Active Transportation Plan guides improvements for walking, biking, and rolling

throughout the Saint Cloud area. It identifies opportunities, challenges, and recommended projects and policies to help make active transportation safer, more comfortable, and more connected for people of all ages and abilities.

- **Regional Evaluation of Counts for Active Planning (RECAP)** - RECAP is the APO's annual report on walking, biking, and rolling activity throughout the region. Using data collected from trails and shared use paths, it helps communities understand how people travel and where future improvements can make the biggest impact.
- **Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plans** - Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plans help make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. The APO works with local school districts and communities to identify improvements around elementary and middle schools that encourage safe, active transportation. SRTS plans have been developed for schools in Saint Cloud Area School District 742, Sartell-St. Stephen School District 748, and Sauk Rapids-Rice School District 47.
- **Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)** - The SEP guides how the APO engages residents, community organizations, and other stakeholders throughout the transportation planning process. It helps ensure that people from all backgrounds have opportunities to share their ideas and provide meaningful input on regional transportation decisions.
- **Stakeholder Engagement Plan Annual Report (SEPAR)** - The SEPAR is the APO's annual review of its public engagement efforts. It evaluates what worked well, identifies opportunities for improvement, and helps ensure the APO continues to provide meaningful ways for people to participate in transportation planning.

Planning Technician

James Stapfer - jstapfer@stcloudapo.org



Collects and analyzes transportation data to support regional planning. Maintains the APO's Geographic Information System (GIS), manages the Travel Demand Model (TDM), and tracks transportation performance to help guide data-driven decisions.

Primary Responsibilities

- Transportation data collection and analysis.
- Travel Demand Model (TDM).
- Performance measures and reporting.
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
- Mapping and spatial analysis.

Key Plans & Documents

- **Transportation Performance Monitoring Report (TPMR)** - The TPMR is the APO's annual report on how the region's transportation system is performing. It tracks key measures such as safety, traffic, pavement conditions, and other transportation trends to help evaluate progress and guide future planning.

Administrative Assistant

Trina Ness - admin@stcloudapo.org



Keeps the APO running smoothly by providing administrative support, coordinating meetings, preparing agendas and materials, and serving as the first point of contact for many questions and requests.

Primary Responsibilities

- Meeting coordination.
- Agendas and meeting materials.
- Administrative support.
- Public inquiries.
- Office operations.

Chapter 6 - Glossary

Active Transportation: Any human-powered mode of transportation, including bicycling, walking, rolling, and other means of self-propelled mobility.

Active Transportation Plan (ATP): The regional ATP aims to provide a long-range planning framework to support nonmotorized forms of transportation in the Saint Cloud Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). This plan identifies needs, resources, and strategies to enhance the safe and convenient use of non-motorized modes of transportation and the facilities necessary to accommodate them.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Civil rights legislation passed in 1990 and effective July 1992 that sets design guidelines for accessibility to public facilities and public meetings for individuals with disabilities.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): A capital improvement plan (or capital improvement program) is a short-range plan developed by municipalities and counties which identifies capital projects and equipment purchases. The CIP provides a planning schedule and identifies options for financing projects identified in the plan.

Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC): A community advisory committee that provides feedback and local perspectives to help inform regional transportation planning.

Complete Streets: A policy and design approach that makes streets safe and accessible for people of all ages and abilities, whether they walk, bike, roll, take transit, or drive.

Electric Bike (E-Bike): A bicycle equipped with an electric motor that provides pedal assistance to the rider. E-bikes make riding easier by adding power to each pedal stroke but do not eliminate the need to pedal.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA): A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers the Federal-Aid Highway Program, providing financial assistance to states to construct and improve highways, urban and rural roads, and bridges.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA): A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that provides financial and technical assistance to local public transit systems and oversees safety measures for those systems.

Geographic Information System (GIS): A computer-based mapping system used to analyze and display geographic information.

Hybrid Meeting: A meeting that allows participation both in person and remotely, typically through an online platform.

