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AMATS, Akron wrap up successful speed table demo

The joint Speed Table Pilot Program in Akron appears to have been a success, according to a report released by AMATS.

In August, AMATS and the city of Akron installed speed tables on Akron's Edgewood Avenue and Schocalog Road. Speed tables are raised areas placed at mid-block points across roadways and are designed to limit the speed at which vehicles travel. Unlike speed bumps, tables have tapered ends and long flat tops to accommodate the entire wheelbase of most passenger cars. Akron's tables were interlocking pieces made from recycled rubberized material and are fastened into place on street surfaces.



KLEINHENZ

The city and the agency launched the pilot program in response to residents in those areas who voiced concerns regarding vehicles speeding through their neighborhoods.

Akron installed one temporary table on Edgewood Avenue and two on Schocalog Road. The city and AMATS tested the effectiveness of the tables as a traffic calming measure from early September through early November. AMATS provided roughly \$15,000 in federal Consolidated Planning Grant funds for the purchase of the tables. The agency also collected speed data on vehicles travelling over the tables using the agency's MioVision cameras and radar counters. AMATS also collected public feedback regarding the tables through its web site.

In December, the agency released its *2020 Temporary Speed Table Pilot Program Evaluation Report*. AMATS Planner Darryl Kleinhenz says that speed analysis determined that the average speed of vehicles travelling on Schocalog Road dropped from 33.7 miles per hour to 26.9 miles per hour and the number of speeders dropped from over 90 percent to 67 percent of total traffic. Analysis on Edgewood Avenue showed that the average speed dropped from 34.4 miles per hour to 28.9 miles per hour while the number of speeders dropped from 90 percent to 65 percent of total traffic.

The agency reviewed traffic volumes on adjacent streets and found few significant changes as vehicles did not appear to be avoiding the roadways following table installation. AMATS performed analyses of speed data collected after the tables were removed and determined that traffic had immediately returned to pre-installation speeds.

As part of this project, AMATS and Akron developed a comprehensive public outreach program that included reaching out to Akron City Council members, a web page detailing the program with a comment form, a survey for the general public, multiple neighborhood mailings, and engagement with the Akron Public Schools, Akron Police Department, the Akron Fire Department and METRO.



Public engagement efforts led to over 300 requests for future speed table locations and over 100 survey takers. Public response based on these surveys and feedback to the agency was favorable to the concept of and the installation of speed tables. Kleinhenz says that AMATS recommended in its report that the Temporary Speed Table Pilot Program continue in 2021 at a new location. The *2020 Temporary Speed Table Pilot Program Evaluation Report* is available by clicking [here](#). Please enjoy the accompanying installation slideshow at left.

Less Greater Akron area traffic congestion may mean more help for problem areas

The new *Congestion Management Process (CMP) Report* finds that there are fewer extremely congested locations in the Greater Akron area today than in the past. That's good news for those areas that are still coping with high congestion as it may mean more resources for the area's remaining trouble spots, according to AMATS Transportation Improvement Program Coordinator David Pulay.

The AMATS Policy Committee approved an updated *CMP Report* which identifies existing and future congestion on the area's freeways, arterials and intersections. The report offers specific highway, transit, freight and system-wide recommendations to improve congested locations throughout the region and evaluates strategies based on previous projects. The report also examines public transit levels of service availability, freight needs, and the impact that crashes have on congestion.

The roadway network considered for the CMP analysis is comprised of 540 miles of roadways in the Greater Akron area. While previous reports have traditionally focused primarily on the regional road network, the latest *CMP Report* considers the area's transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks and how they interface with the highway network. The report also marks the first time that AMATS has relied upon GPS device tracking technology in cell phones and vehicles to calculate congestion.

Pulay says that the report finds that there are fewer extremely congested locations in the Greater Akron area today than in the past. Twenty years ago, there were 19 extremely congested locations in the area. In comparison, that number has dropped to 10 in the latest *CMP Report*. Pulay admits that, while some of this decline may be due to changes in how congestion is calculated by the agency now, much of this decrease is due to the completion of various projects designed to ease congestion throughout the region.

A benefit of this congestion reduction is that the region can

better leverage decreasing transportation funding by focusing on the most important remaining areas of regional concern. Unfortunately, most of these remaining areas – such as various arterial segments on state Route 91, the state Route 8-state Route 82 Intersection in Macedonia, and the state Route 59 (Perkins Street)-state Route 8 Interchange in Akron - have not yet been addressed due to their tremendous complexity and cost.

