

## ST. CLOUD AREA PLANNING ORGANIZATION

A regular meeting of the St. Cloud Area Planning Organization was held Thursday, September 24, 2009, 7:00 p.m. at Waite Park City Hall. Chair Pullis presided, with the following members present:

Mayor Dave Kleis	City of St. Cloud
John Libert	
Bob Johnson	
Carolyn Garven	
George Hontos	
Dave Masters	
Mike Landy	
Dick Andzenge	
Sheila DeVine	
Mayor Al Rassier	City of St. Joseph
Renee Symanietz	
Bob Loso	
Mayor Tim O'Driscoll	City of Sartell
Joe Perske	
Mayor Rick Miller	City of Waite Park
Mike Linquist	
Chuck Schneider	
Mayor Bob Kroll	City of St. Augusta
Penny Weihrauch	Town of Haven
Jeff Schlingman	
Kevin Pullis	Town of LeSauk
Ron Naber	
Mark Bromenschenkel	
Matt Symalla	Town of St. Joseph
Jerome Salzer	
Jim McMahon	County of Benton
Spencer Buerkle	
Ewald Peterson	County of Sherburne
John Riebel	
Mark Sakry	County of Stearns
Leigh Lenzmeier	
Tim Crennen	CMTA

### Absent Members:

John Pederson	City of St. Cloud
Sonija Berg	
Steve Hennes (Excused)	City of Sartell
Brad Gunderson	City of Sauk Rapids
Marv Neubert	
Dave Saunders	
Mike Zenzen (Excused)	City of St. Augusta
Donna Schulzetenberg	
Randy Linn (Excused)	Town of Haven
Jeff Janssen	Town of St. Joseph
Joe Wollak (Excused)	County of Benton
Felix Schmiesing	County of Sherburne
Vince Schaefer	County of Stearns

### Also Present:

Senator Tarryl Clark	District 15
Terry Humbert	Mn/DOT District 3

Scott Mareck  
Michele Cottrell  
Cathryn Hanson  
Tom Cruikshank

St. Cloud APO

St. Cloud Metro Bus

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER 24, 2009:**

Mr. Libert moved, Ms. Symanietz seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

**CONSIDERATION OF APO BOARD MINUTES OF AUGUST 27, 2009:**

Mr. Salzar moved, Mr. Libert seconded to approve the minutes with one correction. Motion carried.

**CONSIDERATION OF APO EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2009:**

Mayor O'Driscoll moved, Mayor Kleis seconded to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**CONSIDERATION OF BILLS RECEIVED SINCE SEPTEMBER 10, 2009 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING:**

Mayor Miller moved, Mayor Rassier seconded to approve the bills as presented. Motion carried.

**CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR AUGUST 2009 & YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET STATEMENTS:**

Ms. Symanietz moved, Mr. Bromenshenkel seconded to approve the financial statements as presented. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**UPDATE ON TH 23 BRIDGE/LAKE GEORGE INTERCHANGE – TERRY HUMBERT, MN/DOT DISTRICT 3:**

Terry Humbert, District 3 Planning Engineer, provided the Board with an overview of the replacement of the TH 23 Bridge and Lake George Interchange. The TH 23 Bridge was determined to be structurally deficient shortly after the collapse of the I-35W Bridge. Accordingly, funding was advanced to complete this project and the Lake George Interchange project earlier than initially programmed by District 3. Gusset plate deterioration was identified early in 2008, which led to closure of the Bridge and rerouting of traffic to University Drive and East St. Germain Street. The Lake George Interchange is being replaced with a full movement interchange and signal lights are also being relocated along the corridor through the downtown area. Granite treatments will be placed along the bridge railings and other concrete facings. Geo-foam has been used to stabilize the Lake George interchange foundation, which sunk considerably with the old interchange. The total project is slated for completion by November 1, 2009.

Mr. Masters asked if any additional work will take place on or after November 1<sup>st</sup>?

Mr. Humbert indicated that the Bridge and roadway should be open to traffic on November 1<sup>st</sup>, however, other miscellaneous work on the project will continue into 2010, including such things as clean up, turf establishment and landscaping. MnDOT has contracts open on the project until June 2010. Financial incentives were provided by MnDOT in the contract for work to continue through the winter, so the project could be completed as soon as possible.

Ms. Weihrauch asked how much the bonuses were for the project? Mr. Humbert indicated that the TH 23 Bridge had a \$1 million bonus and the Lake George Interchange project had a \$300,000 bonus. He explained that FHWA has approved thresholds in place for bonuses that relate to the overall project cost. MnDOT was within these approved thresholds for bonuses on the TH 23 and Lake George Interchange projects.

Mr. Humbert was asked if a signal would be installed at 1<sup>st</sup> Street South along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Humbert explained that there would be a signal at this location and that this was being funded by the City of St. Cloud.

Mr. Pullis thanked Mr. Humbert and MnDOT for their work on this project and for providing an overview to the Board.

## **CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT 2035 TRANSIT PLAN – PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING:**

Ms. Hanson reported that demand for transit services, both public and private, has seen tremendous growth over the last several years and expectations for future needs are anticipated to remain high due to a number of variables that span the socioeconomic spectrum. With an aging population, ongoing economic recession, and increasingly congested roadway network, transit services are a viable and necessary complement to personal motor vehicle and non-motorized transportation options.

Transit services reflect not only traditional fixed route “city bus” service, but several other transportation options; including, Para transit (Dial-A-Ride), rural transit service (Tri-CAP/RiverRider), private/non-profit carriers (St. Benedict’s Center), intercity bus service (Jefferson Lines/Greyhound), passenger rail service such as Northstar Commuter Rail and Amtrak, and private/for-hire carriers such as Yellow Cab and Executive Express. Each of these providers serves an essential transportation function within our region.

