

AKRON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Policy Committee
Technical Advisory Committee
Citizens Involvement Committee

FROM: AMATS Staff

RE: Summary of *Transportation Outlook* April 2008 Public Involvement Meetings

DATE: May 7, 2008

Purpose of Meetings

AMATS scheduled an initial round of public meetings at four locations in the Akron Metropolitan area for the dates of April 16, 17, 23 and 24, 2008. This round of meetings was the first step in the public involvement efforts to update the area's regional transportation plan, *Transportation Outlook*. These meetings provided an arena for the public to voice, both orally and in writing, their needs and ideas for the transportation system. Rather than providing the public with completed recommendations to react to, these meetings provided an opportunity to solicit wide-ranging ideas regarding the transportation system.

Meeting Format

The meetings had a format that began with a twenty-minute presentation. The presentation gave some background information about AMATS, and about the past, existing and future growth and development trends in the region. The presentation was followed by a one-hour question and answer period.

Scheduling of Meetings

The meetings were scheduled in a manner that would represent the entire region. Four evening meetings were scheduled in public libraries. The meetings were scheduled as follows:

1. April 16, 2008 at 7 pm at the Green Branch of the Summit County Public Library, in Green.
2. April 17, 2008 at 7 pm at the Highland Square Branch of the Summit County Public Library, in Akron.
3. April 23, 2008 at 7 pm at the Twinsburg Public Library, in Twinsburg.
4. April 24, 2008 at 7 pm at the Kent Free Library, in Kent.

Promotion of Meetings

AMATS used three mediums (newspaper ads, the AMATS website and flyers), to advertise the meetings:

Newspaper Advertisements – Three newspaper advertisements were purchased to promote the meetings. A 20-column inch advertisement ran in *The Reporter*, the week of April 6; a 20-column inch advertisement ran in the *Beacon Journal* on April 9; and a 16-column inch ad ran in the *Record-Courier* April 16.

AMATS Website – The meeting announcement appeared on the AMATS website on the “What’s New” page.

Flyers – At two of the meeting locations, Twinsburg Public Library and the Kent Free Library, 25 flyers were placed for distribution at each location. The Akron and Green libraries did not receive flyers due to the amount of advance notice time that the libraries requested prior to the meeting.

Meeting Results

The following is a summary of attendance and oral comments received during these meetings:

April 16, 2008 Green (1 Attendee)- The comment focused on relieving congestion in Green at the area around the I-77 and the Massillon Rd. interchange. The comment suggested alleviating the congestion by building a ramp at SR 619 and I-77

April 17, 2008 Highland Square (19 Attendees)- As the meeting with the most discussion, the recurring theme of the comments was to provide alternate modes of transportation in the area between downtown Akron and Highland Square and towards Montrose. The main emphasis was on constructing bicycle lanes on W. Market St. as well as extension of more bus service to Montrose. Attendees discussed the importance of multi-modal strategies throughout the region to reduce pollution caused by automobile travel.

April 23, 2008 Twinsburg (2 Attendees)- The comments supported commuter rail as a main form of transit as well as a streetcar system.

April 24, 2008 Kent (9 Attendees)- The comments focused on the importance of providing additional bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities for promoting health and environmental protection/conservation. To accomplish these goals, one comment suggested using Surface Transportation Program funds in addition to the Transportation Enhancement funds to supplement funding for pedestrian facilities and bikeways. Another comment suggested that additional bicycle trails in Portage County be added to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Needs report.

The five written comments received are attached to this memorandum. Please note that the last comment attached represents one of approximately 27 pages of a signed petition regarding bicycle lanes in the city of Akron and suggestions of funding sources. In all, there are approximately 170 signatures on the petition.

Next Steps

The comments received at the meetings will be presented to the Plan Update Subcommittee on May 15. The Staff will also take these comments into consideration as Transportation Outlook is developed. The next round of Transportation Outlook public meetings is expected to be held in September or October.

TRANSPORTATION OUTLOOK
PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

Please complete and return this form to AMATS
Return may be made in person or via mail to:
Room 806 CitiCenter / 146 South High Street / Akron, OH 44308
Or Fax to: (330) 375-2275

NAME: STEPHEN CSEJTEY DATE: 4/17/06
ADDRESS: _____ CITY: AKRON
ZIP: 44303 E-MAIL: _____
PHONE: (optional) _____ Work/Home (Please circle one)

MEETING LOCATION: Summit County Public Library- Highland Square Branch

COMMENTS: ACCESS TO WORKING BIKE LANES
THROUGHOUT THE CENTRAL AREA OF THE
CITY WOULD BE USED HEAVILY. THE
TOWPATH IS GREAT FOR RECREATION, BUT IT
DOES NOT GET ME SAFELY TO WORK
OR THE STORE OR THE LIBRARY.

BIKE LANES WOULD BE INEXPENSIVE
AND PROVIDE SAFE METHOD OF HEALTHY
ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TRANSPORTATION.

FEDERAL FUNDING IS AVAILABLE TO
CONSTRUCT BIKE LANES.

(Please use back of this sheet for additional comments. Thank you.)

TRANSPORTATION OUTLOOK

PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

Please complete and return this form to AMATS
Return may be made in person or via mail to:
Room 806 CitiCenter / 146 South High Street / Akron, OH 44308
Or Fax to: (330) 375-2275

NAME: Martha Grevoch DATE: 4/17/08
ADDRESS: _____ CITY: Akron
ZIP: 44303 E-MAIL: _____
PHONE: (optional) _____ Work/Home (Please circle one)

MEETING LOCATION: Summit County Public Library- Highland Square Branch

COMMENTS: Urge consideration of commuter bike
lanes from downtown to Hawkins + Mantrose
(via W. Market) and to North Hill...
Even without initial support, I think that
if you build it, they will come - eventually.

