

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This chapter provides a brief background of collaborative involvement efforts, federal regulations for public participation, Plan specific public participation goals and strategies, and participation activities for this Plan.

Background

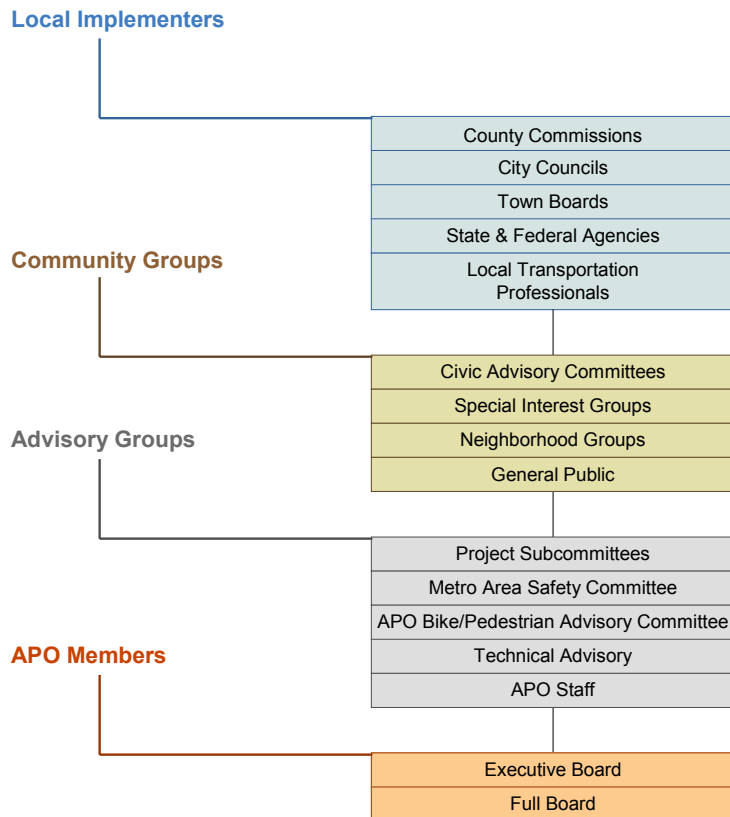
The APO is committed to public participation in its planning and programming efforts. Involving the community creates a means for exchanging information by providing objective information, identifying issues, outlining potential alternatives, and assessing impacts prior to determining a course of action. The hope is to eventually foster consensus, and in the process build collaborative partnerships.

The APO strives to make transportation decisions that reflect the best interest of the entire St. Cloud Metro Area and are sustainable over time. Participation is sought from a broad cross-section of the population, which allows for addressing public priorities and concerns, minimizing negative impacts, and improving public agency-to-community relationships. More specifically, the APO seeks out the input of Local Implementers, Community Groups, Advisory Groups and the APO Members as illustrated on Figure 2-1.

Intent of Public Participation

- Facilitate an open dialogue with the public
- Organize and record comments
- Incorporate input

**Figure 2-1
Local Planning Partners**



Public Participation Basics

- Provide objective information
- Outline potential alternatives
- Assess impacts prior to determining a course of action

This chapter provides public involvement guidance for the APO's many planning processes including the Long-Range Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Plan, Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), environmental and planning studies. More importantly this chapter illustrates public participation process and activities for this Plan.

Federal Regulations

The APO's public participation policy for the Plan incorporates FHWA requirements (see Figure 2-2). Federal statutes and regulations provide general guidelines for public involvement processes and procedures.

Figure 2-2
Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process

Include a proactive public involvement process:

- Provide complete information, Timely public notice, Full public access to key decisions
- Early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and Transportation Improvement Programs

Be consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State

Identify actions necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations "Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities"

Provide for the involvement of:

- traffic, ridesharing, parking, transportation safety and enforcement agencies
- Commuter rail operators
- Airport and port authorities
- Toll authorities
- Appropriate private transportation providers
- City officials where appropriate

Provide for the involvement of local, State and Federal environment resource and permit agencies as appropriate

APO Planning

- 20-Year Transportation Plan
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Transportation System Management (TSM) Report/Plan
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Environmental & Planning Studies

The APO has traditionally made a point of being aware of populations that are referred to in federal regulations as the “traditionally underserved,” e.g., disabled, elderly, low income, and minority.

