



AMATS

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COVER:
Sixty-two cyclists participated in AMATS' Kent Bike-N-Brainstorm in April. The agency has hosted two successful B&Bs in 2013 and more are on the horizon. These events have been so successful that the agency recently earned some high praise from federal officials.



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Greater Akron area has a new TIP and a new long-range plan

The *Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2014 and 2017* (TIP) – the Greater Akron area’s new four-year program of highway, public transportation, and bike and pedestrian projects – and *Transportation Outlook 2035* – the area’s new long-range regional transportation plan – chart a prudent fiscal course for a region facing shrinking transportation funding resources.

Approved in mid-May by the AMATS Policy Committee, both documents emphasize preservation of the area’s existing transportation system rather than expansions. Key strategies of this approach are the pursuit of more maintenance and operational projects and the promotion of regional connectivity. The TIP and the Plan are grounded in the fiscal reality that - unless new sources of transportation funding are found by local, state and federal policy makers - the Greater Akron area must use its existing resources as efficiently as possible.

The new TIP represents a \$667 million investment in the area’s highway, public transportation, and bike and pedestrian infrastructure over the next four years. Nearly \$429 million in the program is devoted to the area’s highways while another nearly \$230 million will go for public transportation. More than \$8 million will fund a host of bicycle and pedestrian projects.

TIP Coordinator Victor Botosan says that the agency has crafted a responsible program of projects that balances the area’s needs with available funding. He notes that 77 percent of the new TIP is devoted to maintaining and operating the Greater Akron area’s existing transportation system.

“There are still a number of significant highway expansion projects planned for Portage and Summit counties over the next four years, but the many maintenance and operational projects in the new TIP are absolutely vital to the continued smooth operation of the area’s highways and transit systems,” Botosan observes.

Notable operational projects in the TIP include a more than \$8 million intersection improvement project on state Route 14 at state Route 59/Newton Falls Road in Ravenna Township and a more than \$7 million reconstruction project on Frost Road, from Interstate 480 to state Route 43, in Streetsboro. Needed operational improvements are also planned for 31st Street in Barberton and Canton Road in Springfield Township and the Village of Lakemore.

While the latest TIP definitely reflects a shift in funding priorities, a number of expansion improvements do appear in the new four-year program. One such improvement is the more than \$137 million project to widen Interstate 76 to six lanes, from state Route 21 to state Route 619, in Barberton and Norton.

The longer-term *Transportation Outlook 2035* recommends over \$4.3 billion in highway investments - including over \$2.5 billion for system preservation - over the next 22 years. The Plan also recommends more than \$1.7 billion in public transportation investments and \$30 million in bicycle and pedestrian improvements during the same period.

“The many maintenance and operational projects in the new TIP are absolutely vital to the continued smooth operation of the area’s highways and transit systems.”

- Victor Botosan, TIP Coordinator -



AMATS Planning Coordinator Krista Beniston says that the Plan marks a turning point of sorts for the 50-year-old agency as it has to do more with less and must make difficult decisions. In the face of limited funding, agency leaders have decided that maintaining the area’s existing roadways should be AMATS’ priority along with promoting alternatives to driving and increasing safety.

The Plan promotes regional connectivity and alternatives to driving through transit, bike and pedestrian strategies. The Plan recommends increasing the frequency of service and extending hours of operation along key transit routes for METRO of Summit County and the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) in Portage County. There are also joint recommendations for METRO and PARTA to pursue a Stow-Kent Transfer Facility and a Cross County Service Feasibility Study.

“We want to provide more opportunities for people to walk, bike or take transit, while maintaining the existing roadways and making them safer.”

**- Krista Beniston,
Planning Coordinator -**



The Plan also marks the first time that AMATS has recommended funding for stand-alone sidewalk projects and on-road bike improvements rather than recreational trails.