I hope that AMATS, the City, METRO
will encourage everyone to use the "METRO,
e-bike, feet etc (behavior change).

Wouldn't it be great if Akron became
a leader in public transportation !!

(Please use back of this sheet for additional comments. Thank you.)

Monday, April 21, 2008 10:12 AM

To whom it may concern;

I have had to miss the meetings being held regarding AMATS changes to the Akron area, but I would like to add my voice to those stating that no additional widening is required for West Market between Highland Square and Walhaven. To my mind, the only legitimate reason to widen this stretch of roadway would be to add bike lanes to downtown. I hope the city will also consider adding bike paths from Highland Square and West Akron which connect in with the Towpath Trail. A path running from Highland Square to Big Bear, Mustill Store, or directly to the trail, would generate community excitement and draw a desirable demographic into the area.

Please also work the preservation of the brick roadways of Highland Square as brick (not printed concrete) into your plans. Keep Akron beautiful and livable.

Thank you for your time.

Regards

Michael Russell

Sent: Thursday, April 24, 2008 12:48 AM
To: AMATS@ci.akron.oh.us
Subject: Rail thoughts for AMATS future

I missed attending your meeting today. My emphasis would be to see the resources that are currently in the ground be re-used. I'm talking about the rail system that the METRO RTA now controls and is responsible for. They own 4 Marta train sets. I emailed METRO a few weeks ago and asked why they can't begin using their rails. They said they can't because AMATS never agreed they should because AMATS must approve for the Federal dollars to follow. I can't believe it would be too difficult setting up inter-city train travel between Akron and Canton or Akron and Kent. I realize its two different train terminals in Akron. I would like to point out that there is an instant TOD in the Merriman Valley should METRO choose to set up a station outside of the Liberty Commons. Almost a billion dollars worth of development is also going into the "Eastgate" neighborhood of Goodyear in the next 7 years. Why not link via rail the Merriman Valley with approximately 6000 people to downtown Akron to the new Goodyear hq and retail destination with the Akron-Canton Airport and downtown Canton. I've seen how packed I-77 gets. I've seen in AMATS reports that between 80-100,000 cars are on I-77 everyday traveling between Akron and Canton. Surely 3-5000+ people in the mornings could decide to take a train instead.

There are people with dreams in Ohio of having high-speed train service connecting the major cities of the state in the not too distant future. Why not connect 2 cities of Ohio now!? Akron and Canton are connected via rail and that rail is controlled by a public entity. There just isn't any service scheduled between them right now. Someday there could be expansion to Cleveland. Lets have Metro save some money on fuel by using rail as a backbone of their system.

I wouldn't mind also seeing a small streetcar system linking the 2 commuter rail terminals of Akron to the various hospitals and the Unviersity as well as Main St.
Thanks,

David Smith

Sent: Tuesday, May 06, 2008 12:00 PM

To: AMATS@ci.akron.oh.us

Subject: Bike Lanes and street improvements in Transportation Plan

To whom it may concern:

Please consider providing safe bike lanes into the central city and university areas in the revised transportation plan.

Also, it is my hope you will not consider any additional widening of West Market Street. Although we always hope for growth, the reality continues to be that Akron is a shrinking city, and planning needs to address decreased, not increased, volumes. I travel nationally for work, and I can tell you with confidence that Akron, at least along West Market, has no significant congestion. Even our rush hour traffic moves with few problems.

Additionally I hope you will find a way of addressing the preservation issue, by working to preserve the remaining brick streets of our neighborhoods.

Regards,

Michael Russell

Sent: Tuesday, May 06, 2008 6:45 PM

To:

AMATS@ci.akron.oh.us

Subject: Future Transportation

May 5, 2008

Dear AMATS Policy Committee Member,

I am writing you to ask for you to help. At no time in history has there been so many changes to the human condition than today. As a transportation policy maker, you are more aware than most of the impact the automobile has had on our country. We thrived with the materials production, manufacturing and assembly, use and service, road construction, and fuel consumption associated with the family car. It allows us the freedom to travel where we want, when we want. Unfortunately, we have built so much of our life style around the car, that we have become a slave to it.

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) increased 40 percent from 1990 to 2006.

Akron is the 3rd city in the US for single occupied car travel, Canton is first. U.S. spends 9 times more on supporting single occupied vehicle travel than on public transportation. While this began long before any one realized, we are just beginning to see the the negative economic, environmental and health consequences of the automobile oriented lifestyle has cost our country.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states that driving a motor vehicle is the single most polluting act an average citizen can perform. Motor vehicles emit millions of tons of pollutants into the air each year and continue to be the single largest contributor to ground-level ozone, a major component of smog. Cars also emit a number of pollutants classified as toxics, these toxics, can reportedly cause cancer. Ground-level ozone and air toxics from motor vehicles also contribute to the environmental problems of global warming and acid rain. Other adverse effects of automobile travel on the environment include contaminants in the storm water system from street run-off; and the use of resources for car and parts manufacturing and disposal.

VMT use carries a range of social and environmental costs, not paid by the user. These are rarely quantified. In the interest of equity, economy and sustainability, it is of paramount importance that the entire cost/benefit equation is completed when different approaches to tackling transport congestion are assessed. According to the EPA's INVENTORY OF U.S. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND SINKS: 1990 – 2006

Transportation CO2 emissions increased by 21 percent (378.5 Tg)

Carbon dioxide emissions from passenger cars and light-duty trucks totaled 1,148.4 Tg in 2006, an increase of 21 percent (200.2 Tg) from 1990.

The barriers to adequately tackling congestion, thus green house gases in the United States are largely political. These underlying institutional problems have been one of the factors driving an automobile dependent system. When the main source of a MPO's revenue comes from gas tax, it stands to reason that planners would build to the tax.