Transportation legislation referred to as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was made law in 2005 and with it came several new regulations for timeframe of public comment periods as well as involving freight, transit and non-motorized stakeholders in all aspects of APO transportation planning. As of July 2007, the APO is in full compliance with Sections 1107 and 6001 of SAFETEA-LU. Specific requirements are in the APO’s approved Public Participation Plan and this chapter. These requirements were followed when developing each element of the Plan. The APO’s Public Participation Plan is accessible on the APOs website (www.stcloudapo.org) and provides much greater detail for specific public participation for each planning activity.

Figure 2-3
Summary of SAFETEA-LU Public Participation Requirements

SAFETEA-LU
Abbreviated Sections 1107 and 6001
Provide the following to the public:

- Reasonable opportunity for comment
- Timely information
- Reasonable technical and policy information
- Adequate notice of public involvement activities, and time for review and comment
- Explicit consideration and response to public input
- Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved
- A summary, analysis and report when significant public comments are received
- Additional opportunity for public comment after significant revisions
- Periodic review of the public involvement process’ effectiveness
- Coordinate our public involvement process with the statewide public involvement process
- Include the physically challenged as stakeholders
- Conduct meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times; use visualization techniques for material and have it available in an electronic format



APO Public Meeting

Strategies

- Maintain a public record of all significant written and oral comments received from citizens and/or planning partners.
- Summarize substantive comments and bring them to the APO Policy Board for review and discussion prior to approving Plan.

Public Participation for this 2035 Plan

The public participation opportunities outlined for this Plan varied. The Plan was divided into a number of delivery packets presented as preliminary draft elements, then as draft chapters and finally as an entire draft document over the two year development period. Figure 2-4 shows how the public and other local, regional, state and federal stakeholders were involved in the development, review and approval of each chapter and the entire Plan. Throughout the Plan development process APO staff was cognizant to always make information available in multiple formats, upon request, for non-English speaking, sight and sound impaired, disabled, and illiterate populations.

In summer 2007 APO staff worked with local jurisdictions and the public to collect demographic and land use data. The land use forecast was presented to the public for review and comment followed by review and approval of the APO TAC and Policy Board. A public involvement log was created to help track participation activities during development of the Plan and documents the land use review, comment and approval timeframes. The log is located on pages B-4 and B-5 of Appendix B.

At the same time that land use and the 2005 (base) TranPlan model were being developed, a Plan schedule was reviewed and approved by Mn/DOT and FHWA staff. The schedule was sent to local media and local, regional, state and federal agencies/jurisdictions, and presented to APO committees and the Policy Board at a published public meeting.

Once approved, staff developed and distributed a Plan newsletter to notify stakeholders and general public when and how to get involved. Transportation and Freight Surveys were also distributed to help assess and determine transportation needs for the St. Cloud metropolitan area. Results of the surveys along with public input helped identify transportation priorities, a funding approach, policies and strategies, and projects for the Plan. Examples of the Plan schedule, brochure, surveys (memorandum), media notices and contact list, and email correspondence are included in Appendix B. Sample outreach materials are also illustrated to the right.

Once policies and strategies were developed, a funding approach approved, and transportation priorities identified, APO staff worked with the general public, various transportation stakeholders, local, regional, state and federal jurisdictions and agencies, and the TAC, Bicycle/Pedestrian, and Transit Committees to further refine and develop each chapter of the Plan. Draft chapters were then presented at public informational meetings for review and comment.

After all draft chapters were developed and presented for review and comment, the entire draft Plan was presented at several public meetings. Examples of public meeting notices, legal advertisements, media email correspondence, newspaper articles and editorials, and public meeting agenda are included in Appendix B.

The Final Plan was approved in April 2010.

APO offers highlights of transportation plan

The St. Cloud Area Planning Organization will hold an open house from 6-7 p.m. and public information meeting at 7 p.m. on Thursday in the Waite Park City Hall, council chambers.

The APO has been updating its long-range transportation plan since early 2008 (as required ... for the metro area to continue to receive federal transportation funding. It was developed with a primary focus on roadway infrastructure yet includes a more balanced multimodal financial approach. Several new chapters focusing on policies and management and operations have been added and existing chapters have been updated. APO staff will answer questions and make a short presentation. ...

Kirby Becker
St. Cloud Area
Planning Organization

St. Cloud Times
Public Open House Notice



2035 Transportation Plan Survey Article

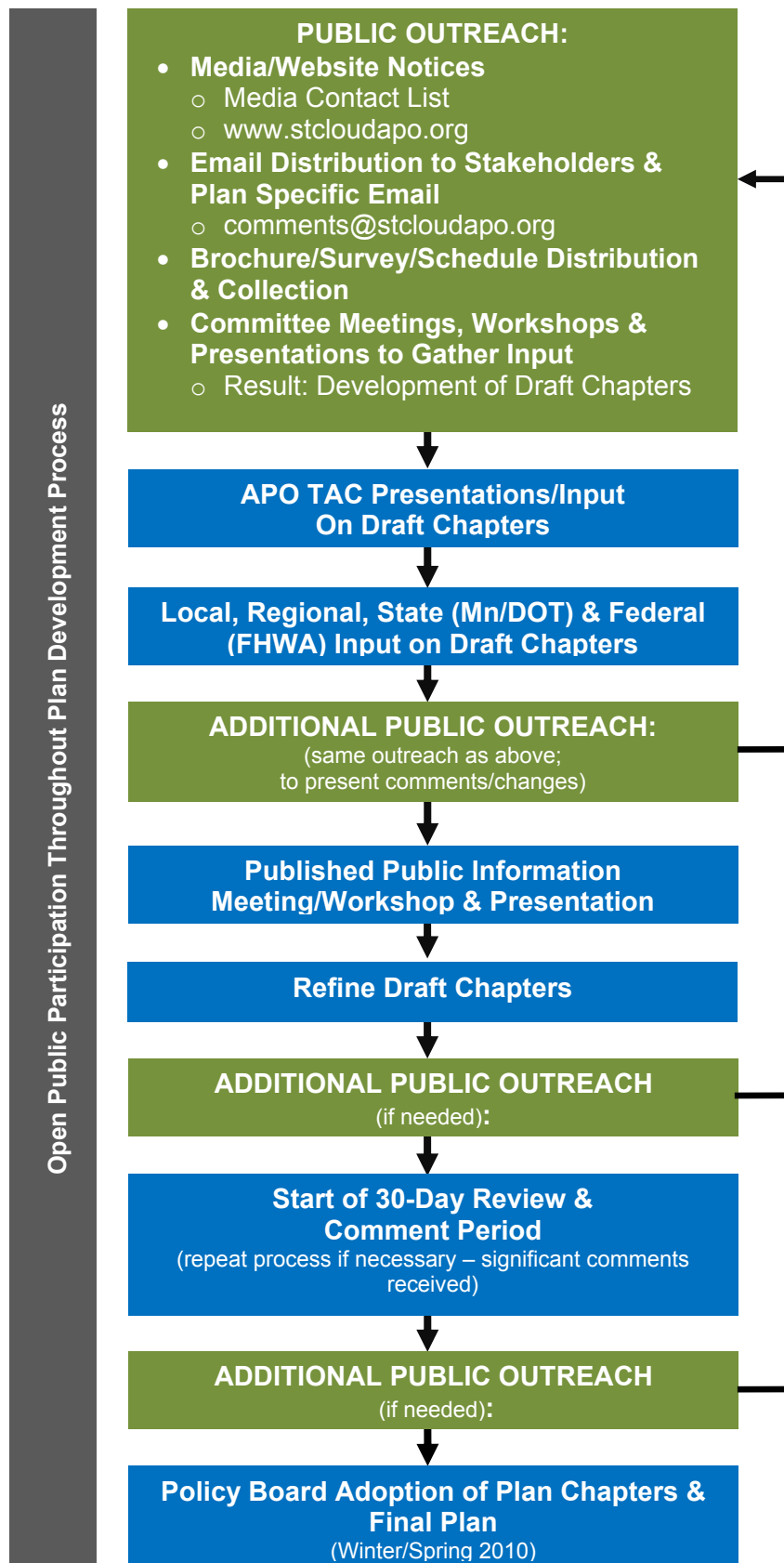


St. Cloud APO website

2035 APO Transportation Plan Public Involvement Log		
EVENT	DATE	SUMMARY
Email	8/19/2006	Sent email to St. Cloud Times to public notice for public meeting for draft Plan Overview, Community Engagement & Land Use
APO Website Update	8/19/2006	Updated APO website and its site to include executive summaries and draft narratives for Plan Overview and Community Engagement, and a Draft Land Use map
St. Cloud Times Newspaper Legal Ad	8/24/2006	Legal published in St. Cloud Times newspaper for public meeting for draft Plan Overview, Community Engagement & Land Use
Public Informational Meeting	8/28/2006	Public meeting, including presentations for draft Plan Overview, Community Engagement & Land Use
Jurisdiction Contact	9/12/2006	Assemble 2030 and 2035 Land Use maps for review and approval by all 13 APO jurisdictions
Continued Public Informational Meeting	9/23/2006	Continue public meeting for draft Land Use
Email	10/17/2006	Sent email to 50+ stakeholders with 2035 Plan brochure & survey and information about website update
APO Website Update	10/17/2006	Updated APO website to include 2035 Plan overview narrative, executive summaries, brochure and survey
Deliver Copies of 2035 Plan Brochure & Survey	10/20/2006	Deliver 100 printed copies of 2035 Plan brochure and survey to 13 jurisdictions in the APO planning area
St. Cloud Times Article	10/20/2006	Article published in newspaper on 2035 Plan process and public meeting on 10/23/06
St. Cloud University Local Television Station Interview	10/21/2006	Interview on 2035 Plan process and next steps
Public Informational Meeting	10/23/2006	Public meeting, including presentations for draft Air & Freight Transportation
Transit Provider Meeting	1/28/2007	Public meeting, coordination and consultation with regional transit providers
Freight Stakeholder Survey	2/20/2007	Online survey to solicit input from Freight Stakeholders
