



AMATS

THE GREATER AKRON AREA'S TRANSPORTATION JOURNAL

January - June 2015

Volume 4, Issue 1

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COVER:
An example of AMATS' Road Diet Analysis in action took place during May's Better Block event in Akron's North Hill area. Event organizers made a temporary bike lane along North Main Street. To read more, turn to pages 2 and 3.

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Photo by Tim Fitzwater - Fitzwater Photography

Want some dieting tips? Check out the AMATS Road Diet Analysis!

Now that we're in the middle of swimsuit season, there may be more than a few people wishing that they had gone on a diet sooner. In fact, AMATS thinks that the whole Greater Akron area could benefit from a mix of diets or - at least - some of its roadways would.

The agency recently released its *Road Diet Analysis*, which identifies potential locations where road capacity far exceeds current volumes of daily traffic. Like any diet, a road diet means reductions - only it doesn't entail cutting calories or pounds - but excess capacity. A road diet reduces the number of travel lanes on a roadway and then adjusts or reassigns the space for other uses and travel modes.

The analysis finds that many locations throughout the Greater Akron area are overbuilt due to being constructed when population and employment were greater than the present day. The result is that these locations' capacities now far exceed their current traffic volumes, according to AMATS Planner Jeff Gardner, the analysis author.

"There are other reasons that we felt made it the time to consider road diets. There is a demand from cyclists for bike lanes, as well as safety concerns for automobiles and pedestrians, that make a road diet a practical and promising option," Gardner observes.

A road diet is a useful low-cost tool to improve safety and integrate multiple modes of travel. The most common road-diet reconfiguration is the conversion of a four-lane roadway into a three-lane roadway made up of two through lanes and a center two-way left-turn lane. Remaining space can be allocated for other uses. The benefits of a road diet may include:

- Fewer crashes, particularly rear-end and left-turn crashes, through the use of a dedicated left-turn lane.
- Fewer lanes for pedestrians and cyclists to cross and more opportunities to install pedestrian refuge islands in the center of roadways.
- More curbside bicycle lanes.
- Traffic calming and reduced speeds that decrease the number and severity of crashes.
- New on-street parking or transit stops.
- A more community-focused, mixed-use environment in neighborhoods.

A temporary example of a road diet in action occurred during the weekend of May 16-17. Better Block Akron and Open Streets Akron, together with other event organizers including AMATS, transformed the Temple Square block of North Main Street near Cuyahoga Falls Avenue in Akron. Event organizers reduced the



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number of driving lanes along North Main Street from four to two while adding on-street parking, bike paths, “pop-up” businesses and eateries, and activities. AMATS Director Jason Segedy says that response to the event was overwhelmingly positive. Segedy says that many area residents indicated that they were pleased to see the neighborhood look better and thrive with activity and people. He adds that the event could serve as a template for road diets throughout the area.

The Top 10 area roadway segments identified by AMATS as potential road-diet candidates in the analysis are listed in the table on below and are based on lower traffic volumes. Gardner notes that the ultimate decision to pursue road diets is left to local communities.

Top 10 Road-Diet Candidates				
	Street	From	To	Location
1.	2nd Street SW	Snyder Avenue	Wooster Road West	Barberton
2.	Opportunity Parkway (state Route 261)	MLK, Jr. Freeway (state Route 59)	West Cedar Street	Akron
3.	Maple Street	Glendale Ave (state Route 162)	West Market Street (state Route 18)	Akron
4.	Independence Avenue	Home Avenue	Brittain Road	Akron
5.	Front Street	Cuyahoga Falls Avenue	2nd Street	Akron/Cuyahoga Falls
6.	Maple Street (state Route 162)	Edgewood Avenue	Glendale Avenue	Akron
7.	Kenmore Boulevard	East Avenue	Lakeshore Boulevard	Akron
8.	Chamberlain Road	Highland Avenue	Aurora Road (state Route 82)	Twinsburg
9.	Second Street	Oakwood Drive	Tiftt Street	Cuyahoga Falls
10.	Kelly Avenue	Waterloo Road	Goodyear Boulevard	Akron

Photos by Tim Fitzwater - Fitzwater Photography



BANKING ON BETTER BLOCK: In mid-May, Akron’s North Hill Temple Square business district was transformed by Better Block, a grassroots community redevelopment effort to demonstrate an area’s potential to become a walkable, vibrant neighborhood. Road diet strategies, such as a temporary bike lane and additional on-street parking, were used during the festivities.

Community Focus: Garretttsville

Community Focus presents information about communities within the Greater Akron area. The village of Garretttsville has been a member of AMATS since February 1970.

Founded – 1804 **Population** – 2,325 (2010 U.S. Census Bureau)

Area – 2.53 square miles **Policy Committee Member** – Mayor Rick Patrick

History – Colonel John Garrett III purchased 300 acres of land in Nelson Township in 1803. In July 1804, Garrett settled on this land. He and other settlers constructed a grist mill, which opened in 1806. Later that year, the Cleveland-Pittsburgh Road was constructed near Garrett's mill. Nearby pioneers would mill their grain at the mill, eventually building roads and trails to meet with the Cleveland-Pittsburgh Road. In 1864, Garretttsville was incorporated as a village.

