

@AMATS

THE GREATER AKRON AREA'S TRANSPORTATION JOURNAL

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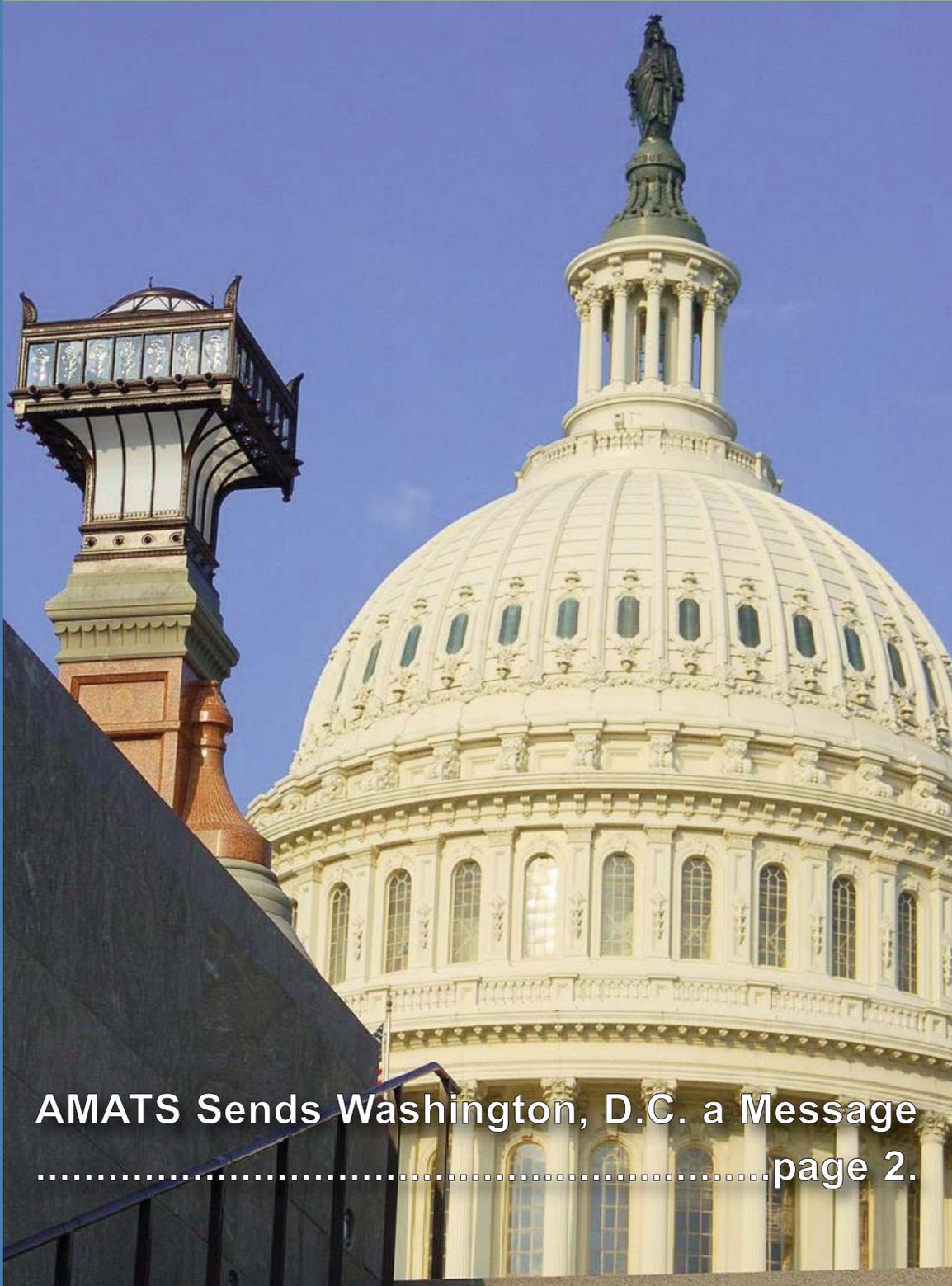
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COVER:

The AMATS Policy
Committee approved a
resolution in March urging
Congress to support a
federal gas tax increase.
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*Photo courtesy
Architect of the Capitol*



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AMATS sends Washington, D.C. a message about gas tax

For the third time since 2010, the AMATS Policy Committee approved a resolution urging an increase in the federal gas tax as a way to bolster the national Highway Trust Fund. The committee approved Resolution 2018-07 stating its support for a 15 cent increase in the gas tax indexed to inflation so that revenue generated for the fund can keep pace with rising costs.