Tx-CAP Rural Transit Provider Meeting	2/23/2007	Needs Identification Assessment with Tx-CAP Transit
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee	2/25/2007	Public meeting regarding bicycle and pedestrian initiatives
Public Informational Meeting	2/26/2007	Public meeting, including presentations for draft Management & Operations
Transit Provider Meeting	3/4/2007	Public meeting, coordination and consultation with regional transit providers

2035 Transportation Plan
Public Participation Log

**Figure 2-4
Public Participation Process Flow**



Conclusion

Involving the community in deliberation over major transportation investments creates a means of exchanging information and viewpoints in an effort to identify issues, outline potential alternatives, and assess impacts prior to determining the final course of action.

Throughout development of the Plan, APO provided all Plan information in both electronic and hard copy format. Using various mediums, including websites, email, newspapers, radio, television allowed APO staff to reach out to traditionally underserved populations and interested parties. Specific interested parties consulted include:

- Public agencies
- Freight stakeholders (shippers & service providers)
- Transit stakeholders (private & public providers and users)
- Pedestrian & bicycle stakeholders
- Environmental justice populations (disabled, elderly, low income & minority)

Public participation does not stop with development of the Transportation Plan; participation and input will continue as specific projects, policies, and programs evolve.



Sample Photos from 2035 Transportation Plan Meetings & Workshops

**St. Cloud Metropolitan Area
2035 Transportation Plan
COMMENT CARD**

Name: _____
Email Address: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Phone: _____
Comments or Questions: _____

Public input is critical to the success of the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area 2035 Transportation Plan. We want stakeholders in the area to be involved early in the Plan development process, which will help us better understand communities we serve.
Written comments can also be made online at comments@stcloudapo.org, faxed to 320-252-6557, or mailed to APO, 2035 Transportation Plan comment, St. Cloud APO, 1040 County Road 4, St. Cloud, MN 56303

2035 Transportation Plan
Comment Card



2035 Transportation Plan
Roadway & Land Use
Public Meeting Boards



2035 Transportation Plan
Public Meeting Handouts
& Sign-in Sheet



2035 Transportation Plan
Metro Bus Transit
Public Meeting Board