The cause of traffic congestion in the US needs to look at the larger ramifications of the American lifestyle. If used more efficiently, the current infrastructure would be adequate to deal with projected future growth in travel demand. Most current transportation emission reduction programs focus primarily on mitigating traffic congestion by changing the way motorists drive rather than how much they drive. These programs attempt to move single occupied vehicles more efficiently. While this strategy has short term results the increase of emissions from constructing the highway and the additional VMT induced by adding one mile of new highway lane will increase CO2 emissions by more than 100,000 tons over 50 years.

The Ohio Department of Transportation states "Ohio cannot simply build its way out of congestion."

AMATS' current program of freeway expansion would continue promoting unsustainable travel behavior and more congestion and pollution. Given the rising price of gas and the subsequent funding crisis, it would be wise for AMATS to replace any plans to expand highways or street widening with more sustainable transportation alternatives, such as the Canton-Akron-Cleveland-Commuter Rail and bicycle commuting facilities throughout the AMATS area. Ralph Coletta said that AMATS Technical Advisory Committee wants to complete the Towpath before it begins to fund safe bike lanes. I appreciate this because the Towpath is a great asset to our community. I would hope that the wishes of the community would be taken into consideration. I have attached over 170 signatures of citizens who want safe bicycle lanes connecting the surrounding neighborhoods to the Towpath as well as downtown areas and the universities.

In 2002 there was a great deal of community and civic support for the Canton-Akron-Cleveland-Commuter Rail and bicycle commuting facilities. While the Village of Silver Lake was opposed to the CAC line, several conditions have continued to worsen. Gas has increased more than a dollar per gallon. International experts predict that global oil production will peak at some point in the next 20 years. Beyond this point demand will increasingly outstrip supply and global oil prices will increase dramatically. The sooner the United States government starts encouraging the transition to alternatives, the less economically damaging it will be when the inevitable exhaustion of oil occurs. And the most disturbing, recent studies indicate that "both industrialized and developing nations must wean themselves off fossil fuels by as early as mid-century in order to prevent warming that could change precipitation patterns and dry up sources of water worldwide."

As Summit and Portage County residents struggle to fill their gas tanks, AMATS would do right by the tax payers to plan and fund a more sustainable multimodal transportation system that would save the environment, tax dollars and lives. The long term benefits of building a rail system will far outweigh the initial cost and will help to make northeastern Ohio more economically competitive.

Any argument that a MPO can't "make" people take public transportation because it infringes on personal freedom fails to recognize that we have policies in place that limit personal freedom for the greater good. Randy Cohen of the New York Times points to policy making as the foundation of civilization.

"It would be misleading to say that wise policy decisions never restrict individual freedom. They do. What civilization is is the restriction of individual freedom.... We have a thousand laws that restrict what an individual can do because it is singularly destructive to the larger community." Summit County has banned smoking in public places because it endangers other people.

Our environment is in jeopardy, we know that we can not continue to support single occupied vehicle travel as our main mode of transportation. The longer we wait to implement more sustainable options the more it will cost us later and the worse it will be for future generations. I believe that AMATS Policy Committee and its staff has the moral and ethical responsibility to do everything possible to provide people with freedom to choose cleaner alternatives that will provide jobs and more importantly will enable our children to enjoy a sustainable future.

I hope, on behalf of our community, both local and global, you will take a this opportunity to reverse the negative economic, environmental and health consequences the single automobile oriented transportation planning of the past and lead the State of Ohio in the implementation of a sustainable multimodal system that include bicycle commuting and commuter rail to make our community a better place to live and work in Summit and Portage County.

Thank you for consideration, I am aware that this is a large undertaking and I will help to gain support from the public as well as the business community. I believe our efforts to protect the planet will be something we all can live with.

Lisa Bostwick

Safe, Complete Streets – Making Akron Streets Work for Everyone

We, the undersigned citizens who live, shop, and play in the Summit County, Ohio believe the Akron-Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) Staff, Technical Advisory Committee, and Policy Committee, must include bicycle commuting as an environmentally responsible principal mode of transportation in the City of Akron and not focus all funding for just recreational bicycle facilities. We respectfully request AMATS, its Staff, Technical Advisory Committee, and Policy Committee to include the implementation of bicycle lanes in the City of Akron for complete streets that provides safe mobility options for all users according to The Bicycle and Pedestrian Legislation Section 217 of Title 23 of the U.S. Code with available Funding Sources listed below:

Bicycle and pedestrian projects are broadly eligible for funding from almost all the major Federal-aid highway, transit, safety, and other programs. Bicycle projects must be "principally for transportation, rather than recreation, purposes" and must be designed and located pursuant to the transportation plans required of States and Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

National Highway System funds may be used to construct bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways on land adjacent to any highway on the National Highway System, including Interstate highways. 23 USC Section 217 (b)

Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds may be used for either the construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways, or nonconstruction projects (such as maps, brochures, and public service announcements) related to safe bicycle use and walking. TEA-21 added "the modification of public sidewalks to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act" as an activity that is specifically eligible for the use of these funds. 23 USC Section 217 (a)

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds may be used for either the construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways, or nonconstruction projects (such as maps, brochures, and public service announcements) related to safe bicycle use. 23 USC Section 217 (a)

Recreational Trails Program funds may be used for all kinds of trail projects. Of the funds apportioned to a State, 30 percent must be used for motorized trail uses, 30 percent for nonmotorized trail uses, and 40 percent for diverse trail uses (any combination). 23 USC Section 208

Provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists are eligible under the various categories of the Federal Lands Highway Program in conjunction with roads, highways, and parkways. Priority for funding projects is determined by the appropriate Federal Land Agency or Tribal government. 23 USC Section 204

Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants are available to support projects, including bicycle-related services, designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from employment. TEA-21 Section 3037

High Priority Projects and Designated Transportation Enhancement Activities identified by Section 1602 of TEA-21 include numerous bicycle, pedestrian, trail, and traffic calming projects in communities throughout the country.