The report notes that the many communities and entities that comprise AMATS must continue working together diligently to find unique solutions that address the region's remaining congested areas. They must also wisely allocate available resources to implement potential viable solutions, according to the report.

Pulay explains that the report identifies five tiers of strategies that policymakers should consider when weighing the effectiveness and feasibility of various approaches to ease congestion. These tier strategies, ranked from highest priority to lowest, are: demand management, operational improvements, public transit improvements, Intelligent Transportation Systems, and capacity expansions.

"We matched these strategies to the report's recommendations for the area's roadways, freeway segments, ramps, interchanges, arterials, and intersections," Pulay continues, "The result is that we now have a report that places the region on a realistic solid footing for the future as we develop the region's long-range transportation plan."

AMATS will consider the report's recommendations for inclusion in the next long-range regional transportation plan which will address area needs and present comprehensive recommendations to meet identified needs over the next 25 years. To view the *CMP Report*, please click [here](#).



PULAY



New connections on the horizon for Franklin Township and Stow

The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) and the city of Stow are about to join a growing cast of players that are pursuing connectivity throughout the Greater Akron area. In its last virtual meeting of 2020, the AMATS Policy Committee on Dec. 17 unanimously approved two separate \$40,000 grants to study livability issues in Franklin Township and the city of Stow.

AMATS offers annual grants through its Connecting Communities Program to assist in the development of plans that promote vibrant, livable communities. Over the last several years, the program has funded studies by Akron, Barberton, Boston Heights, Green, Hudson, Kent, METRO of Summit County, Montrose-area communities, Ravenna, Richfield, and Twinsburg. PARTA and Stow are the latest recipients of these grants. New pedestrian and cycling facilities and trail networks may be on the horizon for Franklin Township and Stow, according to AMATS Mobility Planner Heather Davis Reidl.



REIDL

PARTA will use its grant to identify transit, pedestrian and bicycle improvements along state Route 59, between Horning Road and state Route 261, in Franklin Township. Due to the lack of sidewalks, crosswalks and signage, it is difficult for pedestrians who live, work, and travel this area to navigate it amongst the higher speed single-occupancy automobiles. The PARTA study will identify areas where sidewalks could be extended, crosswalks installed, crossing signals implemented, mid-block crossing areas highlighted, and better transit passenger amenities added. This study will determine what strategies and improvements are feasible to make the roadway safer and more navigable for alternative modes of transportation such as walking and cycling.

Stow will use its grant to establish a framework for a city-wide, multi-modal trail network to accommodate all users. This network will not only serve Stow's various populations, businesses and visitors, but will connect the city to adjacent and regional destinations and multi-modal networks. The Stow study will explore the potential of shared-use paths and sidepaths as the primary facilities for the city's trail network. The study will also determine the viability of placing trails within one-quarter mile of every resident and business. Among Stow's goals is to construct its trail network over the next 20 years.

Reidl says that, despite ongoing challenges, 2020 marked a solid year of progress for the AMATS Connecting Communities Program. Agency officials were pleasantly surprised by the number and quality of grant applicants for this year's round of funding. "We think that active transportation options such as walking and cycling are becoming more important to the public, especially in light of recent quality of life concerns," she adds. To learn more about the Connecting Communities Program, please click [here](#).



Crash fatalities up despite fewer crashes, injuries in new report

Crash-related fatalities increased in the Greater Akron area, despite fewer vehicle crashes and crash-related injuries between the years 2017 through 2019, according to the latest three-year analysis released by AMATS.

The new report is based on AMATS' analysis of more than 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). For the *2017-2019 Crash Report*, the agency identified 181 high-crash roadway sections and 350 high-crash intersections in the region.

AMATS Transportation Improvement Program Coordinator David Pulay says that fatalities and fatal crashes in the region increased between 2018 and 2019. The number of fatalities in the Greater Akron area jumped from 35 in 2018 to 44 in 2019, an increase of 26 percent. The number of fatal crashes rose from 31 in 2018 to 43 in 2019, an increase of nearly 39 percent. (For data analysis, AMATS considers a crash as a single event, but a crash may involve multiple vehicles and result in multiple injuries or fatalities.)

Pulay warns that such increases in fatalities may not have ended with 2019. The agency is seeing evidence that fatalities continued to rise in the Greater Akron area despite lower traffic volumes resulting from the statewide COVID-19 lockdown. Preliminary data shows that there were 15,282 crashes in 2020, which is significantly lower than in 2019, but the region recorded 59 fatalities, according to Pulay.