The current tax of 18.4 cents per gallon generates about \$35 billion for various road construction and other surface transportation projects across the nation. Another \$5 billion raised from the tax supports public transportation. The tax hasn't been increased since 1993 while construction and other costs have increased unabated. The Highway Trust Fund is projected to become insolvent by 2021, unless a new source of funding is found.

"Insolvency is a real threat in light of the fact that the fund is grappling with current and projected outlays of about \$55 billion a year over the next two years," AMATS Director Curtis Baker continues, "If something isn't done, we, as a nation, will have to reduce spending drastically or continue to borrow to maintain what we have."

Baker notes that, in its role as the Greater Akron area's metropolitan planning organization, AMATS received more than \$90 million in federal funding requests from the region's communities during its latest round of project applications. "Of that amount, we awarded only about \$33 million. For a long-term perspective, our region is expected to need about \$4.4 billion just to maintain our current highway system through 2040. Clearly, we have a need for additional funds," Baker observes.

Resolution 2018-07 was relayed to Ohio's Congressional delegation for consideration in late May. Agency officials believe that the resolution is timely given the current infrastructure negotiations between Congress and the Trump administration. Baker notes that the resolution also urges state lawmakers in Columbus to consider raising additional revenue for roadway infrastructure.

"States, counties and local communities are gradually assuming more of the funding burden that was carried by the federal government. Locally, we see cities like Barberton and Ravenna approving tax increases to fund infrastructure improvements. Summit County will increase motor vehicle license fees next year to pay for bridge and road improvements. This trend may continue and accelerate if needs aren't met," Baker observes.

Resolution 2018-07 is available for viewing by clicking [here](#).



Project Updates

The following table lists significant projects that were awarded between Sept. 13, 2017 and June 11, 2018.

PROJECT	ESTIMATED COMPLETION	AMOUNT
State Route 43 - Construction of turn lanes on state Route 43, between state Route 261 and Summit Street, in Kent. Project includes signal and sidewalk improvements on state Route 261, Beryl Drive, Cherry Street, and School Street.	11/30/2018	\$1,729,932
State Route 303 - Raising roadway profile, from west of Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad tracks to east of state Route 303, to correct drainage and flooding issues in Streetsboro. Project includes earthwork and culvert replacement.	10/31/2018	\$2,406,656
Olde Eight Road Phase 1 - Resurfacing of Olde Eight Road, from Boston Mills Road to Boston Heights North Corporate Limit, in Boston Heights.	08/31/2018	\$615,627
Brittain Road Sidewalk - Installation of sidewalks on the east side of Brittain Road, between Tallmadge Avenue and Independence Avenue, in Akron.	08/20/2018	\$206,228
State Routes 305 and 700 - Resurfacing portions of state Route 305 and 700 in the Village of Hiram and Hiram Township. Project includes maintenance of a bridge spanning Eagle Creek.	7/30/2018	\$1,379,899
Center Road - Resurfacing Center Road from Cleveland-Massillon Road to Eastview Drive in New Franklin. Project includes full and partial depth repairs and restriping.	6/29/2018	\$621,289

COMING SOON - The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) officially broke ground for its upcoming Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling facility on March 8. AMATS Director Curtis Baker, second from right, was among the officials who worked a shovel for the ceremony.

To find out how AMATS is promoting CNG use throughout the Greater Akron area, watch our YouTube feature - *Fill'er Up* - by clicking [here](#).



New crash report a mix of 'good news, bad news'

The good news for the Greater Akron area is that the number of traffic crashes on the region's roadways and intersections decreased slightly between 2015 and 2016. The bad news for the region is that crashes and fatalities increased from 2014, according to the latest three-year crash report compiled by AMATS.

The report's findings are based on the agency's analysis of nearly 55,000 motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian-related crash records for the area's roadway sections and intersections provided by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). High-crash locations identified in the report may be used by communities as a starting point when seeking federal Highway Safety Program funds through ODOT for safety improvement projects.



