

@AMATS

THE GREATER AKRON AREA'S TRANSPORTATION JOURNAL

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COVER:

Above, after a nearly 17-month hiatus, in-person meetings of the AMATS Citizens Involvement Committee resumed on Aug. 5 with a meeting at the Akron-Summit County Library - Main Branch in downtown Akron.

A more than \$13.4 million improvement of Barney's Busy Corners in Cuyahoga Falls, shown at right, is one of the recommendations in *Transportation Outlook 2045*, the Greater Akron area's new long-range regional transportation plan. For more, turn to **pages 2 and 3**.

Photo at right courtesy of Cuyahoga Falls



Change Is In The Air

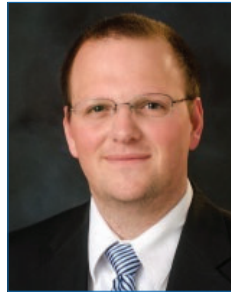
A Vision for the Greater Akron area - *Transportation Outlook 2045!*

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A Vision for the Greater Akron area - Transportation Outlook 2045!

The Greater Akron area's transportation infrastructure took a huge step to the year 2045 in late May. During a May 20 virtual meeting, the AMATS Policy Committee unanimously approved *Transportation Outlook 2045*, a nearly \$8 billion long-range transportation plan for the region.

As the area's federally designated metropolitan planning organization, AMATS prepares and updates the region's long-range transportation plan every four years. *Transportation Outlook 2045* identifies regional transportation needs and presents funding recommendations for highway, public transportation, bike and pedestrian projects. AMATS Director Curtis Baker says that the new plan recommends more than \$7.7 billion in funding to meet identified needs over the next 24 years. "More than \$5.3 billion of these funds are for our region's highways. This total includes over \$4.7 billion for preservation of the existing system, which is our primary focus rather than expansion," Baker adds.



BAKER



HEADING TOWARD 2045:

A \$133.5 million improvement of Interstate 77, between Ghent Road and Interstate 80 (Ohio Turnpike), was one of the 124 long-term freeway, arterial and intersection projects recommended in *Transportation Outlook 2045*.

While system preservation is a priority in the new plan, it does include \$419 million for freeway recommendations and \$350 million for specific roadway projects. Among the long-term highway recommendations in the plan are a more than \$146 million bridge replacement project on state Route 8, between the Perkins Street and Glenwood Avenue interchanges, and a \$133.5 million improvement project on Interstate 77, between Ghent Road and Interstate 80 (Ohio Turnpike).

Notable road projects in the plan include a nearly \$22 million reconstruction of Arlington Road, from Waterloo Road to East Market Street, in Akron and a more than \$13.4 million improvement project at the Barney's Busy Corners intersection in Cuyahoga Falls.

One unique project in Portage County is a \$10 million "road diet" on state Route 261 in Kent. The "road diet" will rededicate a portion of the four-lane divided route spanning from Cherry Street to Kent-Ravenna Road (state Route 59) to a shared-use path to promote cycling.

Baker notes that *Transportation Outlook 2045* addresses other regional needs beyond area freeways and roadways. The plan includes nearly \$2.4 billion for public transit systems in Portage and Summit counties and \$35 million for various bicycle and pedestrian improvements throughout the region. The bulk of the plan's public transit funds - \$2 billion - will be used for general operating expenses by the area's two regional transit authorities (RTAs), the Portage Area RTA in Portage County and METRO in Summit County. Another \$250 million will be used by the authorities to preserve their existing bus fleets and approximately \$68 million will be used to expand the region's public transit systems.

Among the plan's more ambitious public transit recommendations is its call for the area's RTAs to pursue bus rapid transit (BRT) and Microtransit services. BRT service provides dedicated transit routes with higher speeds, shortened wait times, and improved reliability. Currently, METRO is studying several potential corridors for BRT service and is working to identify a

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priority corridor for such service. Microtransit is a demand-response type service with integrated web applications that provide flexibility for riders where traditional fixed-route transit service isn't warranted. Baker says that PARTA is considering microtransit service to rural areas of Portage County in which regular line service is unavailable.

The plan continues AMATS' efforts to promote active transportation such as biking and walking through expansion of the region's bike and hike trail and sidewalk networks. The plan recommends: more than \$8 million to construct the Rubber City Heritage Trail in Akron; more than \$7 million to construct the Veterans Trail in Akron, Cuyahoga Falls, Silver Lake and Stow; nearly \$8 million to construct the Headwaters Trail in Aurora and Mantua Township; and \$6.5 million to construct the Heartland Trail in Chippewa Township and the Village of Clinton.