"Interestingly enough the increases in crashes that we saw here in our region happened during a time of lower traffic volume on our roadways. There is speculation that these increases in fatalities may have been due to more people speeding and driving recklessly because of less traffic," he adds. Precise crash and fatality figures for the Greater Akron area in 2020 will be released in the agency's next triennial crash report.

Despite the increase in fatalities, the news isn't all bad for the region in the agency's latest crash report. The report finds that area crashes trended down from 18,787 in 2017 to 18,697 in 2018 before dropping to 17,746 in 2019. That decline represents a decrease of 5 percent or 951 fewer crashes in 2019 than the year before. Crashes that resulted

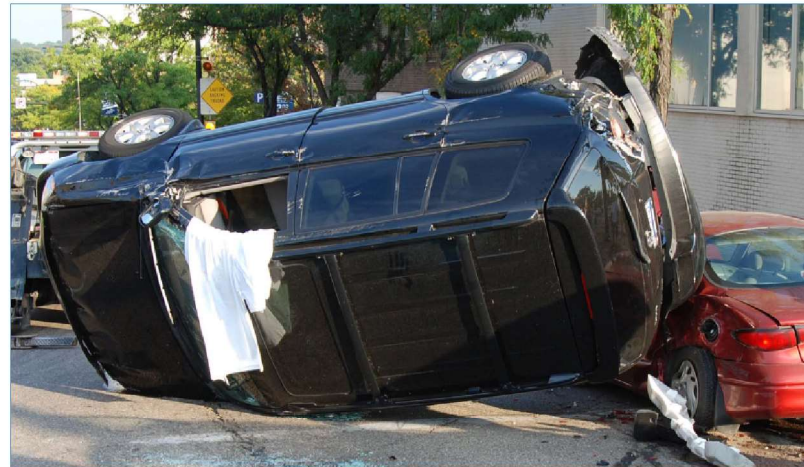


Photo courtesy of the Akron Police Department.

in injuries also decreased from 4,261 in 2018 to 4,101 in 2019, a decrease of 160 or four percent.

The report contains other mixes of good news and bad news for the region. Crashes that resulted in an injury decreased from 4,261 in 2018 to 4,101 in 2019. Unfortunately, crashes that resulted in serious injuries increased from their decade-low nadir of 290 in 2018 to 303 in 2019.

Out of the 252 bicycle-related crashes that occurred between 2017 and 2019, 183 or 73 percent resulted in an injury and seven in a fatality. The most recent fatality number for bicycle-related crashes represents a more than doubling of fatalities from the previous report's recorded three fatalities.

During the same three-year period, there were 466 pedestrian-related crashes with 385 or 83 percent resulting in an injury and 24 in a fatality. Like bicycle-related crashes, fatalities from pedestrian-related crashes saw a significant increase from the previous report when 17 fatalities were recorded.

Overall, pedestrians accounted for over 19 percent of all area crash-related fatalities that occurred between 2017 and 2019.

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. The *2017-2019 Crash Report* is available by clicking [here](#).

Project Updates

The following table lists significant projects that were awarded between April 23, 2020 and Sept. 21, 2020.

| PROJECT | ESTIMATED COMPLETION | AMOUNT |
|---|----------------------|-------------|
| South Hawkins Avenue - Resurfacing of South Hawkins Avenue from, East Avenue to Mull Avenue, in Akron. | 11/16/2020 | \$1,024,940 |
| Valley View Road - Construction of a detention pond on the north side of Interstate 80, south of Valley View Road and west of state Route 91 to aid in intercepting runoff from the Ohio Turnpike. Project includes easement and possible property acquisition, earthwork, outlet structure and restoration. | 12/11/2020 | \$143,819 |
| Traffic Control Maintenance - Installation of raised pavement markers along various routes throughout Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) District 4. | 7/1/2021 | \$134,000 |
| Roadway Minor Rehabilitation - Microsurfacing various routes throughout Portage and Trumbull counties. | 7/31/2021 | \$2,073,807 |
| Roadway Minor Rehabilitation - Resurfacing of state Route 305 in Portage County, from state Route 282 to Trumbull County Line, and state Route 305 in Trumbull County, from Portage County Line to US 422. Project includes state Route 534 in Trumbull County from east of Phalanx Mills Herner Road to US 422. | 9/1/2021 | \$1,105,383 |
| Traffic Control (Safety) - Systematic two-lane sign replacements on various routes throughout Stark and Summit counties. | 9/30/2021 | \$967,525 |
| Guardrail / Roadside Maintenance - Systematic guardrail maintenance and repair on various routes throughout ODOT District 4. | 10/30/2021 | \$833,310 |
| Bridge Preservation - Deck sealing of 40 bridges throughout Summit County. | 6/30/2022 | \$1,264,335 |