Jurisdictions: The member units of government which are within the APO's planning area. The member jurisdictions of the APO include the following: Benton County, Sherburne County, Stearns County, City of Saint Cloud, City of Saint Joseph, City of Sartell, City of Sauk Rapids, City of Waite Park, and LeSauk Township.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP): A person who does not speak English as their primary language and has limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA): The geographic area over which a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) exercises planning authority, and which must include the Census-defined Urban Area, plus other urban and urbanizing areas as agreed to by the MPO's Board.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): A regional organization responsible for coordinating transportation planning in urban areas with more than 50,000 people. The Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) is the MPO for the Saint Cloud area.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP): The region’s long-range transportation plan. It looks ahead at least 20 years and identifies transportation needs, priorities, and future investments for walking, biking, driving, transit, freight, safety, and accessibility.

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT): The state department of transportation for Minnesota. MnDOT's mission is to plan, build, operate, and maintain a safe, accessible, efficient, and reliable multimodal transportation system that connects people to destinations and markets throughout the state, regionally, and worldwide.

Mississippi River Trail (MRT): A designated bicycle route that follows the Mississippi River through Minnesota and across the United States. In the Saint Cloud region, the MRT uses local roads and trails to provide a scenic and connected route for bicyclists along the river.

Policy Board: The Policy Board of the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization is the decision-making body of the APO. The Board is made up of elected officials from member jurisdictions as well as a senior-level management position from Saint Cloud Metro Bus. The Policy Board is responsible for adopting regional transportation plans, projects, and policies as well as directing APO staff.

Public Engagement / Public Involvement: Activities and strategies used to inform, involve, and gather input from community members during transportation planning and decision-making processes.

Regional Evaluation of Counts for Active Planning (RECAP): The APO's annual report on walking, biking, and rolling activity throughout the region.

Regional Infrastructure Investment Plan (RIIP): A regional list of planned transportation projects from the APO's member communities and MnDOT, regardless of funding source.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS): A program that helps make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school.

Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO): The regional transportation planning organization for the Saint Cloud area. The APO works with local governments, Metro Bus, MnDOT, and the public to coordinate transportation planning across the region.

Saint Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC): MTC, more commonly known as Saint Cloud Metro Bus (or simply "Metro Bus"), is the urban transit provider within the Saint Cloud Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). Founded in 1969, Metro Bus provides fixed route, paratransit (Dial-a-Ride), and commuter bus services – via the Northstar Commuter Link to access the Northstar Commuter Rail train in the City of Big Lake – for the cities of Saint Cloud, Sartell, Sauk Rapids, and Waite Park.

Stakeholder: A stakeholder is any person or group affected by a transportation plan, program, or project, including those not aware they are affected. Stakeholders may also be any person or group that thinks they may be affected by a transportation plan, program, or project even if they are not affected. Examples of stakeholders include non-governmental organizations, traditionally underserved communities, residents of affected geographic areas, commuters and tourists, transportation professionals, and government agencies.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP): The SEP guides how the APO involves residents, community organizations, and other stakeholders in transportation planning. It helps ensure people have meaningful opportunities to learn about plans, share ideas, and provide feedback.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan Annual Report (SEPAR): This report serves as a comprehensive evaluation of the APO's public stakeholder engagement activities in a given year. It reviews strategies, platforms, and initiatives used to inform and involve the public in transportation planning efforts, analyzes engagement metrics and outcomes, and provides actionable recommendations for improvement.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC): The TAC consists of voting representatives from each of the APO's member jurisdictions along with representation from Saint Cloud Metro Bus and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). This committee – typically composed of planners and engineers – reviews plans and programs from a technical perspective and makes recommendations to the APO's decision makers.

Title II: Part of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that requires state and local governments to make their programs, services, activities, and communications accessible to people with disabilities.

Title VI: Part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal funding.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): A compilation of significant surface transportation improvements receiving federal funding and scheduled for implementation in the APO's planning area during the next four years.

Transportation Performance Monitoring Report (TPMR): The APO's annual report on how the region's transportation system is performing.

Travel Demand Model (TDM): A computer model used to estimate how people travel throughout the region today and how travel patterns may change in the future.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP): The UPWP is the APO's annual work plan. It identifies the transportation planning projects, studies, public engagement activities, and budget the APO will focus on over the next two years.