“Transportation Outlook 2035 provides strategies for how the area will continue to thrive and promotes greater connectivity among the region’s roadway, transit, pedestrian and cycling networks. We want to provide more opportunities for people to walk, bike or take transit, while maintaining the existing roadways and making them safer,” Beniston explains

Transportation Outlook 2035 – like the TIP - is not void of recommendations for major improvement projects in the Greater Akron area. The Plan recommends that nearly \$200 million be used to reconfigure portions of the Central Interchange and another \$97 million be used to reconfigure the Main Street/Broadway Interchange, both of which are in Akron. More detailed information and copies of both items are available at amatsplanning.org.



Barberton, Bath and Copley townships land Connecting Communities Planning Grants

The city of Barberton and the townships of Bath and Copley are the 2013 recipients of two \$50,000 planning grants from AMATS. The AMATS Connecting Communities Planning Grant Program was launched by the agency three years ago and awards funds for the study of potential improvements that promote sustainability such as bicycle, pedestrian and transit infrastructure projects.

Since its launch, the program has awarded several grants totaling \$200,000 to communities and organizations such as Akron, Boston Heights, Ravenna, Richfield and METRO. The latest round of grants went to Barberton for its *North-South Community Connection Plan* and Bath and Copley townships for their *Montrose: North/South East/West* study.

Barberton will use its grant to foster greater connectivity between its north and south ends. The study will identify potential improvements within a 259-acre area between Van Buren Avenue and 2nd Street Southwest, which is bounded by Wooster Road and Robinson Avenue to the north and Hudson Run Road and Snyder Avenue to the south. Light and heavy industries are sandwiched between Van Buren Avenue and 2nd Street and barriers such as the Tuscarawas River and the Ohio & Erie Canal hinder mobility between the city's north end - which contains its downtown, residential, commercial, and Lake Anna recreational areas - and its south end, which is home to large residential developments and additional recreational areas, including the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail.

The *Montrose: North/South East/West* study will encompass a 3.25 mile suburban area bounded by Bath Township to the north and Copley Township to the south and includes the heavily traveled roadways of Interstate 77, state Route 18, Springside Drive, Montrose West Avenue, and Cleveland-Massillon, Rothrock and Crystal Lake roads. The study will consider bicycle and pedestrian access improvements throughout the area and transit and vehicle access improvements to nearby retail and parking locations. Other topics to be addressed by the study include possible aesthetic improvements, signage blight and the interrelated issues of sustainability and environmental impacts.

The agency selected the two studies after an extensive review of 10 project applications that began in January. Improvements and recommendations identified in these studies may be eligible for inclusion in future long-range regional transportation plans prepared by the agency. Studies by last year's recipients, the Village of Boston Heights' *Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Plan* and the city of Ravenna's *Safe Alternatives: Less Traffic* (SALT), are expected to be completed soon.



NORTH AND SOUTH: Barberton will identify ways to link its industrial north and residential southern sides. The city's south side is also home to the Wolf Creek Trailhead, shown above.



BETTER CONNECTIVITY: Bath and Copley townships will study access improvements throughout the heart of the Montrose area. More pedestrian crossings, like this one at the northwest corner of Market Street and Cleveland-Massillon Road, may be appearing throughout the area.

Project Updates

The following table lists significant projects that have been awarded between October 25, 2012 to June 10, 2013.

PROJECT	ESTIMATED COMPLETION	AMOUNT
Prospect Street - Turn lane construction and signal improvements, from Summit Road to Hayes Road, in Ravenna Township.	Not Available	\$962,414
State Route 5 - Turn lane construction and intersection improvements at New Milford Road in Ravenna Township.	09/15/2013	\$1,091,901
State Route 14 - Resurfacing and repair of two bridges, from Ohio Turnpike ramps to Superior Avenue, in Streetsboro.	07/31/2013	\$1,152,811
US 224 - Minor rehabilitation, bridge repairs and intersection improvements, from Summit County line to state Route 183, in Suffield, Randolph and Atwater townships.	11/15/2013	\$5,653,733
S. Arlington Road - Resurfacing from Green South Corporate Line to East Nimisila Road, in Green.	Not Available	\$898,300
Cleveland-Massillon Road - Resurfacing from New Franklin North Corporate Line to New Franklin South Corporate Line.	Not Available	\$813,120
Ghent/Cleveland-Massillon Road - Resurfacings of Ghent Road, from Sourek Road to Cleveland-Massillon Road, and Cleveland-Massillon Road, from state route 18 to Springside Drive, in Bath Township.	Not Available	\$873,190
Greensburg Road - Resurfacing from Arlington Road to Shriver Road in Green.	Not Available	\$957,345
Interstates 76 and 77 - Resurfacing and repair from Central Interchange to Copley Road in Akron.	08/31/2013	\$1,386,889
State Route 18 - Signal improvements from Goodkirk Street to Fire Station 2 and Goodkirk Street/Fountain Street, from Exchange Street to Perkins Avenue, in Akron.	Not Available	\$1,039,985
State Route 91 - Bridge replacement on state Route 91 just south of Stow.	08/20/2013	\$301,876
State Route 91 - Turn lane construction and signal improvements on state Route 91 (Darrow Road) at Creekside Drive in Twinsburg.	Not Available	\$938,000
State Route 93 - Widening to five lanes and intersection improvements on state Route 93 (Manchester Road), from south of Robinson Avenue to north of Cormany Road, in Coventry Township.	07/31/2014	\$7,468,803
State Route 162 - Resurfacing and rehabilitation of state Route 162 (Copley Road), from Medina County Line to Interstate 77, in Copley Township and Akron.	08/31/2013	\$1,439,529
State Route 303 - Resurfacing and minor work to three bridges, from Hudson West Corporate Line to Hudson East Corporate Line, in Hudson.	08/31/2013	\$1,492,252
State Route 619 - Resurfacing and bridge replacement, from New Franklin East Corporate Line to Stark County Line, in Green.	09/01/2013	\$1,504,539
State Routes 93 and 619 - Turn lane construction and signal improvements at the intersection of state Route 93 (Manchester Road) and state Route 619 (Turkeyfoot Lake Road) in New Franklin.	09/30/2013	\$1,278,733
State Road - Turn lane construction, bike lane construction, signal improvements, and drainage improvements, from Bath Road to Steels Corners Road, in Cuyahoga Falls.	07/31/2015	\$8,323,121
Thornton Street Bridge - Bridge repair and maintenance, from Broadway to Wolf Ledges Parkway, in Akron.	Not Available	\$838,864

Community Focus: Clinton

Community Focus presents information about communities within the Greater Akron area.

Founded – 1816

Population – 1,214 (2010 U.S. Census Bureau)

Area - About 3.67 Square Miles

Policy Committee Member – Mayor Al Knack

History - Clinton was formerly known as “Warwick” and that name is still used for the rail junction. The village was laid out in 1816. Growth accelerated with the construction of the Ohio & Erie Canal as Clinton became the business and transportation hub for several counties in the late 1820s.

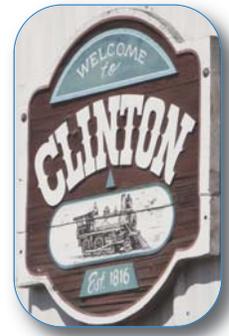
The arrival of the railroad in the 1880s meant the eventual demise of the canal. As the 19th century progressed, an attempt to overhaul the system failed and tolls no longer covered expenses. A flood in 1903 devastated the canal and a second flood 10 years later destroyed the canal again and resulted in the loss of miles of towpath and banks. Some of the canal’s locks eventually had to be dynamited to decrease danger to surrounding areas.

Today, Clinton’s portion of the canal is seeing new life as part of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. The trail extends for 2.18 miles through the heart of Clinton and includes a visitor trailhead and the historic Canal Lock 2, the Canal Guard Lock and the Rhoads-Harter House - a key stopping point in Summit County along the Underground Railroad for fugitive slaves before the Civil War.