Name	Address	Zip	Email	Phone
Rachel Severn		44340		
Donna		44310		
Mike Moran		44330		
Jeff Wells		44386		
Cynthia Chabon		44290		
Kristens Rogers		44260		

over 170 s:

AKRON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Policy Committee
Technical Advisory Committee
Citizens Involvement Committee

FROM: AMATS Staff

RE: *Transportation Outlook – Status Update*

DATE: March 4, 2009

Transportation Outlook, the draft Regional Transportation Plan, was presented to the Policy Committee at the January 2009 meeting. The Policy Committee approved the draft Plan and the 30 day public comment period which started January 29 and ended February 27.

Transportation Outlook was anticipated to be approved during the March meeting. However, due to technical issues involving air quality analysis, the Plan approval has been delayed. Final approval of *Transportation Outlook* will be requested at the May Policy Committee Meeting.

Public Comments

During the comment period the staff held two public meetings at public libraries in Akron and Kent on February 10 and 11, respectively. A total of 25 people attended these meetings. The staff received a number of comments on the plan. The major themes of the public comments included:

- The need to provide more transportation options and the importance of multimodal transportation
- The need for bicycle friendly roads and increased bicycle linkages to regional trails
- The need for commuter rail service in the Akron metropolitan area
- The need for a regional transportation and land use vision
- The need for a discussion on climate change

All written comments received by the staff are attached. In total, 16 written comments were received.

Draft Plan Revisions

Several revisions were made to the draft Plan in response to member and public comments. The Transit section of the Plan was updated to include a discussion of rail.

This discussion summarizes past studies completed to analyze commuter rail service and the potential for completing a new study. The Plan also discusses the State's interest in inter-city rail as part of the Ohio Hub system.

The Transit section was also updated to reflect the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Projects requested by METRO and PARTA were added to the transit recommendations due to the projected increase in Section 5307 funds from the stimulus package.

The updated draft of *Transportation Outlook* is available on the AMATS website (www.ci.akron.oh.us/amats). The staff will request approval of the Plan at the May Policy Committee meeting.

From: Jorge Rodrigues
Sent: Monday, February 09, 2009 11:02 PM
To: amats@ci.akron.oh.us
Subject: Barny Busy Corners reconstruction

I own a business on Tallmadge Road near Barny Busy Corners in Cuyahoga Falls. I've read about the possible reconstruction of that intersection. Depending on how that is done it could be a good thing but I am unable to find any drawings or depictions of the new intersection. Are there any drawings available? I'd also like to know if you anticipate any road closings during construction that would block access to the businesses?

Thank you for your time.....

Jorge Rodrigues

From: Greg L
Sent: Monday, February 09, 2009 5:01 PM
To: amats@ci.akron.oh.us
Subject: Barneys Busy Corners Upgrade

I do not agree with the proposal of closing Tallmadge Road in Cuyahoga Falls for the Barneys Busy Corners upgrade.

Instead I would suggest that Bailey Road be the road that gets closed.

Tallmadge Road is a direct access road to Rte 8 offering both North and South connections unlike Bailey Road/Hudson Drive. Tallmadge Road is an alternative direct access to the Chapel Hill area helping to alleviate some of the congestion on Howe Avenue.

Greg Leimeister
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221-4773

From: Lyndee Wolf
Sent: Monday, February 09, 2009 7:00 PM
To: AMATS@ci.akron.oh.us
Subject: Comments

From a planet sustainability perspective and achieving independence from foreign oil, bicycle and pedestrian improvements should be the top priority. While your plan to include \$105 million for these types of improvements is commendable, widening roads to improve car congestion only encourages car use. Increased use of bicycles would go a long way to solving many transportation, environmental and health issues. Bicycle and pedestrian friendly cities also make for better communities. Instead of widening roads to increase the number of car lanes, why not add bicycle lanes to encourage a better mode of transport? The time has come to completely rethink transportation. As a nation and inhabitants dependent on this planet for our very survival, we can no longer afford the luxury of business as usual.

Thank you for allowing me to comment and share my thoughts.

Lyndee Wolf
Stow, OH 44224

AMATS

TRANSPORTATION OUTLOOK
DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN
PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

Please complete and return this form to AMATS by 4 p.m., February 27, 2009

Return may be made in person or via mail to:

Room 806 CitiCenter / 146 S. High Street / Akron, OH 44308

Or Fax to: (330) 375-2275

You may e-mail your comments to AMATS at amats@ci.akron.oh.us

NAME:

FRED WISE

DATE:

2/10/09

ADDRESS:

PENINSULA (HOME IS ACTUALLY IN CUYAHOGA PARISH)

ZIP: 44207

PHONE: (optional)

work/home (Please circle one)

EMAIL ADDRESS: (optional)

COMMENTS: (please reference page number)

ALL POINTS TO BICYCLE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. HEIGHTEN PRIORITY S/R PLACED ON "BIKE FRIENDLY" STREETS

NEAR & EXTENDED BIKE TRAILS ARE IMPORTANT BUT BIKE

FRIENDLY STREETS TO & FROM THE BIKE TRAILS IS

POSSIBLY MORE IMPORTANT, THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE

IN NORTHWEST SUMMIT COUNTY - FROM BATH/NEIGHBOR

TO HUDSON/STOW/MONROE PARISH & FURTHER IN TO PORTAGE

COUNTY - KILM/RAVENNA.

(Please use back of this sheet for additional comments. Thank you.)

AMATS

TRANSPORTATION OUTLOOK DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

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Or Fax to: (330) 375-2275

You may e-mail your comments to AMATS at amats@ci.akron.oh.us

NAME: Michael Russell DATE: 2/10/2009

ADDRESS: _____
Akron 44302 ZIP: 44302

PHONE: (optional) _____ work/home (Please circle one)

EMAIL ADDRESS: (optional) _____

COMMENTS: (please reference page number) _____

More bike paths please! It would be
great to connect all neighborhoods
(especially mine - Highland Square) to the
Towpath. And to get a bike friendly
route to UA (University of Akron)
Thanks!