Photo Courtesy of the Kent Fire Department

The agency's *2014-2016 Crash Report* shows that the number of area crashes surprisingly decreased by 231 from 18,589 in 2015 to 18,358 in 2016 – a drop of less than one percent. Crashes that resulted in an injury also decreased slightly during the same period – from 4,474 to 4,463. AMATS officials suggest that the improving crash numbers may be due to various safety improvements – such as new left turn lanes, signals, roundabouts, and widenings – throughout the region. Frost Road in Streetsboro, Summit Street in Kent, and 31st Street in Barberton are examples of recent safety projects which received AMATS-programmed funds.

Despite the improving crash totals, Greater Akron area fatalities increased every year of the report from 40 in 2014, to 47 in 2015, and 49 in 2016. These increases are mirroring similar trends at the state and national levels. Safety experts are unsure as to why fatalities are increasing with some speculating that distracted and impaired driving due to drug abuse are contributing factors. For the *2014-2016 Crash Report*, the agency identified 178 high-crash roadway sections and 310 high-crash intersections in the region. Not surprisingly, because Akron has the most roadway sections and intersections of any community in the region, the city also has the most locations listed for both high-crash categories. Among the findings of the *2014-2016 Crash Report* are:

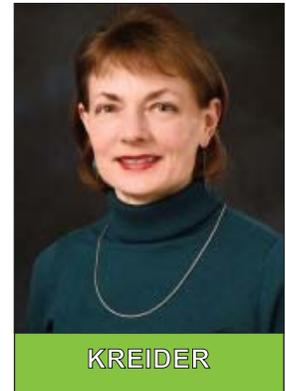
- Akron has 64 high-crash roadway sections followed by Cuyahoga Falls with 19 sections. Kent – the Portage County community with the most high-crash sections – is third with 17.
- Akron has 164 high-crash intersections followed by Cuyahoga Falls with 31 intersections. Kent – the Portage County community with the most high-crash intersections – is third with 18.
- The cities of Akron and Fairlawn each have three sections listed in the 10 highest scoring high-crash roadway sections in the Greater Akron area. Kent has two sections listed to be the Portage County community with the most sections in the top 10.
- Akron has six intersections listed in the 10 highest scoring high-crash intersections, the most of any community in the Greater Akron area. Streetsboro is second with two intersections listed.

The *2014-2016 Crash Report* is available by clicking [here](#).

Agency offers a glimpse of 2045

The AMATS Policy Committee accepted a *Population Forecast* for the year 2045 during its May 10 meeting. This forecast will be used to develop the next long-range transportation plan for the Greater Akron area.

Because of interest in the forecast’s findings, AMATS prepared a video explaining the development of this forecast and what population trends that it sees unfolding in the region. The video is narrated by the forecast’s author, AMATS Planner Louisa Kreider.



KREIDER

To view this item, please click [here](#). We invite you to subscribe to our YouTube channel - [AMATSPanning](#). It's a great way to stay informed regarding transportation-related news.

BE PRACTICAL

Dave Holstein, P.E., the administrator for the ODOT Office of Roadway Engineering, at podium, made a June 7 presentation regarding the department’s Performance Based Practical Design practices. Holstein’s presentation immediately followed the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee meeting at ODOT District 4’s office in Akron.



May marks a successful and eventful Bike Month

In celebration of National Bike Month, AMATS hosted a Bike-to-Work Week Challenge during the week of May 14-18. Challenge participants registered online through GohioCommute.com and then logged their bike trips to work during the week. They also had to snap a selfie and send it to the agency to qualify for prizes during a May 25 drawing.

Congratulations to cyclists, Olivia Evans and Cindy Donel, selfies shown at right, who each won a one-night stay at the Hilton Garden Inn Akron.



EVANS

DONEL

Making tracks with Jane's Walk

AMATS brought Jane's Walk back to the Greater Akron area for a fifth successful year. The agency hosted 17 walking tours May 4-7. Jane's Walk events are part of a global walking initiative that was launched by friends of urban planning pioneer, Jane Jacobs.

The events offer participants a chance to explore local neighborhoods and encourage dialogue between neighbors and community planners. AMATS is promoting connectivity principles in transportation planning and uses these events as one of its planning tools. Feedback from this year's events will be used to update the region's *Pedestrian Plan* next year.