Transportation Challenges – The village of Garretttsville is in northeastern Portage County at the intersection of state Routes 82 and 88. Downtown Main Street is also state Route 82 and runs east and west. The village has one traffic light located at the intersection of state Routes 82 and 88 and one caution light located at the east end of Main Street at Center Street. The eight-mile Headwaters Trail starts at Garretttsville Village Park on state Route 88 (South Street) and travels west towards the village of Mantua. Currently, 75 percent of Garretttsville has sidewalks.

Garretttsville Mayor Rick Patrick says that, while traveling through the community is fairly easy with essentially no obstacles, the village wants to improve access to the Headwaters Trail from state Route 82 at the Sky Plaza IGA Store. Potential accessibility improvements include parking, a bicycle rack, crosswalks and signage. There is also a need for a traffic light at the state Route 82/Liberty Street intersection, which is frequently congested and the site of occasional vehicle accidents.

Mayor Patrick adds that there are many places in Garretttsville that still need sidewalks, but most of these areas will be addressed by developers. "The most critical place that we would like to have sidewalks is on Liberty Street from Water Street to state Route 88 by the J.A. Garfield School System. This is an area that is highly traveled by students and residents and - with no sidewalks in this area - it makes it unsafe for pedestrian travel day or night," Patrick observes. Another concern to the village is the replacement of an old iron bridge located on Liberty Street just south of Center Street. Garretttsville aided the Portage County Engineer's office with repairs to this bridge approximately five years ago, but its sidewalks were deemed unsafe and closed at that time.

Web site – www.garretttsville.org



Agency approves new four-year, multi-million dollar program of transportation projects

The AMATS Policy Committee unanimously approved the *Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2019* (TIP) – the Greater Akron area's new four-year program of highway, public transportation, and bike and pedestrian projects – during its March meeting.

The new TIP represents a \$720 million investment in the area's highway, public transportation, and bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Nearly \$424 million in the program is devoted to the area's highways while another nearly \$291 million will go for public transportation. More than \$4.8 million will fund a host of bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Like its predecessor, the latest TIP is 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 program continues the area's emphasis on preservation of its existing transportation system rather than costly new expansion projects.

Of the program's total funding, \$444 million or 62 percent is devoted to preservation projects while nearly \$224 million or 31 percent will be used for operational improvements throughout the area. Botosan notes that only about \$51 million will be used for projects that add capacity to the area's transportation system. This latest program includes several road diet and multimodal-type projects that will help the area make more efficient use of its existing system of roadways. Some of the most significant types of these projects include Kent's East Summit Street and Akron's West Exchange and Cedar streets, and state Route 261 (Tallmadge Avenue), Botosan says.

The new program is not completely void of significant improvement projects. The state Route 59/Innerbelt re-routing, the reconstruction and widening of Interstate 76, and improvements to the I-76/77 Main Street/Broadway Interchange are also scheduled to receive funding during the four-year program. Additional information about the TIP is available on the AMATS web site by clicking [here](#). For questions about the program, please contact TIP Coordinator Victor Botosan at **330-375-2436** or email at vbotosan@akronohio.gov.

STROLLING ALONG:

AMATS hosted its second-annual series of Jane's Walk tours May 1-3. The *Inside Scoop on Akron's Engineering and Infrastructure* walking tour, shown at right, began at Cascade Plaza in downtown Akron, wound its way to the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, and back to downtown.

Jane's Walk is an international festival of free, volunteer-led urban walks that honor the legacy and ideas of urban activist and writer, Jane Jacobs. The walks allow people to learn about their communities from a pedestrian perspective.

AMATS hosts the tours for the purpose of promoting a more pedestrian-friendly environment in the Greater Akron area.



Agency urges increase in federal gas tax, new directions for transportation

The AMATS Policy Committee supports a 10 cent increase in the federal gas tax as a way to shore up the national Highway Trust Fund. The fund, which supports needed road construction and mass transit projects, will go insolvent if Congress fails to approve a new transportation spending bill by July 31. (In late May, President Obama signed into law a two-month extension of the Highway Trust Fund.)

The Policy Committee approved **Resolution 2015-05R** stating its support for the increase in a 14-4 vote with one abstention during its March 26 meeting. The committee approved a similar resolution several years ago, but the body's latest statement contains more pointed language in its urging of national leaders to index the tax to inflation and to pursue a new planning framework to meet infrastructure needs, according to AMATS Director Jason Segedy.

"While our region could always use more federal and state funding, what we need even more is a new federal and statewide vision for transportation - one that prioritizes fixing the roads and bridges that we already have and creating viable alternatives to driving," Segedy explains.

He adds that AMATS has pursued a "fix-it-first" approach to the Greater Akron area's transportation system for the last several years with great success. While the resolution urges federal leaders to index a tax increase to inflation - the gas tax hasn't been raised since 1993 - Segedy notes that not all of the nation's transportation funding problems are due to the diminished buying power of federal dollars.

