



BATH TOWNSHIP

Summit County, Ohio

TRUSTEES

Elaina E. Goodrich
Becky Corbett
James N. Nelson

FISCAL OFFICER

Sharon A. Troike

**TOWNSHIP
ADMINISTRATOR**

William E. Snow

January 3, 2013

Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study
806 CitiCenter
146 S. High Street
Akron, Ohio 44308



Re: Connecting Communities Planning Grant

Dear Mr. Segedy:

I am pleased to submit a planning grant request from Bath and Copley Townships in an effort to develop a comprehensive plan using Connecting Communities initiatives and complete streets principles for the Montrose area.

Your consideration of our application is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Elaina E. Goodrich
Bath Township Trustee President

cc: Copley Township Trustees

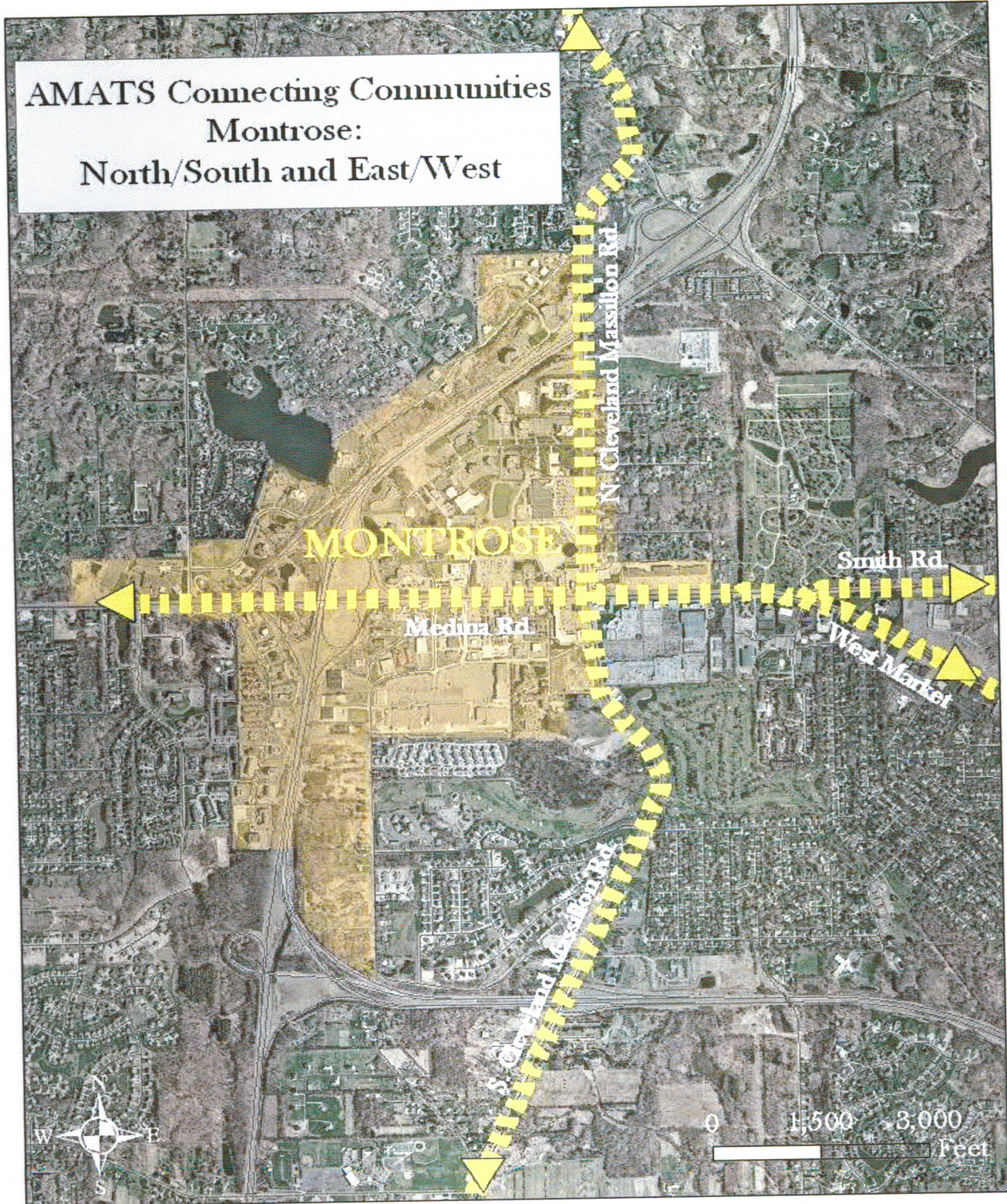
3864 W. Bath Road
P.O. Box 1188
Bath, Ohio 44210-1188
330-666-4007
Fax 330-666-0305
www.bathtownship.org