A number of planning initiatives have recently been completed or are currently underway that involve transit services: in 2007 a Regional Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Coordination Plan was adopted by Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO; the State of Minnesota is currently completing an Intercity Bus Network Study, Greater Minnesota Transit Plan, and a Statewide Transit Investment Implementation Plan will begin later this year; and locally, Metro Bus is nearing completion of a comprehensive Transit System Performance Analysis.

As funding opportunities remain scarce, finding collaborative solutions to meet the regional transit needs must become a priority. Moving into the next planning cycle we need to continue providing opportunities for coordination and communication between transit providers search for innovative ways to collaborate service delivery, and strive to both recognize and serve the unmet transit needs of our communities.

Mr. Land asked how St. Cloud Metro Bus is funded.

Ms. Hanson stated that St. Cloud Metro Bus is funded through a combination of federal and state grants, a local property tax levy and fare box collections. Capital projects are also occasionally funded through earmarks from the federal government.

Mayor Kroll asked what percentage of St. Cloud Metro Bus passengers are St. Cloud State University students?

Ms. Hanson stated that approximately 50 percent of St. Cloud Metro Bus passengers are St. Cloud State University students.

Mr. Sakry asked what percentage of transportation funding in the St. Cloud Area is spent by St. Cloud Metro Bus compared to road and bridge projects?

Mr. Mareck indicated that historically transit has comprised approximately 20 percent of all transportation expenditures in the St. Cloud Metro Area.

Mr. Loso requested St. Cloud Metro bus consider extending service to the St. Joseph area.

Mr. Cruikshank indicated that St. Cloud Metro Bus has attempted to work with the City of St. Joseph in the past and residents have indicated that they are not interested in Metro Bus service. Perhaps in another 5-6 years this discussion could be reopened. With the growth in the St. Joseph area and having St. Ben’s and St. John’s Universities, St. Cloud Metro Bus service could perhaps prove to be beneficial.

Ms. Weihrauch moved, Ms. Garven seconded to approve the Draft 2035 Transit Plan as presented. Motion carried.

## **CONSIDERATION OF TRUNK HIGHWAY CORRIDOR ACCOUNT RESOLUTION, PER APO EXECUTIVE BOARD REQUEST:**

Mr. Mareck explained that in the early 2000's, the State Legislature established a Trunk Highway Corridor Account to be used by cities and counties to pay for local match costs associated with Trunk Highway projects. This Account currently has a zero balance. Mr. Mareck explained that the Executive Board requested him to prepare a resolution supporting State General Obligation bond dollars being allocated to this Account. In the past, funds from this Account have been provided in loan format only, however, State Statute also allows for Trunk Highway Corridor Account funds to be provided in the form of grants. The local project that could potentially benefit from this program in the short-term is the recently funded interchange at TH 15 and Stearns CSAH 120. This project requires a \$3 million local match. Mr. Mareck explained that perhaps this Account could also prove beneficial in the future for local match costs associated with other improvements along Trunk Highway 10, Trunk Highway 15, and Interstate 94 in the St. Cloud Area.

Mr. Landy questioned why the Account is currently not funded? Mr. Mareck explained that the Trunk Highway Corridor Account was initially funded at \$20 million and \$10 million of this was loaned to cities and counties. However, \$10 million was taken back by the Legislature to offset State debt, so the Account currently has a zero balance.

Mayor Rassier expressed concern that if State General Fund dollars are used to fund the Trunk Highway Corridor Account, then this would leave less money for other needs. He felt this could prove harmful to other St. Cloud Metro Area bonding requests in the future.

Mayor Kleis commented that the Trunk Highway Corridor Account should be funded as a loan and not a grant. With the loan, there is a local commitment through a local match and repayment.

Mr. Mareck clarified that the drafted APO resolution language did not specify whether the funds should be made available for projects in a loan or grant format.

Mr. Sakry commented that big ticket items would benefit from this pot of funding.

Mr. Perske commented that utilizing the Trunk Highway Corridor Account local match assistance could be seen as another way of getting projects funded that may not have otherwise been funded.

Mayor O'Driscoll indicated that a statewide committee would need to be appointed to recommend to the MnDOT Commissioner what projects would receive Trunk Highway Corridor Account funds. MnDOT is aware of the issue of under-funding within District 3. Therefore, the District 3 area may have a good opportunity to receive some of these funds, if appropriated by the Legislature. The Minnesota Transportation Alliance (MTA) is also advocating for funding the Trunk Highway Corridor Account and Mr. Mareck sits on this Board.

Mayor Kleis commented that funding this Account would continue to perpetuate communities not planning and getting funding for projects without local support and minimal planning processes.

Mr. Sakry moved, Mr. Hontos seconded to approve the resolution of support for the Trunk Highway Corridor Account as presented. Motion carried.

## **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Mr. Mareck announced that MnDOT will be holding an open house at their District 3 office in St. Cloud on Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup> to solicit input on the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. He encouraged Board members to attend this meeting.

Mr. Mareck reported that the long term federal transportation funding bill (SAFETEA LU) expires on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The House has passed a 3 month extension, however, the President is advocating for an 18 month extension and the Senate has not acted on an extension as of yet.

Ms. Steiskal reported that Congresswoman Bachmann did not vote for the 3 month House extension because she felt it did not help states with their need to make long-term plans.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

With no other business, Mayor Kroll moved, Mr. Bromenshenkel seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.  
Motion carried.