More than \$10.2 million is recommended for sidewalk improvements in the communities of Hudson, Norton, Richfield, Stow and Twinsburg. Tallmadge will receive \$1 million for the construction of a pedestrian tunnel between West Avenue and Northwest Avenue to the center of Tallmadge Circle.

If you would like to learn more about the Greater Akron area's long-range regional transportation plan, *Transportation Outlook 2045* is available by clicking [here](#).



A TUNNEL AND A DIET:

Transportation Outlook 2045 continues AMATS' efforts to promote active transportation such as biking and walking.

Tallmadge Circle, shown above, is the site of a proposed \$1 million pedestrian tunnel recommended in the plan. Meanwhile, a portion of state Route 261 in Kent, shown below, will be the site of a \$10 million "road diet" to promote cycling.

AMATS advocates active transportation principles in planning to promote healthier lifestyles and improved air quality throughout the Greater Akron area.



FIRSTHAND IN THE FALLS:

AMATS and the city of Cuyahoga Falls hosted a Bike-N-Brainstorm event in early August. Fifteen cyclists met on the evening of Aug. 6 at the bicycle repair station near the Front Street area of Cuyahoga Falls for a 7.2-mile ride through the city, shown at top.

At various points throughout the ride, participants stopped to discuss their ideas with AMATS and city officials as to how to improve the cycling experience in Cuyahoga Falls, shown in middle and bottom photos. The firsthand insights of these cyclists will be used by AMATS and city officials to identify potential cycling improvements throughout the Summit County community.

The next Cuyahoga Falls Bike-N-Brainstorm is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 3 at 6 p.m. For information about how to participate in this event, please contact **AMATS Planner Darryl Kleinhenz** at **330-375-2436** or at **dkleinhenz@akronohio.gov**.



Project Updates

The following table lists significant projects that were awarded between Sept. 22, 2020 and July 9, 2021.

PROJECT	ESTIMATED COMPLETION	AMOUNT
South Diamond Street/Mill Road - Resurfacing of South Diamond Street, from Summit Road to Mill Street, and Mill Street, from South Diamond Street to Sycamore Street, in Ravenna. Project includes ADA ramps and new pavement markings.	6/11/2021	\$279,876
State Route 91 (Darrow Road) - Installation of new sidewalks along state Route 91 (Darrow Road), between Conwill and Fishcreek roads, in Stow.	8/30/2021	\$480,201
Smith Road - Resurfacing of Smith Road, from Fairlawn East Corporate Limit to the east side of Sand Run Road, in Bath Township.	8/31/2021	\$845,857
Second Street/Wooster Road/Norton Road - Resurfacing of Second Street SW, from Hudson Run Road to Wooster Road, in Barberton. Project includes a road diet with bike lanes and the resurfacing of Wooster Road North, from Norton Road to Burt Street, and Norton Road, from Barber Road to Wooster Road, in Barberton.	9/30/2021	\$1,078,000
State Route 261 (Opportunity Parkway) - Resurfacing of state Route 261 (Opportunity Parkway), from Edgewood Avenue to Pier Drive, in Akron. Project includes minor bridge work and signal improvements along state Route 261 at Rand Avenue and Dart Avenue.	9/30/2021	\$1,561,199
Boston Mills Road - Phase 2 - Resurfacing of Boston Mills Road, from Blue Hen Falls driveway to west of Riverview Road in Boston Township. Project includes excavation of adjacent slopes to provide wider shoulders.	9/30/2021	\$922,861
The PORTAGE - Brady's Leap Section - Construction of Brady's Leap section of The PORTAGE Hike & Bike Trail along the west bank of the Cuyahoga River from Main Street to the existing end of The PORTAGE located just south of Fairchild Avenue in Kent.	9/30/2021	\$1,218,249
Norton Avenue - Resurfacing of Norton Avenue, from Cleveland-Massillon Road to the Norton East Corporate Limit, in Norton.	10/1/2021	\$362,990
North River Road - Resurfacing of North River Road, from state Route 91 to the Stow Corporate Limit, in Munroe Falls.	10/30/2021	\$631,359
Ingleside Drive Bridge - Replacement of Ingleside Drive bridge over Brandywine Creek in Hudson.	10/30/2021	\$1,367,332
Wooster Road - Resurfacing of Wooster Road, from state Route 21 to Taylor Road (Norton East Corporate Limit), in Norton.	10/30/2021	\$192,848
State Route 91/State Route 18 (Canton Road/East Market Street) - Intersection realignment with a new roundabout at state Route 18 (Canton Road/East Market Street) in Akron.	11/5/2021	\$2,660,911
Chestnut Boulevard - Resurfacing of Chestnut Boulevard, from State Road to Second Street, in Cuyahoga Falls.	11/7/2021	\$719,870