(Please use back of this sheet for additional comments. Thank you.)

as a railroad operation. Offset of trail center line from track center line and necessary zoning needs to be considered and planned for.

Land use needs to be more of a focus of AMATS and recommended in the plan; this zoning and control of development will benefit transportation in the next 25 years.

Also integration of ~~the~~ public transportation system must have good connections with long distance rail (Ohio hub) service.



RECEIVED

TRANSPORTATION OUTLOOK
DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN
PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

FEB 13 2009

Please complete and return this form to AMATS by 4 p.m., February 12, 2009.
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Or Fax to: (330) 375-2275
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AMATS
METROPOLITAN AREA
TRANSPORTATION STUDY

NAME: HAROLD WALKER, JR. DATE: 2-11-2009

ADDRESS: KENT, OH ZIP: 44240

PHONE: (optional) _____ work/home (Please circle one)

EMAIL ADDRESS: (optional) _____

COMMENTS: (please reference page number) _____

It seems to me that a 20-year plan should incorporate more visionary alternatives for long-term consideration.

For example, for promotion of wider demand for public transit, I call attention to the "Eco-Pass" program of Boulder, Colorado - (descriptive materials handed to staff.)

(Please use back of this sheet for additional comments. Thank you.)

From: reginald.arkell
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 4:39 PM
To: amats@ci.akron.oh.us
Subject: Review of AMATS Draft/Updated Transportation Plan

Jason:

I have reviewed AMATS' draft of *Transportation Outlook, The 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (TP)*. The following comments and suggestions are provided.

- 23 CFR § 450.306, *Scope of the metropolitan transportation planning process*, lists eight planning factors that should be addressed. "The degree of consideration and analysis of the factors should be based on the scale and complexity of many issues, including transportation system development, land use, employment..."etc.

In the Region and Transportation Issues sections of the draft TP, it is stated that most of the population/housing and employment growth through 2030 is forecast to take place outside of the inner urban areas. It is also stated that this continued dispersal of population is associated with growing suburban traffic volumes/congestion and poor transit performance. The draft TP implies that the MPO: 1) is attempting to predict future settlement patterns for population and employment based on past trends and local zoning codes; 2) considers its forecast of low density development preferable to alternative projections that use different assumptions; and 3) will plan the transportation system accordingly. It is suggested that the AMATS and Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) assumptions used in the demographic forecast/projection be made more transparent.

See the American Planning Association article: *Is That a Good Assumption?* (<http://www.planning.org/planning/2007/jan/assumption.htm>) "A forecast is the future that is most likely to occur. A projection is a conditional statement about the future based on a set of assumptions. A plan may be defined as the preferred projection. All forecasts are projections....Projections are a means to an end, not an end in themselves." The ends or goals of the transportation system are stated in the planning factors section on pages 43-45 in Appendix A of the draft TP. However, it is not overly clear how the projections in the above paragraph (the means) relate to or address some of the planning factors (the ends). In particular, there is not an apparent nexus of the chosen land use and transportation system patterns to: protection of the environment; energy conservation; improved quality of life; enhanced connectivity between modes; and efficiency of the system.

Transportation system efficiency improvements in terms of modal balance cannot be accomplished at any level of significance without adequate supporting population/ employment densities. It is recognized that AMATS does not have land use planning authority, although, many of its member agencies do. AMATS could become more actively involved in land use planning. It is suggested that alternative growth scenarios be provided, using different assumptions, that direct more of the development to established urban areas to increase densities in the municipalities. Analysis could be performed to determine the benefit-cost ratio of the alternatives versus continuation of the population/ employment dispersal pattern. This could include analysis of infrastructure costs and modal balance performance measures documented below under different scenarios. See the Journal of the American Planning Association study: *Land Use-Transportation Scenarios and Future Vehicle Travel and Land Consumption* (http://faculty.arch.utah.edu/bartholomew/JAPA_SP_Article.pdf).

- 23 CFR § 450.322(b), *Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan*, states that the plan shall include strategies leading to an integrated multimodal and efficient transportation system. 23 CFR § 450.322(f)(3) states that the plan shall include "...operational

and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods.”

In Appendix A of the draft TP, P.47 it is stated, “Transportation Outlook recommends a number of operational and management improvements to relieve congestion, improve safety, and increase mobility.” The plan update could expand upon this statement and identify the actual strategies and indicate how they are related to particular projects. Further, the plan update could consider specific performance strategies/measures to gauge transportation system efficiency in terms of modal balance. The measures below and in the TCRP 88 report, *A Guidebook for Developing a Transit Performance-Measurement System*, are provided for consideration (http://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_report_88/Guidebook.pdf).

- Higher: population and employment densities; transit farebox recovery rates; transit mode share; transit ridership; street connectivity indexes; land use mix; and
 - Lower: per capita/overall AVMT; household transportation expenditures; emissions; and parking availability.
- Pursuant to 23 CFR § 450.320, *Congestion management process in transportation management areas*, the MPO is required to address congestion management and system efficiency through consideration of travel demand reduction [transportation demand management (TDM)] and operational management strategies. This includes evaluating methods to reduce single occupant vehicle (SOV) travel in addition to growth management/congestion pricing measures, and public transportation improvements.

It is recommended that the update include analysis of travel demand reduction techniques considered as part of the requirement for operational management strategies under 23 CFR § 450.322(f)(3). This could include roadway user fees that are not necessarily related to congestion, such as increased fuel taxes or pricing for vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and parking. These strategies could be related to recovering and reducing highway and transit related subsidies. This could include a thorough benefit-cost analysis to demonstrate the methods that can reduce VMT and related costs while enhancing quality of life.