"Our current fiscal difficulties are not just a matter of federal or statewide gas taxes failing to keep up with inflation or per-capita vehicle miles traveled declining. They are directly related to how federal and state transportation dollars are being spent," he continues, "Too much is being spent to expand our highway system and not enough is being spent to maintain the roads and bridges that we already have."

Segedy observes that the continued focus on building more, wider, and more expensive roads that state and local governments will be responsible for maintaining in perpetuity is a large part of the reason why the Highway Trust Fund is insolvent. It is also one of the reasons why the Ohio Department of Transportation has had to resort to non-traditional funding mechanisms, he adds.

MAKING A CASE:

AMATS Director Jason Segedy, at left, makes an argument for Policy Committee approval of Resolution 2015-05R during the committee's March meeting. Along with urging an increase in the federal gas tax to pay for infrastructure needs, the resolution stated that a new planning framework is needed at the national level.



Project Updates

The following table lists significant projects that have been awarded between November 26, 2014 to June 15, 2015.

PROJECT	ESTIMATED COMPLETION	AMOUNT
Prospect Street - Resurfacing of Prospect Street and new sidewalk in Ravenna.	11/30/2015	\$503,080
Cleveland Road - Resurfacing of Cleveland Road, from Highland Avenue to Ravenna North Corporate Line, in Ravenna.	07/31/2015	\$688,793
Industry, Stroup and Johnnycake Roads - Replacements of bridges on Industry, Stroup and Johnnycake roads in Portage County.	05/15/2016	\$1,011,540
State Route 14 - Various intersection improvements including the termination of Newton Falls Road at Woodbine Avenue and the extension of Peck Road to state Route 59, in Ravenna Township.	09/30/2016	\$4,946,694
State Route 303 - Resurfacing and bridge replacement, from state Route 44 to state Route 700, in Shalersville and Freedom townships.	09/30/2015	\$828,560
Interstates 76 and 77 - Bridge deck replacement, from the I-77 northbound ramp to US 224/Interstate 277 westbound, and the I-76/Chester Avenue pedestrian bridge, in Akron and Coventry Township.	09/15/2016	\$2,548,525
Waterloo Road - Improvement at Arlington Road intersection in Akron.	11/09/2015	\$1,079,343
Ravenna Road - Bridge replacement over Tinkers Creek in Hudson.	11/30/2015	\$1,128,680
Ellsworth Hills Safe Routes To School - Construction of new multipurpose path near Ellsworth Elementary School in Hudson.	07/31/2015	\$106,757
Hopocan Avenue - Resurfacing of Hopocan Avenue in Barberton.	06/30/2015	\$452,609
Interstates 76, 77 and 277 - Resurfacing of I-76 (the Kenmore Leg), between I-77 to I-277, in Akron. Project includes shoulder and ramp improvements.	11/30/2015	\$8,865,281
State Route 91 - Resurfacing of state Route 91 (Darrow Road), from Hudson North Corporate Line to south of Post Road, in Hudson. Project includes bridge repairs.	09/01/2015	\$2,526,198
Interstates 76 and 77 - Relocation of Johnston Street and the removal of three bridges over Johnston Street to facilitate improvements to I-76 in Akron.	06/30/2017	\$15,645,152
Liberty Road - Construction of a sidewalk in Twinsburg.	08/05/2015	\$634,800
State Route 18 - Deck replacement and painting of Brittain Road bridge spanning Wheeling & Lake Erie railroad in Akron.	10/15/2015	\$1,677,790
State Route 82 - Four-lane widening of state Route 82 (Aurora Road), from east of Crow Drive to Chamberlin Road, in Macedonia and Twinsburg.	09/30/2015	\$4,577,016
State Route 91 - Reconstruction of state Route 91 (Darrow Road), from Post Road to Glenwood Avenue, in Twinsburg. Project includes new turn lanes.	08/16/2016	\$4,746,450
State Routes 21, 176 and 303 - Resurfacing and miscellaneous bridge work, from I-77 to I-271, and from the Medina County Line to the Peninsula West Corporate Line, in the Village of Richfield and Richfield Township.	10/30/2015	\$2,864,436
State Route 82 - Resurfacing of state Route 82 (Aurora Road), from Cuyahoga County Line to I-271, and new left turn lane in the Village of Northfield.	10/15/2015	\$3,157,363
Springdale Road Bike Lane - New bike lane on Springdale Road in Stow.	09/30/2015	\$326,504

Dates to Remember

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Committee/Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
July 3	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - July 4th Holiday
July 16	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
September 7	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Labor Day
September 17	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom B
September 24	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom B
October 12	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Columbus Day
October 16	8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Annual Meeting	Sheraton Suites Akron Cuyahoga Falls
November 11	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Veterans Day
November 19	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
November 26-27	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Thanksgiving
December 10	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom B
December 17	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom B
December 25	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Christmas Day

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.

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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.