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PROJECT	ESTIMATED COMPLETION	AMOUNT
Silica Sand Bridge East - Replacement of Silica Sand Road bridge spanning over Eagle Creek in Portage County.	11/15/2021	\$537,425
Olde Eight Road/Twinsburg Road - Installation of a new traffic signal at the Olde Eight Road/Twinsburg Road intersection.	12/1/2021	\$115,650
Aurora Signal Improvement Project - Upgrade signals along various routes in Aurora. Signals will be interconnected, address ADA concerns and provide safer routes to school.	7/31/2022	\$2,460,593
State Route 14 - Widening to add two-way, left-turn lane on state Route 14, between Portage Pointe Drive and Diagonal Road, in Streetsboro. Project includes installation of new sidewalk.	9/30/2022	\$4,630,241
Tallmadge Road - Reconstruction of Tallmadge Road at the Interstate 76 interchange and the relocation of Mogadore Road in Brimfield Township.	6/30/2023	\$5,694,854
Interstate 77/Interstate 277/US 224 - Reconstruction of existing pavement and adding a fourth lane to sections of I-77, between the Arlington Road and I-277/US 224 interchanges. Project will add a second lane to the I-77 northbound to I-277 westbound ramp and I-277 eastbound to I-77 southbound ramp. Project includes bridge replacements and bridge widenings.	8/30/2024	\$49,728,377
Akron Central Interchange, West and South Legs - Pavement replacement and structure work on Interstate 76, from the Interstate 77 split (Kenmore Leg) to west of Princeton Street, and from the pedestrian overpass located east of Grant Street to the Hoban pedestrian overpass, and I-77, from Waterloo Road to state Route 8 split (Central Interchange), and from the I-76 split (Kenmore Leg) to north of state Route 261. Project includes resurfacing of state Route 8, from I-77 split (Central Interchange) to Perkins Street. This project includes replacement of the left-handed exit ramps from I-76 eastbound and westbound in the Central Interchange and reconfiguring the lane arrangements on I-76 eastbound and westbound to provide drop lanes for northbound and southbound exits in each direction.	7/30/2025	\$149,248,930

ON THE MOVE:

AMATS has completed its move to new offices in the PNC Building in downtown Akron. The Greater Akron area’s federally designated metropolitan planning organization, AMATS, is once again open to the public.

The agency moved into its new facilities located in Suite 1300 at 1 Cascade Plaza in Akron in early July.

AMATS Director Curtis Baker says that the agency’s new downtown facilities allow agency personnel to work in a modern, central, cohesive work environment while remaining easily accessible to the public.



AROUND IN AURORA:

Members of the AMATS Staff joined Aurora City Engineer Sara Cooper for a walking tour of Aurora's nearly \$12.5 million citywide traffic signal improvement project. The project will establish a central-based traffic signal system and improve coordination among signals in Aurora. The project involves 17 signalized intersections located throughout the city. More efficient vehicular flow, safer routes to school, and improved pedestrian access at intersections, especially for persons with disabilities, are among the project's goals.

Upgrades will include new LED signals, curb ramps, pedestrian pushbuttons, countdown displays, and school zone flashers. AMATS approved nearly \$3.5 million in Surface Transportation Block Grant funds for the project in 2018.

In the top photo, Cooper, standing at far right, describes aspects of the project to the AMATS Staff at the intersection of state Route 43 and Pioneer Trail. In the middle photo, staff members hear firsthand from construction crew members how progress is proceeding at the intersection of state Routes 43 and 82. Below, the staff in the background, learn about the many pedestrian improvements planned at the intersection of state Routes 82 and 306.



Dates to Remember

Date	Time	Committee/Event	Location
September 6	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Labor Day
September 16	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Hilton Garden Inn
September 16	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
September 23	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Hilton Garden Inn
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	Hilton Garden Inn
December 9	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
December 16	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Hilton Garden Inn
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 Yamini Adkins, 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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Please visit our web site at: www.amatsplanning.org

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.