Transportation Challenges – Mayor Knack says that the village is experiencing an increase in rail traffic with 70 trains per day. A number of Clinton’s intersections are in need of widening and the area’s hilly terrain contributes to blockages in line of sight in the areas of Hickory, Main, North, and Fulton streets and South Cleveland-Massillon Road. The mayor adds that there are growing concerns regarding water erosion along Clinton’s roadways and the need for updates to village storm drains, most of which were originally installed in the 1800s. Clinton officials are also considering a central sewer system for the village.

Due to recent downtown improvement projects, Clinton has growing pedestrian-related needs. Knack says that the village must update its street, business and tourist information signs and repair its sidewalks, none of which comply with standards contained in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Web site - clintonvillageohio.com



Celebrating rolling successes - AMATS' 2013 Bike-N-Brainstorms

So far in 2013, AMATS has hosted two successful Bike-N-Brainstorm rides - one in Kent in April and another in Green in June. The agency's Bike-N-Brainstorms are an innovative way that the agency uses to gain public insight as to what should be done to improve biking in the Greater Akron area.

A Bike-N-Brainstorm is a group bike ride along key corridors so that cyclists may experience firsthand what it's like to bike there. At the end of their ride, group members participate in a brainstorming session with agency personnel to share their ideas as to what can be done to improve bike travel within the area.

The Kent Bike-N-Brainstorm began April 20 at the new Kent Central Gateway in downtown Kent. Sixty-two attendees braved morning snow showers to travel a 5-mile route through various parts of Kent. The ride highlighted future bike projects in the city, such as the addition of new bike lanes, upcoming links between the city and the Kent State University (KSU) campus, and connections to The PORTAGE Hike & Bike Trail. Among the issues identified by participants during the subsequent brainstorming session were the need for improved signage, more bike lanes, and keeping bike lanes free of debris. The city of Kent, KSU and the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority partnered with AMATS in hosting this event.

The Green Bike-N-Brainstorm kicked off on the morning of June 22 at the Nimisila Reservoir. A group of about 40 participants traveled their choice of a 3-mile family friendly route along Green's Christman Road or an 8-mile route throughout the city of Green. Issues identified during the brainstorming session were the need for wider berms, improved signage and more bike lanes. The city of Green and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources partnered with AMATS in hosting this event.

"We're really pleased with the level of enthusiasm at these events. The feedback that we receive helps our agency and local communities immensely in planning and prioritizing bike infrastructure improvements," AMATS Planning Coordinator Krista Beniston continues, "In April, AMATS participated in the U.S. Department of Transportation's Midwest Regional Bicycle Safety Summit in Minneapolis and our Bike-N-Brainstorms were hailed as a best practice by federal officials."

A number of ideas offered by cyclists following two well-attended rides in Akron last year made their way into the *2012 Bike Plan*, the agency's long-term vision and priorities for bike transportation, and *Transportation Outlook 2035*, the area's new long-range transportation plan.



RIDE INSIGHTS: Cyclists at the Green, left, and the Kent, above, Bike-N-Brainstorms, share their insights about how to improve biking.

@AMATS

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Persons with disabilities needing assistance are asked to contact Billy Soule, Assistant to the Mayor for Community Relations, 166 S. High Street, Room 200, Akron, Ohio 44308, (voice) 330-375-2189, (TDD) 330-375-2345, at least seven (7) days in advance.

Date	Time	Committee/Event	Location
July 18	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Stow Safety Building
July 18	7:00 p.m.	CIC	Akron-Summit County Main Library
July 24	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Martin University Center
September 19	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Stow Safety Building
September 19	7:00 p.m.	CIC	To Be Announced
September 25	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Martin University Center
December 12	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Stow Safety Building
December 12	7:00 p.m.	CIC	To Be Announced
December 19	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Martin University Center

Dates to Remember