Downtown Akron, Kenmore Boulevard and Summit Lake Park, shown at right, from top to bottom, were among the walking route locales. Tours highlighted unique artistic, engineering and historical aspects along routes.

To find out more, please view our YouTube feature, *Making Tracks with Jane's Walk*, by clicking [here](#).



Greater Akron area enters 2018 with 37 new projects

Thirty-seven highway, bike and pedestrian projects throughout the Greater Akron area will receive nearly \$34 million in federal funds following the first meeting of the AMATS Policy Committee in 2018. An extensive signal improvement project in Aurora, major reconstruction of Barberton's Wooster Road West, and new sidewalks along Darrow Road (state Route 91) in Stow are some of the projects that the committee approved during its Jan. 25 meeting.

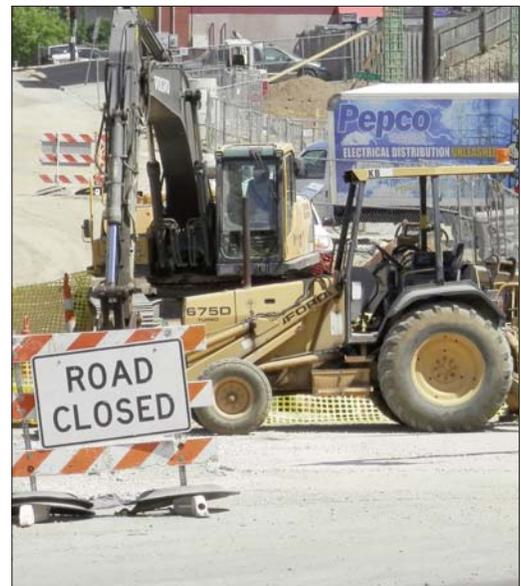
AMATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Coordinator Dave Pulay says that the projects, represent wise investments in the region's infrastructure in the face of diminishing funding resources. "The lion's share of these projects maintain our current system, which we believe is a more fiscally responsible course for the region rather than costly expansions although there are a number of new exciting projects in this latest round of funding," Pulay explains.

Seven projects to reconstruct and improve Greater Akron area roadways will receive over \$18 million from the federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program. Two Barberton projects, the Wooster Road West Reconstruction and the Wooster Road/State Street intersection, will receive more than \$5.5 million and \$1.9 million in STBG funds respectively. The committee also approved \$3.6 million for Cuyahoga Falls' Portage Trail Extension Widening and more than \$3.5 million for a citywide signal improvement project in Aurora.

Twenty-five projects will receive more than \$13.1 million in federal funding from the AMATS Resurfacing Program. Eight of these resurfacing projects are sponsored by the Summit County Engineer's office including the two-part Cleveland-Massillon Road project in Copley Township, which will receive a total of \$1.4 million. Other sponsors that secured funding for more than one project include Akron and Barberton with three projects each totaling \$2.1 million and nearly \$1.2 million respectively and New Franklin with two projects totaling nearly \$1.2 million.

The area's trail and sidewalk networks will continue to grow as five projects totaling nearly \$2.6 million, will receive funding from the federal Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) Program. The Cuyahoga Valley National Park's Pedestrian Bridge and Trail and the Summit Metro Parks' Freedom Trail Phase 4 will each receive \$700,000 for construction. A project to construct new sidewalks along a portion of Darrow Road in Stow will also receive more than \$590,000 in TASA funds.

Tables detailing projects that will receive STBG, Resurfacing and TASA funds are available by clicking [here](#).



Dates to Remember

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Committee/Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
July 4	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - July 4th Holiday
September 3	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Labor Day
September 13	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
September 13	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
September 20	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
October 5	8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Annual Meeting	Sheraton Suites Akron Cuyahoga Falls
October 8	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Columbus Day
November 12	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Veterans Day
November 22-23	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Thanksgiving
December 6	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
December 6	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
December 13	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
December 25	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Christmas Day

The City of Akron is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are able to fully participate in public programs, services, and activities. Anyone who is in need of an accommodation from any City department is invited to contact Donald Rice, Director of Human Resources, 146 South High Street, CitiCenter Building, Suite 130, Akron, Ohio 44308, (voice) 330-375-2780 as soon as possible. If you require TDD phone service call Ohio Relay at 800-750-0750 and they will assist in contacting the Department of Human Resources at (330) 375-2780.

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