On July 29, 2008, the U.S Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) announced the release of *Refocus. Reform. Renew, A New Transportation Approach in America* (<http://www.dot.gov/affairs/dot10308.htm>). The document offers an innovative methodology to address transportation system congestion and inefficiencies that are constraining the economy. “As a policy matter, the Administration strongly supports development of a surface transportation financial model in which system user charges relate more closely to the true marginal costs of congestion, construction, operation and maintenance.” This would include variable and vehicle miles traveled (VMT)-based charges. Note that this document was recently removed from the U.S. DOT web site.

- 23 CFR § 450.322(f)(10)(i), *Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan*, states: “For purposes of transportation system operations and maintenance, the financial plan shall contain system-level estimates of costs and revenue sources that are reasonably expected to be available to adequately operate and maintain....public transportation (as defined by title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53).”

Appendix D Financial Plan of the draft TP provides information at the bottom of page 60 and on page 64 on the cost methodology and inflation rates used for transit projects. Table D-3 provides transit project costs through the year 2030. It is suggested that the table be broken down by periods of time so that the year-to-year costs are more transparent.

- 23 CFR § 450.322(f)(10)(vii), *Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan*, states: “For illustrative purposes. The financial plan may (but is not required to) include additional projects that would be included in the adopted transportation plan if additional resources beyond those identified in the financial plan were to become available.”

It is suggested that the TP contain projects expected to be supported by funds that may be available pursuant to the American Economic Recovery Act.

- 23 CFR § 450.334(a)(4), *Self-certifications and Federal certifications*, states that the MPO should certify that the transportation planning process is being carried out in accordance with “49 U.S.C. 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity.”

Appendix E, Environmental Justice Analysis, in the draft TP determines impacts on protected populations from roadway projects and accessibility to employment and other amenities. The methodology could include historical analysis of income disparity by race and the relationship with or causal effect from population disbursement.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss these recommendations or have any questions. Thank you.

Reggie

Reginald Arkell, Community Planner
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
Chicago, IL 60606



RECEIVED

TRANSPORTATION OUTLOOK
DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN
PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

FEB 17 2009

Please complete and return this form to AMATS by 4 p.m., February 27, 2009.
Return may be made in person or via mail to:
Room 806 CitiCenter / 146 S. High Street / Akron, OH 44308
Or Fax to: (330) 375-2275
You may e-mail your comments to AMATS at amats@ci.akron.oh.us

AMATS
AKRON METROPOLITAN AREA
TRANSPORTATION STUDY

NAME: Jeff Ingram DATE: 2/14/09

ADDRESS: Kent, OH 44240 ZIP: 44240

PHONE: (optional) _____ work/home (Please circle one)

EMAIL ADDRESS: (optional) _____

COMMENTS: (please reference page number) _____ B

I would like to see rail transportation for passengers developed throughout the Akron, Youngstown and Cleveland triangle. The benefits of developing a light rail system include less congestion, less pollution, and safer travels for the many people in our region. I understand a corridor of light rail is being developed from Cleveland, to Columbus, to Cincinnati and believe Northeast Ohio should connect with this corridor. All Aboard Ohio

(Please use back of this sheet for additional comments. Thank you.)

is an organization that AMATS
could work with in designing and
implementing passenger rail.

Thank you for your
time and consideration

Jeff Ingram

RECEIVED

FEB 17 2009

From: William Maki

Cuyahoga Falls OH 44221

15 Feb 2009

AMATS
AKRON METROPOLITAN AREA
TRANSPORTATION STUDY

To: AMATS
806 CitiCenter Bldg
146 S High St
Akron OH 44308

Subject: Newspaper Articles

Please find enclosed four articles which may affect our transportation plans. Although some of the news items cover events outside of our two counties, the plans we make are affected by the activities of these places. Please consider the impact of these on our future roads, any increase in traffic or change in traffic patterns, or any work levied on us to correct/update our roads.

#1 NE Ohio airports extending runways.

The impact would be more traffic as persons go to the airport to leave or arrive at the airport and drive/take rentals through our area. Same for truck traffic for cargo.

#2 New Rail Line

Implementation of this proposed line could restoke the fires and build up steam for the (now defunct) proposal to have a Cleveland-Akron-Canton light rail line.

#3 NASA project to power bus

Technology could be used in the two county area to provide solar power to make hydrogen from water. Roofs of bus maintenance facilities, rented fields where the solar panels would be installed and hydrogen collected, etc. This would affect the fuel consumption plans of METRO and PARTA, costs to convert or buy new buses, etc.

#4 New fees to fix flooding

As all of our roads are hard surface, a tremendous amount of water runs off and into the rivers when it rains. The article addresses private land use (malls, factories, homes) but could be expanded to include city/county/state/national highways. In planning future road expansions, repairs, etc., it may behoove us to plan water catchment ponds. These could be used to catch and store water for public use (in drought), for road maintenance crews (to siphon up water and make a brine mix in winter), or for fire crews (to use to fill tankers if fighting a fire where there is no fire hydrant system).

Thank you

William J Maki

RECEIVED

February 14, 2009


FEB 18 2009

Dear Jason,

AMATS
AKRON METROPOLITAN AREA
TRANSPORTATION STUDY

I read an article a while ago about a project to widen Graham Road in Stow between Rte. 91 and Charring Cross Drive . I contacted the City of Stow and they told me it was on a list to be done by 2030 . I feel this project needs to be done as soon as possible. I live on Graham Rd . in the area of the proposed additional lanes, and traffic has become increasingly more congested over the last 35+ years that I have lived here. I also believe that the proposed addition should run all the way from Rte.91 to Fishcreek Rd. It is my hope that due to our new president looking at highway projects nationwide, that some funds could be used here in Stow for this much overdue project . Thank you for considering my thoughts on this matter.

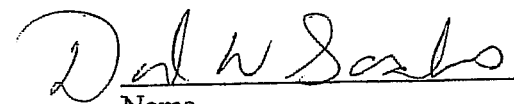
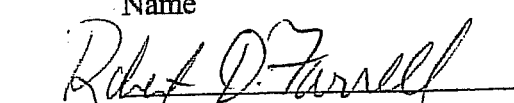
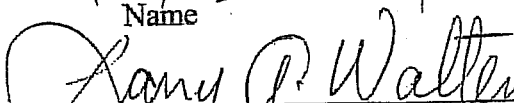
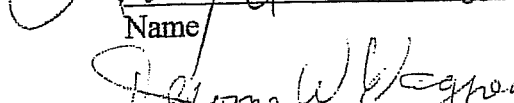
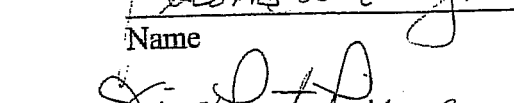
Sincerely,



David Sachs

Stow, Ohio
44224

Here are additional signatures from neighbors that are also in agreement with this letter:

	_____	_____
Name	Address	Phone
	_____	_____
Name	Address	Phone
	_____	_____
Name	Address	Phone
	_____	_____
Name	Address	Phone
	_____	_____
Name	Address	Phone

COMMENTS:

As noted in the January 29, 2009 news release, changes in the national transportation investment policy may be coming soon. The "Stimulus plan" was just passed by Congress, so must be taken into account. At the state level, the outcome of ODOT's public meetings last year on transportation for the 21st century may also mean adjustments to this plan in order to protect the environment and reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

Page 22: As you know, transportation issues include funding, highways, transit, and land use, but also air quality. This whole area is non-attainment for air quality, with little optimism about meeting federal standards on time, in order to improve public health. Therefore, we may need to shift more funding toward measures to accomplish this, including non-motorized transportation.

Page 30-31: Because maintaining the existing roads and bridges for safety and reducing congestion is important, I recommend increasing the state gas tax, with the increment used specifically for air quality improvements. We must be more innovative than just the standard list of options. Evaluate carefully alternatives such as cash-for clunkers; mass transit improvements—such as frequency of service, circulator service, and CNG vehicles or hybrids; more park-and-ride lots, increased coordination between RTA systems for inter-county trips; and careful evaluation of light rail. Also implement options for freight (page 21), such as incentives to upgrade diesel engines, no-idling programs, and incentives for more containers on trains.

Page 36-38: I was pleased to hear that more funds would be shifted to complete the Portage Hike & Bike Trail and other regional trails, now that the Towpath Trail is almost done. Also, the recommendation that bicycle and pedestrian improvements should be targeted in areas that promote frequent use. This should include links between the main trails and destinations such as parks and preserves.

Page 20: To address funding for all of the above, there are probably a number of analyses. Depending on political feasibility, I recommend adding 1¢ per gallon to the gas tax every other year, with 50% of the increment to be used for air quality improvements (broadly defined) and 50% to offset the effects of inflation on all of the above. We do not need new roads, which encourage urban sprawl. As Governor Strickland said, anything that important could be a toll road.

Page 36: One specific suggestion when designing or upgrading State roads in northern Ohio: Please stripe off a bike/pedestrian path on both sides of the road. Then use it for snow storage in the winter (including East Main Street in Kent). This should help keep sidewalks open for people to walk on during the winter. If sidewalks are not covered with ice/salt/slush by snowplows, property owners could then be strongly encouraged to clean their portion of sidewalk, with improved public safety and grateful pedestrians.

Your thoughtful work on transportation issues is very much appreciated.

Edith Chase

RECEIVED

From: William J Maki

18 Feb 2009

FEB 20 2009

Cuyahoga Falls OH 44221

To: AMATS
Akron CitiCenter
Akron OH

AMATS
AKRON METROPOLITAN AREA
TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Subject: The 2030 Transportation Plan

1. Money for roads. As brought up in the meeting at the Kent Free Library, Ohio raises road repair money from fuel taxes. As people buy more fuel efficient cars, or hybrid cars, or fuel cell cars that use no gasoline, fuel taxes will drop. Will you convey this in the plan as a shortfall in funding? The State of Ohio needs to offset this with a) higher fees for license plates b) higher fee to purchase a vehicle. As an alternative, the county/city/township/village municipalities could raise their own local fees, if not controlled by the state.
2. The idea advanced to make more toll roads was in the newspaper. Are any sections of roads in our planning area adaptable to this idea?
3. Hike and Bike Trails. We have planned to improve/install many trails. Could the work be done by shovel and pick? The state would have to instruct the MPOs to let out the work, and winning companies would have to hire people drawing unemployment. This would get those people off the rolls, provide wage and health benefits (well, for a year or two) and result in the work planned from now to 2030 to be done in 2-3 years? Yes, this is a renewal of the Public Works Administration of the Depression.
4. Public Transport. I see the need for more people movers covering routes to serve the area. Note I did not say buses? I think buses are a bit antiquated for in-county travel. Perhaps cross country buses for Greyhound and tour buses should carry 40-50 people, but not people movers. What would keep us from going to all small buses? Are there some routes where there are 40 passengers continuously on board? Should larger buses fan out from Akron, Ravenna, Kent, etc. and smaller people movers move out from these depots?
5. And why are buses so high? I envision these people movers like carts in the parking lots of DisneyWorld and Disneyland. One step up, you sit down. Two carts behind a tractor. No heat, no air conditioning. Protection from snow, rain – yes. Can we break out of the 1920's trolley car design, which morphed into the modern buses, when a lot of people used buses and they lived in cities, not in suburbs. We need to change the vehicles to better help the non-drivers.
6. In the long-range plan, items 2, 7, 42, 54, and 57 are all interstate. I recommend we defer those and concentrate on the other (cheaper) items.