FIRSTHAND LOOK IN FAIRLAWN:

AMATS personnel got a firsthand look at the progress of the \$12.1 million South Cleveland-Massillon Road project in Fairlawn in late October. AMATS Director Curtis Baker, second from left, listens as Fairlawn officials led by Ernie Staten, the city's deputy public service director, describe how the project is proceeding.

The project will widen the road to five lanes and includes a roundabout at the Cleveland-Massillon Road/Rothrock Road intersection. AMATS programmed nearly \$4.5 million in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds for the roundabout. The agency also committed \$3 million in Highway Safety Program funds and \$277,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant funds to the project.



ON THE MOVE:

AMATS was on the move with the Downtown Akron Partnership (DAP) in October. DAP is a non-profit organization whose mission is to enhance Akron's downtown through innovative programs to promote the area as a vibrant destination.

Beginning on Oct. 6, agency personnel participated in the DAP-hosted *Experience the New Main Street in DT Akron* bike rides, a series of three weekly rides through downtown. The rides showcased the many bike and pedestrian improvements underway in Akron as part of the city's ongoing Main Street Corridor Project.



At top, from left to right, AMATS Planner David Swirsky and DAP Director of Business Relations Kimberly Beckett follow Akron Director of Planning and Urban Development Jason Segedy's lead on their trek through the area. Downtown's new dedicated bike lanes provide improved access for cyclists to destinations such as the nearby Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail.



In middle photo, from left to right, Segedy, Swirsky, Beckett and Akron City Planner Dylan Garritano tour the new Mill Street Roundabout. Along with improving vehicle flow, the roundabout will provide greater pedestrian access to the surrounding area. The group is reading the names of patrons who have purchased bricks near the roundabout.

At bottom, cyclists use side bike ramps on their journey to Akron's Lock 4. The ramps are an example of recent bike and pedestrian amenities that Akron has installed to promote downtown connectivity.



Dates to Remember

| Date | Time | Committee/Event | Location |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|---|
| March 18 | 1:30 p.m. | TAC | Virtual Meeting |
| March 18 | 6:30 p.m. | CIC | Virtual Meeting |
| March 25 | 1:30 p.m. | Policy | Virtual Meeting |
| May 13 | 1:30 p.m. | TAC | To Be Determined |
| May 13 | 6:30 p.m. | CIC | To Be Determined |
| May 20 | 1:30 p.m. | Policy | To Be Determined |
| May 31 | * | * | AMATS Offices Closed - Memorial Day |
| July 5 | 1:30 p.m. | TAC | AMATS Offices Closed - July 4th Holiday |
| August 5 | 1:30 p.m. | TAC | To Be Determined |
| August 5 | 6:30 p.m. | CIC | To Be Determined |
| August 12 | 1:30 p.m. | Policy | To Be Determined |
| September 6 | * | * | AMATS Offices Closed - Labor Day |
| September 16 | 1:30 p.m. | TAC | To Be Determined |
| September 16 | 6:30 p.m. | CIC | To Be Determined |
| September 23 | 1:30 p.m. | Policy | To Be Determined |
| October 8 | 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. | Annual Meeting | To Be Determined |
| October 11 | * | * | AMATS Offices Closed - Columbus Day |
| November 11 | * | * | AMATS Offices Closed - Veterans Day |
| November 25-26 | * | * | AMATS Offices Closed - Thanksgiving |
| December 9 | 1:30 p.m. | TAC | To Be Determined |
| December 9 | 6:30 p.m. | CIC | To Be Determined |
| December 16 | 1:30 p.m. | Policy | To Be Determined |
| December 24 | * | * | AMATS Offices Closed - Christmas |
| December 31 | * | * | AMATS Offices Closed - New Years |

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, 166 South High Street, Room 103, 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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This report was prepared by the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Ohio Department of Transportation, and the Village, City and County governments of Portage and Summit Counties and a portion of Wayne County. The contents of this report reflect the views of AMATS, which is responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official view and policies of the Ohio and/or U.S. Department of Transportation. This report does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation.