MEETING DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee

First meeting • Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2026 • 1 p.m. • Microsoft Teams

Prepared by the Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) from the meeting transcript and Mentimeter responses. This is a discussion summary, not verbatim minutes. Participant statements describe individual perspectives; they are not committee votes or adopted positions.

Attendees

Community participants (11): Aaron Henning; Austin Williams; Barbara Banaian; Ben Thoele; Dave Cashman; Jenny Svihel; Marshall Herron; Mike McClelland; Nick Haverhals; Todd Holman; Warren Luepke.

APO staff (2): Alex McKenzie, associate transportation planner; Brian Gibson, executive director.

Overview

The first CTAC meeting introduced members to the APO, explained CTAC's role as a one-year pilot advisory group, and opened discussion about current transportation challenges and hopes for the future. Residents shared experiences with driving, walking, bicycling, transit, and accessibility. Three Mentimeter prompts helped surface additional ideas.

CTAC provides a space for community experiences to inform APO staff, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Policy Board. It does not approve plans, rank or score projects, or make final funding decisions. No formal votes or recommendations were made at this meeting.

Key takeaways for TAC

- **Roadways and signals:** Participants described traffic delays, difficult intersections, and driver behavior on Highways 10, 15, 23, and Stearns County Road 75, with requests for better signal timing, safer crossings, and long-term corridor improvements.
- **Safer ways to walk and bicycle:** Comments emphasized connected bike lanes and paths, a safer Stearns County Road 75 crossing in Saint Joseph, and better connections among downtown Saint Cloud, the Mississippi River, parks, and neighborhoods.
- **E-bikes and e-scooters:** Members raised sidewalk conflicts, youth riding behavior, and the need to distinguish legal e-bikes from faster motorized devices, while also recognizing e-bikes as affordable everyday transportation.
- **Thinking beyond road capacity:** Members proposed exploring land use, housing near jobs, transit access, maintenance costs, demographic change, and driverless vehicles as part of long-range transportation planning.

Meeting purpose and format

APO staff introduced the organization's regional planning responsibilities and explained how CTAC input will be summarized for TAC and the Policy Board. Staff described a goal of approximately quarterly, 60- to 90-minute discussion-based meetings, with additional topic-specific meetings when useful. The APO is exploring future in-person and online meeting options. When available, staff aim to send advance materials roughly 10 days before meetings; extensive preparation is not expected.

> *"the missing piece in all that is the public."*
> Brian Gibson, APO executive director

Discussion themes and specific suggestions

1. Traffic congestion, signal timing and driver safety

- **Signal timing and backups:** Participants described waits at Highway 15/Division Street and backups along Highway 10, Highway 15 and Highway 23. Suggestions included more responsive traffic signals and improving flow without sacrificing safety for people walking or bicycling.
- **Long-term highway designs:** Ideas included reducing stoplights on major routes where appropriate, considering interchanges or overpasses, and improving access management on Highways 10, 15, and 23. Austin Williams also mentioned Stearns County Road 75 and Division Street in discussing arterial routes.
- **Driver behavior:** Participants raised red-light running, merging behavior, visibility, and the need to make crossings safer. Todd Holman identified tinted vehicle windows and unpredictable motorcycle movements between vehicles as concerns for bicyclists and mobility-device users.

"I put chaotic. ... I think a lot of the issues is the amount of people and the amount of traffic and the amount of businesses has kind of exploded, especially along that Division Street."

Austin Williams — ellipsis indicates omitted words

2. Walking, bicycling and connections across the region

- **Stearns County Road 75 in Saint Joseph:** Marshall Herron described difficulty crossing County Road 75 between the Lake Wobegon Trail in Saint Joseph, and called for safer bicycling and pedestrian access. He also questioned whether speeds on Minnesota Street and College Avenue support a walkable community.
- **Bike lanes and sidewalks:** Austin Williams said parts of Saint Cloud lack dedicated bicycle facilities, which can leave riders choosing between busy streets and sidewalks. Members raised the need for a more connected and safer network.
- **Downtown and river connections:** Nick Haverhals suggested improving downtown walkability and linking downtown Saint Cloud more clearly to the Mississippi River and existing bicycling routes.
- **Schools:** Ben Thoele identified safe routes to school, particularly near Madison Elementary School, as an interest.

"it's very difficult to get across Highway 75 safely from the Wobegon Trail into Saint Joseph."

Marshall Herron

3. E-bikes, e-scooters and shared space

The group discussed e-bike and e-scooter safety after Aaron Henning described community concerns about riding on newly built sidewalks, including along Lincoln Avenue. Marshall Herron noted the different classes of e-bikes and confusion with more powerful motorized devices. APO staff explained that local jurisdictions are exploring a consistent regional approach and that parent/youth education is part of the discussion; no ordinance was presented or endorsed.

Ben Thoele urged the group to recognize e-bikes as a practical and potentially lower-cost way to get to work, not solely as a youth safety issue. Members also emphasized traffic dangers affecting all users. Comments reflected multiple perspectives rather than a shared CTAC position.

"I feel like the number of people ... who are using it ... to get to work is more than I've ever seen."

Ben Thoele — ellipses indicate omitted words

4. Land use, affordability and alternatives to driving

In response to the Mentimeter suggestion that the city become denser, Ben Thoele made a case that neighborhood design, housing costs, parking requirements and the location of jobs shape how much people must drive. He suggested examining housing near major employers and the cost of maintaining sprawling infrastructure. Marshall Herron noted the connection between walkable places and bicycle-friendly streets in Saint Joseph. Staff acknowledged that land use and transportation planning are closely linked, while local governments make land-use decisions.

> *"the answer isn't more roads, it's more density."*
>
> Ben Thoele

5. Transit access and accessibility

In introductory remarks, Jenny Svihel described relying on walking, bicycling, and buses rather than driving. In conversation before the formal meeting began, she also raised transportation barriers for people with and without disabilities, Dial-a-Ride demand, and the challenges of finding reliable trips. These observations suggest a future discussion about accessible transportation and travel choices, though they were not a dedicated agenda item.

> *"I don't drive, so I walk to work, I take a bike, or I will take the bus"*
>
> Jenny Svihel

6. Infrastructure maintenance and future change

- **Pavement and utility coordination:** Austin Williams questioned why relatively new roads sometimes need to be opened for underground work and compared the condition of Stearns County Road 2 with heavily traveled roads near the mall. He suggested exploring how road and utility projects could be better coordinated to reduce future maintenance.
- **Population and financing:** Ben Thoele requested demographic projections and discussion of how future growth or decline could affect road maintenance costs. Staff said the Imagine 2055 population-projection effort is expected in 2027.
- **Driverless vehicles:** Nick Haverhals raised autonomous vehicles as a possible long-range issue affecting the need for parking and road space. Staff discussed the technology as an emerging trend, not as a specific proposed regional project.

> *"how do we prevent that in the future to prevent having to cut into brand new concrete?"*
>
> Austin Williams

Mentimeter: questions and responses

Three anonymous prompts were used to begin discussion. The counts below are responses shown by Mentimeter and should not be interpreted as committee voting results. Original screenshots are included in Appendix A.

Prompt 1 — "When you think about getting around the Saint Cloud area today, what is one word that comes to mind?" (9 responses)

Individual entries were "bicycle," "cars," "chaotic," "frustration," "how," "improveable," "messy," "not division" and "sidewalks." Each appeared once. Responses combined travel modes with concerns about congestion, street conditions, and room for improvement.

Prompt 2 — "I could get around more easily if …" (8 responses)

Suggestions included better signal timing, traffic operations that protect all travelers, more bicycle lanes and a safe Stearns County Road 75 crossing in Saint Joseph, improved merging, more direct highway routes with fewer signals, a single source for maps across transportation modes, and a denser city.

Prompt 3 — "Thinking about the future, what is one thing you hope is different about transportation in our region?" (8 responses)

The entries envisioned an interconnected regional walking and bicycling network through parks; reduced stopping on Highways 10, 15, and 23; improved interchanges and signals; better business access and pedestrian safety; less noise; regional transportation coordination; a system more responsive to community needs; and less dependence on driving.

APO staff information shared

- **Highway 10 and Highway 15:** Brian Gibson outlined studies and potential improvements along Highway 10 and a funded Highway 15 corridor planning effort. These were described as studies and possibilities, not approved interchange projects. Staff invited public input when opportunities arise.
- **E-bike policy discussions:** Staff reported early conversations about possible consistent local ordinance language and education; any local regulations would require action by the relevant cities.
- **Imagine 2055:** Members were encouraged to contribute to the regional long-range transportation plan using the survey and interactive map at Imagine2055.com.

Next steps

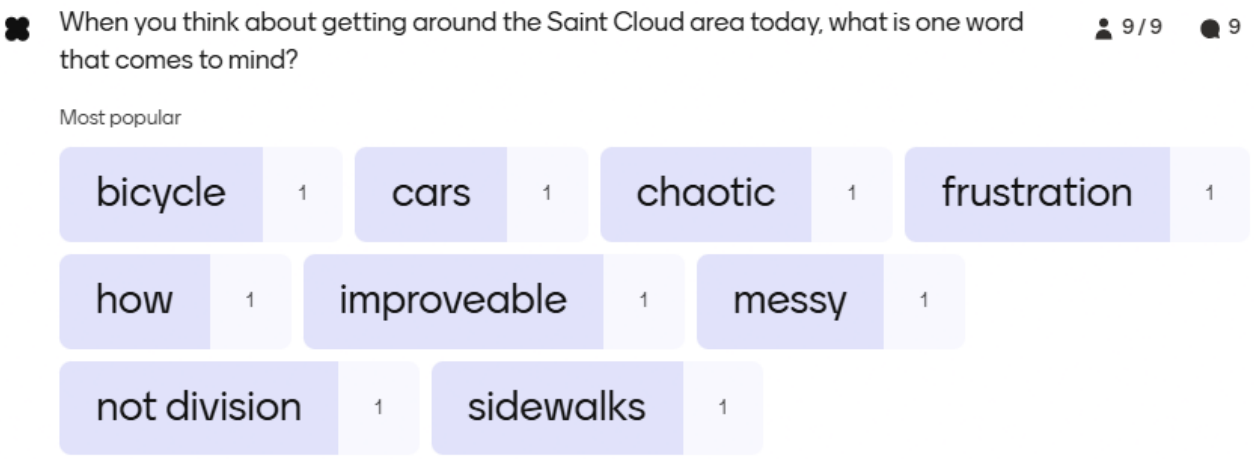
- APO staff will circulate the meeting summary to CTAC members for review and share key discussion themes with TAC and the Policy Board.
- Staff will maintain a running list of potential topics, including e-bike/e-scooter safety, corridor operations, walking and bicycling connections, land use, transit, long-range trends and road maintenance.
- Staff will continue to explore meeting formats and share agenda materials in advance when possible; future meeting dates and topics were not set during this session.

Note: The Sept. 30 evening CTAC session was held separately. This summary covers only the 1 p.m. session; no comparison or combined conclusions are implied.

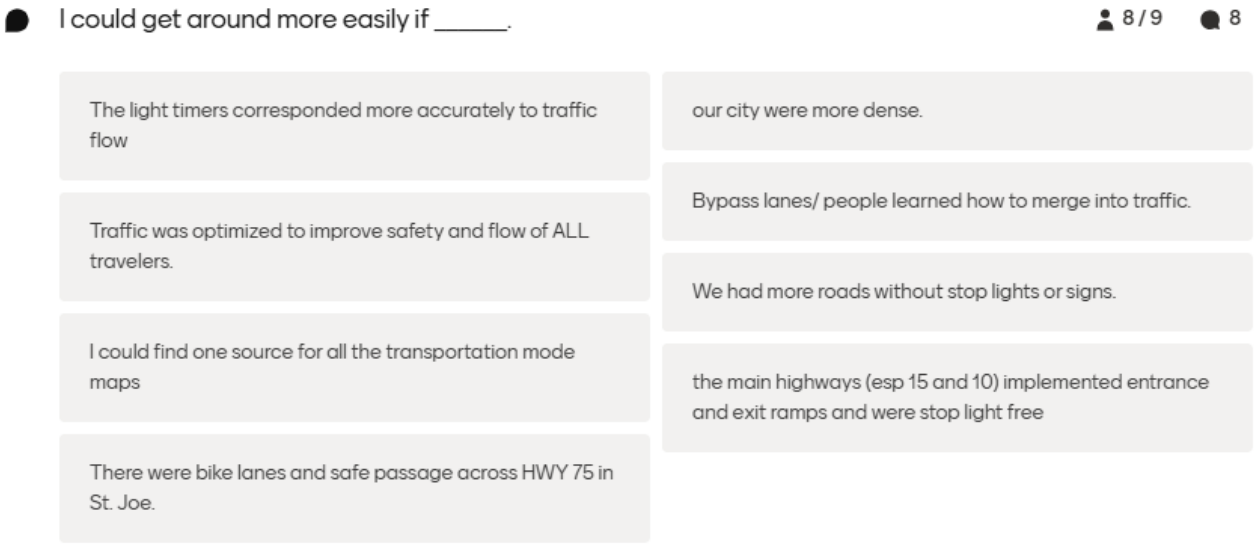
Appendix A — Original Mentimeter screenshots

The images below preserve the participant-submitted wording, including spelling and punctuation. Entries were anonymous unless a participant identified their response aloud.

1. When you think about getting around the Saint Cloud area today, what is one word that comes to mind?



2. I could get around more easily if _____.



3. Thinking about the future, what is one thing you hope is different about transportation in our region?