**Montrose:
North/South
East/West**

**Connecting Communities
Planning Grant**

January 2013

AMATS Connecting Communities
Montrose:
North/South and East/West



Application

Scoring and Timeline — Applications will be evaluated by the Connecting Communities Planning Grant Task Force beginning immediately after the January 15, 2013 application deadline. The Task Force was created to score, review, and recommend projects to the AMATS Policy Committee, which will select the grant recipients at its March 21, 2013 meeting.

Sponsor

1. Applicant/Sponsor (Implementing Governmental Agency Only). If sponsor is a township please provide a letter of support from County Government or County Engineer.

Community /Agency	Bath Township Board of Trustees
Community Project Manager	Elaina E. Goodrich
Phone Number	330-666-4007
Fax Number	330-666-0305
Email Address	egoodrich@bathtownship.org
Mailing Address	3864 W Bath Road Akron OH 44333

Co-Sponsor

2. Project Co-Sponsors (if applicable)

Community /Agency	Copley Township Board of Trustees
Community Project Manager	Helen J. Humphrys
Phone Number	330-472-5013
Fax Number	330-666-2245
Email Address	humphrys@copley.oh.us
Mailing Address	1540 S Cleveland-Massillon Road Copley OH 44321

Planning Study Summary

3. Connecting Communities Planning Study Summary

Planning Study Title:	Montrose: North/South and East/West
Brief Description:	The purpose of the planning study is to develop a comprehensive plan using <i>Connecting Communities</i> initiatives and complete streets principles to make recommendations to improve pedestrian/bicycle access throughout the study area, transit and vehicle access to retail, parking access, corridor aesthetics and signage, sustainability and environmental impact, including storm water problems.

Map

4. Project Map — please include a map of the proposed project planning area. If the map is not included in the main document of your application, please list the attached image filenames and include the files as an attachment when submitting.

Image Filenames (if applicable):



Project Need

5. Describe the planning area boundaries and size. Describe the existing transportation and land use issues and define the problems facing the area. (10 points)

Boundaries and Size: The Montrose area, designated as a suburban center is approximately 3.25 square miles. Its boundaries include Bath Township to the north, City of Fairlawn to the east, Copley Township to the south, and Medina County to the west. The centrally located major highway, State Route 18, intersects Cleveland-Massillon Road, Springside Drive, Rothrock Road, Interstate 77, Crystal Lake Road and Montrose West. Montrose rapidly developed from 1980 to 1990. In that 10-year span, road openings on State Route 18 were easily approved. An east-west service road, Brookwall from Cleveland-Massillon to Rothrock Road, was built.

Existing Transportation and Land Use: North of this suburban center the area is designated as exurban, more rural residential, covering approximately 141.32 square miles. South is defined as suburban, high density residential, and approximately 292.1 square miles. Transportation options within Montrose are limited to automobile and bus transportation.

Fairlawn, accessed by State Route 18, is commercial with residential arterial roads. Fairlawn has accommodated the different modes of travel better than the other Montrose communities because it has sidewalks that can be used by bicyclists and pedestrians. However, that infrastructure is limited.

State Route 18 in Bath and Copley, west of Hametown Road, is zoned residential; however, further west, Medina County is zoned commercial on both sides of State Route 18. This creates development pressures on Bath and Copley Townships.

Problems: Copley and Bath Townships have recently reviewed their comprehensive land use plans focusing on concerns in the area. Established zoning is difficult to change unless it is to a more intense use, which is not appealing to the residents.

Sustainability of the area is in question. Montrose is reaching the age when existing commercial businesses are looking at new properties to develop while leaving behind huge buildings to become second generation commercial enterprises, or worse, vacant big box monstrosities.

A negative experience for travelers, especially on high-volume shopping days, leads to frustration, which could lead to a decrease in business. Over the long term, businesses could have difficulty remaining viable.

Planned and balanced business growth is necessary because as the commercial area grows, residential options in the vicinity become less appealing, increasing the commercial sprawl and making it more difficult to keep the residential zoning intact. Not only is it more difficult close to Montrose but as the roadways widen to accommodate traffic they become less appealing for residential neighborhoods at a further distance. Also, infringement of commercial development could have a negative impact on the market value of homes.

Capacity issues and access challenges are problematic for commuters during peak traffic hours. Access to State Route 18 needs to be controlled. In addition, traffic patterns are confusing for all modes of transportation. Trucks, cars and buses compete for the same space allowing no easy access for bicyclists or pedestrians. Currently it is not safe to travel by bicycle or on foot since there are no designated shoulders or sidewalks in Bath and Copley, only in Fairlawn. Also, the lack of transportation options results in fewer choices available to the shoppers and workers in the Montrose area. It is necessary to integrate strategies for multimodal transportation with complete streets principles.

Aesthetic improvements should also be coordinated with complete street design concepts allowing for improved quality of life.

Purpose & Outcomes

6. Define the purpose of the study, and the expected outcomes (access management, streetscapes, and pedestrian facilities).
(10 points)

The purpose of the planning study is to develop a comprehensive plan using *Connecting Communities* initiatives and complete streets principles to make recommendations to improve pedestrian/bicycle access throughout the study area, transit and vehicle access to retail, parking access, corridor aesthetics and signage, sustainability and environmental impact, including storm water problems.

1. A transportation access plan for the Montrose area accommodating trucks, cars, and transit (public transportation), bicycles and pedestrians
 - Management of vehicle access and parking options to the varied services offered in the retail, restaurant, hotel, motel, medical areas and to the job centers of Bath and Copley.
 - A plan to make the area public transit friendly including review of public transportation stops to allow safer access to the suburban center.
 - Provide access and by-pass routes to allow for more diverse forms of traffic.
2. A transit, bicycle, pedestrian plan that minimizes environmental impact and maximizes sustainability.
 - A study of the transit, bicycle and pedestrian traffic in the Montrose area leading to the development of plans for traffic management and multimodal transportation options.
 - Recommendations for improvements to storm water management.
3. A bicycle and pedestrian plan connecting the communities of Medina, Fairlawn, Copley and Bath communities including schools, government facilities, churches, parks, recreation facilities, senior centers and residences to the Montrose area.
 - Bicycle and pedestrian routes within Montrose and options connecting Montrose to outlying suburban areas within a five-mile radius.
4. A street beautification plan for the Montrose area to make it more inviting and provide a quality atmosphere for economic development.
 - An environmentally and esthetically pleasing complete streets plan along State Route 18, Cleveland-Massillon and other access roads.
 - Provide ways for a pleasant shopping experience through better signage.
5. Probable costs and a funding strategy to facilitate the implementation of the improvements recommended.
6. A strategy for public input and participation with emphasis on the owners and employees in the Montrose area.

Connecting Communities Principles

7. Discuss how the proposed project addresses one or more of the Connecting Communities recommendations. Explain how the proposed project will improve transportation choices, such as bicycle, pedestrian or public transportation, and how it will incorporate complete streets principles. Describe how the proposed project will integrate land use and transportation in a way that enhances the surrounding community. Explain how the proposed project will enhance economic competitiveness. (20 points)

Address Connecting Communities recommendations

The plan would:

- **Improve pedestrian and bicycle planning.**
- **Enhance public transportation systems to meet the needs of current users and be attractive to new users.**
- **Incorporate complete streets principles into land use and transportation decisions.**
- **Implement land use policies that improve community cohesion and reduce urban sprawl.**
- **Improve inter-agency coordination on regional planning.**

Transportation choices

- Provide *complete streets* with safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists from the residential areas from Medina, Bath, Copley, and Fairlawn and within Montrose.
- Provide access routes to allow for more efficient and diverse forms of traffic.
- Provide more options for public transportation.

Enhance surrounding communities

Consider the outlying residential areas that are in close proximity to Montrose. This can be done in several ways:

- Provide a safe, accessible, cost-effective, and convenient transportation system that supports the needs of the people that use the Montrose area.
- Connect Montrose to outlying suburban areas within a five mile radius including schools, government facilities, churches, parks, recreation facilities, senior centers and residences by various means of transportation.
- Decrease the impact of commercial sprawl making it easier to keep residential zoning intact. As roadways are widened to accommodate traffic, consider ways to make it appealing and safe for residential neighborhoods to access the area from a distance.

Enhance economic competitiveness

Provide easy, safe and reliable access to retail and business centers e.g. by utilizing an access management plan to address the concern about driveways on both sides of roadways only servicing a single business.

- Provide a mix of transportation which appeals to the market. Plan for more bicyclists and walkers for the mixed uses in Montrose which offer multiple services to the public.
- Plan *complete streets* with consideration of beautification.
- Plan for improved quality of life by addressing aesthetic concerns.

Public Involvement & Coordination

8. Describe your preferred approach to engaging the public in the planning process. Identify key stakeholders who you believe will be active participants in the planning process. (5 points)

The best way to implement change is to include all stakeholders that are affected. A letter of invitation to Montrose businesses requesting attendance at a district steering committee would assist in the study of issues and the implementation of the plan. A meeting scheduled in one of the hotels' conference rooms in the heart of Montrose would demonstrate the governments' sincerity to accommodate the businesses. A follow up visit might encourage additional stakeholders to attend future meetings.

Those attending would include officials from Copley, Bath, Fairlawn, and Summit County; business owners, developers, land owners, citizens, and transportation officials from AMATS, Fairlawn Area Chamber of Commerce, ODOT, Summit County Engineer, Safe Routes to School, Heritage Corridors of Bath, and Friends of Yellow Creek. With all the stakeholders at the table, progress to implementing a comprehensive plan could be substantial.

During the planning process input would be gathered from:

- Land owners, business owners and employees
- Residents in affected areas
- Institutional stakeholders

Public meetings with visual displays would be held at the beginning of the planning process to identify concerns and at regular intervals to determine the impact of the proposed plan on users. Upon the completion of the plan, meetings would be held to educate the public to the proposed plan and respond to concerns of the public.

Copley's and Bath's websites would display draft proposals for easy access by the public. Input could be e-mailed to the consultants for consideration.

The status of the plan would be reviewed periodically at trustee meetings so the public would be aware of the proposed plans. Finally the plan would be presented to the Copley and Bath Trustees to be adopted in an open meeting. Newspapers covering the meetings would report plans through the Akron Beacon Journal, the West Side Leader and the Bath Country Journal.

Capacity & Implementation

9. Describe the community project manager's capacity to participate in the planning process, including implementation upon study completion. Describe how your community/agency will implement this planning study. List activities/documents, if any, that demonstrates commitment to addressing the study area needs. Applicants are welcome to provide letters of support. (10 points)

Implementation: A Montrose Business Steering Committee comprised of private/public representatives would act as a catalyst for community cohesion and planned improvements. If the commercial enterprises view the Montrose area positively, progress to a more viable and sustainable area for a longer term may be accomplished.

Copley and Bath would consider adoption of the plan and implementation of any changes to existing zoning resolutions for complete street infrastructure; requiring developers to install those systems as part of the cost of development. Copley's planning director, who holds a Masters in Public Administration with an emphasis on planning, stands ready to assist in this capacity.

Capacity: Trustee Humphrys of Copley and Trustee Goodrich of Bath are committed to follow through on this request as well as key staff personnel that would be involved.

Trustee Goodrich has written 65 grants with awards of \$2.5 million used for various township projects; the majority for purchase or improvement to parkland owned by the township. She would apply this skill to writing grants to cover costs that would occur for implementation of the plan.

Trustee Humphrys has written 59 grants with awards of \$2.5 million. She was treasurer for various township projects with \$1.5 million from Community Development Block Grant funds for infrastructure improvement and storm water drainage in the Pigeon Creek area. Copley's commitment as co-sponsor to this regional effort is strong.

Bath and Copley Townships work well together as is evidenced by the construction and joint operation of a fire station on S.R. 18, as well as cooperating and assisting in the widening of S.R. 18 and Cleveland Massillon Road with the county and state to improve traffic flow.

Funding sources:

Grants: Clean Ohio Trail Grants for trail improvements, Summit County Community Grants for trail improvements, ODNR Recreational Trails Grants for trails and bike paths, Economic Development Grants from Ohio Department of Development, Streetscape Grants from US. Department of Transportation with matches from local and state funding (AMATS and ODOT).

Federal and State Transportation Funds: Transportation Enhancement Funds could pay for infrastructure projects, Safe Routes to School Grants could pay for improved access from Montrose to the Copley-Fairlawn and Revere Local Schools.

Local Funding: Bath and Copley could seek funding from Joint Economic Development District Funds (JEDD). Bath and Copley could seek funding from Metro Regional Transit Authority. Bath and Copley could consider assessments to the businesses for certain improvements for increasing their market value. Matching funds and in-kind labor could be provided by Copley and Bath Townships to help seek grant awards. Stakeholders may invest in aspects of the plan, land owners and businesses could invest in improvements benefitting their businesses.



COUNTY OF SUMMIT, OHIO

Russell M. Pry, Executive

175 S. Main Street · Akron, Ohio 44308-1308 · 330.643.2510 · fax: 330.643.2507 · www.co.summit.oh.us

January 2, 2013

The Honorable Elaina E. Goodrich
Bath Township Board of Trustees
3864 West Bath Road
Akron, OH 44333

The Honorable Helen J. Humphrys
Copley Township Board of Trustees
1540 South Cleveland-Massillon Road
Copley, OH 44321

RE: Connecting Communities Planning Grant
Montrose; North/South and East/West Planning Study

Dear Trustees Goodrich and Humphrys:

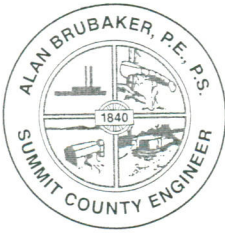
Please accept this letter as my strong support for Copley and Bath Townships' joint Connecting Communities Planning Grant Application for the Montrose North/South and East/West Planning Study. The County of Summit is very aware of the significant growth in the Montrose area over the past several decades, mostly due to commercial development. A planning study of the area would provide strong recommendations for improving pedestrian/bicycle access throughout the study area, as well as transit and vehicle access to retail. A comprehensive study of the area is necessary to help identify solutions to these important issues affecting residents and businesses located in and around the Montrose commercial area.

The planning grant would provide an important first step in developing a regional plan for transportation and environmental issues. Following this study, Copley/Bath and the other adjacent communities will be able to collaborate on a strategy for necessary infrastructure and zoning improvements to remain competitive and attractive for sustainable development.

I want to express my strong support for your joint grant application. By working together on the important issues facing our communities, we create a better place to live and work. I commend you efforts. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need anything else at 330-643-2605.

Sincerely,

Russell M. Pry, Executive
County of Summit



ALAN BRUBAKER, P.E., P.S.

SUMMIT COUNTY ENGINEER

January 8, 2013

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

Attn : Jason Segedy, Director

Re: AMATS PLANNING GRANT
LETTER OF SUPPORT

Dear Mr. Segedy

The Summit County Engineer's Office supports the Connecting Communities Initiative application submitted jointly by Bath and Copley Townships to study the traffic congestion in the Montrose Area.

The portion of Montrose that falls within the City of Fairlawn has the benefits of both sidewalks and traffic access management. The portion of Montrose outside of the city lacks both of these same amenities. This Connecting Communities Initiative grant would provide the impetus to develop a comprehensive plan and prioritize individual projects to be constructed.

If there are any questions regarding this submission please contact Joseph K. Paradise, P.E., Deputy Director of Engineering Services at 330-643-8105 or you may contact him by e-mail at jparadise@summitengineer.net

Thank you for this opportunity to provide a safer transportation system for the motorists and pedestrians of Summit County.

Sincerely,

Alan Brubaker, P.E., P.S.
Summit County Engineer

cc: J. Paradise, file