From: Greg Gantzer
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2009 10:53 AM
To: amats@ci.akron.oh.us
Subject: Transit plan comments

Hello,

Regarding the long term highway and transit plan, I am quite confused as to why improvements to the following areas are not higher on the priority list:

- SR82 widening from SR8 to Cuyahoga Line
- SR82 / Olde 8 / Bradywine Rd intersection

Both of these have consistently ranked in the top 10 trouble spots are far as congestion or operational issues, yet neither are shown as being on the upcoming list of projects for years. If you are showing that these are some of the worst trouble spots, why aren't they moved up on the list?

Greg Gantzer
Gantzer Group, Inc.

From: Greg Gantzer
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2009 6:24 PM
To: 'Baker, Curtis'
Subject: RE: Transit plan comments

Curtis,

I appreciate the feedback, thanks. The maintenance prioritization is understandable and something I agree with, but please put me down as commenting on the need for work on 82. This has been consistently labeled as one of the routes that does/will have the biggest over-capacity issue.

I'd also like to drop some comments concerning the Olde 8/82 intersection for the record as well. Not sure if a roundabout is still being considered, and its unlikely that that approach would be sufficient, nor would turn lanes. A five-way intersection simply cannot handle the required volume. A better approach would be to route the end of Brandywine road either through or near the St. Barnabus property located a ¼ mile south of the intersection. The road could intersect with Olde 8 with a new light timed with the Rt 82 light., thereby eliminating the 5 way intersection. Given the current state of the economy, a deal could be struck with the church at low cost.

Greg Gantzer
Gantzer Group, Inc.

From: Laura Christie
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2009 12:05 PM
To: amats@ci.akron.oh.us
Subject: 2030 Plan comments

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on AMATS 2030 plan. As a resident of northeast Ohio I have to admit that I'm a bit alarmed by the complete omission of any mention of climate change in the 20 year plan. It is widely expected that Congress will pass some form of legislation regulating carbon emissions in the relatively near term; if not this year then early next year.

The transportation sector contributes roughly a quarter of the nation's greenhouse gases annually. And while AMATS is not currently *required* to assess the impacts climate change or how the region's metropolitan planning contributes to it, it is an issue that you will be required to address in the coming years. Why wait? Why does it seem that Northeast Ohio takes a reactive approach on issues such as this, rather than a proactive one? AMATS wouldn't be the first MPO in the nation to take climate change into consideration - <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/metro/mpoclimstlwa.htm> - but you could be the first in the state to include it in a long range plan. Set an example for NOACA.

I encourage AMATS to acknowledge that carbon dioxide is a pollutant and to calculate its emissions along with those of ozone and PM. At the very least AMATS should commit to developing a methodology to do so. I also encourage you to take CO2 emission and climate change into account when assessing adverse environmental impacts of proposed projects. While considering variable such as noise pollution is important, noise pollution is not imperiling our planet.

At the very least I urge you to acknowledge that climate change and climate change legislation present an added layer of uncertainty and a whole new set of challenges for metropolitan planning in the Akron area. It is my sincerest hope that AMATS heeds the call of everyone concerned about climate change and reconsiders your passive approach to dealing with CO2 emissions. Take a stand. Make a statement. Be a leader. And please include CO2 emissions and climate change in your 2030 plan.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to comment. And thank you for your sincere consideration.

Laura P. Christie
Northeast Ohio resident

Laura P. Christie, LEED AP
Climate Change Program Manager
GreenCityBlueLake Institute of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History
Cleveland, Ohio 44106



February 27, 2009

Jason Segedy
Study Director
Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study
Suite 806 CitiCenter
146 South High Street
Akron, OH 44308-1423

Dear Mr. Segedy:

Please accept this letter as formal comments regarding the *2030 Regional Transportation Plan (Draft)* recently published by your agency.

Overall, we found the document to be well planned and written. Your emphasis on public transit and inclusion of pedestrian and bicycle trail development is particularly progressive.

With regards to mitigation of environmental impacts, we strongly suggest that AMATS consider the support of regional ecological mitigation banks/projects that are watershed based. Current regulatory policy allows for the transfer of vital and functional wetlands from one watershed to another. With the increase in development in Summit County, we have watched many of our valuable wetland resources transfer from our region to more remote areas of Ohio. These areas are usually several watersheds removed from the point of impact. Development of land and natural resources in any area should be mitigated in, or near, the point of impact. Failure to keep mitigation within the watershed where impacts occur fails to recognize the importance of these resources and the valuable functions they provide including stormwater and flood control, water quality, and biodiversity.

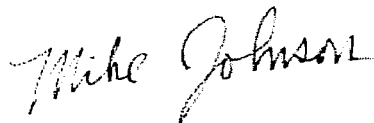
Another aspect we feel is missing from your plan is any specific mention of transportation and climate change. Scientific consensus on climate change has grown rapidly. Today, the world scientific community is nearly unanimous in their conclusion that climate change is real, has been accelerated by human activities, and is a threat to our environment and society. Transportation accounts for two-thirds of oil consumption in the United States and nearly 30% of our greenhouse gas emissions.

Many of the items discussed in your current draft report already begin to address the problems associated with climate change and transportation. Your study details many benefits associated with public transportation and bicycle trails. In addition to the obvious social and recreational benefits of these amenities, a greater focus on these alternative forms of transportation could also decrease total carbon emissions. Failure to specifically address climate change in your report undermines the full value of many of the carbon reducing measures you already propose and is a missed opportunity to proactively address an issue of regional, national, and global importance.

Finally, in addition to considering how transportation affects climate change, officials need to consider how climate change may ultimately affect transportation. Changes in climate, storm intensity and duration, rising sea levels and general changing weather patterns may well require the transportation industry to adapt and rethink basic traffic infrastructure and operational methods.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Johnson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Michael Johnson
Chief, Natural Resource Management
Metro Parks, Serving Summit County