Creating Transportation Alternatives
Changing the Status-Quo

Our Regional, State and National Transportation Future
Overview

• A busy time in transportation policy
  – ODOT Budget
  – Transportation Outlook
  – Renewal of MAP-21

• Good time to discuss transportation priorities
  – Change the status-quo: strategic policy shift needed
  – What AMATS is doing regionally to help make this happen

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What is AMATS?

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) serving Greater Akron
- Responsibilities include:
  - Develop regional transportation plan
  - Oversee the expenditure of federal transportation funds
  - Coordinate transportation improvements with federal, state, and local officials
  - Serve as a forum for elected officials to discuss regional transportation policy
State and Federal Funding Issues

• Billions of $ funneled through ODOT and MPOs
  – New ODOT budget
  – New AMATS Plan

• Fiscal Questions
  – What truly are our greatest transportation needs?
  – How will these funds help address them?

• Policy Questions
  – Is our traditional focus on congestion still justified?
  – What about road/bridge maintenance?
  – What about public transit, bicycle, pedestrian improvements?
Statewide Transportation Needs

• We should consider other needs before committing to building new highway capacity
• Does reducing congestion still make sense?
  – Ohio ranks #46 in population growth
  – VMT has been declining for 90 months straight
  – Ohio has large and aging legacy infrastructure to maintain
• We should “fix it first” and support existing communities/already developed areas
• We shouldn’t encourage more land to be developed
Regional Transportation Needs

• Maintain existing roads/bridges – “Fix It First”
• Improve safety – strategically invest in high-crash locations
• Promote and support alternatives to driving
  – Invest in public transit, biking, walking
  – Promote “complete streets”
• Land use/urban design decisions that make it:
  – Easier, not harder, for those that don’t drive
Regional Transportation Needs

• Build new highway capacity sparingly
  – Support already developed areas
  – Avoid enabling urban sprawl/rural development

• Strategically address traffic congestion
  – Fiscal and environmental considerations
  – Can’t build our way out of all congestion
  – Cost vs. benefit
    • Opportunity Cost vs. other transportation investments
    • How much $ to reduce commutes by 1-2 minutes?

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New 21st Century Realities

• Can’t operate under 20th Century paradigm
  – Fiscal and demographic situation very different

• Fiscal Realities
  – Insolvent Federal Highway Trust Fund
  – Insufficient revenue at state/local level
  – Major unfunded liabilities in terms of infrastructure maintenance
  – Anemic population (and economic) growth in Ohio

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Address Revenue Shortfalls

• Revenue Side
  – Increase Federal gasoline tax
    • By at least 10 cents per gallon, index to inflation
  – Consider increasing State gasoline tax
    • Study what is being done in Maryland
  – Consider tolling more roads and bridges

• Expenditure Side
  – Spend our limited dollars differently
  – We can do this today, without raising taxes
Invest in Public Transportation

• Ohio ranks:
  – 7th in population
  – 12th in public transit ridership
  – 47th in state support for public transportation

• 8% of Ohio households do not have a vehicle
  – Higher percentage in major cities

• Ohio needs to do a better job of funding and planning for public transit
  – Equity and economic opportunity issue
Rethink Economic Development

• Question the dogma that:
  – New transportation capacity + opening new land for development = net economic growth

• Today’s reality
  – Ohio has 4th largest interstate system
  – Dense network of arterial roads
  – Thousands of acres of underutilized urban land

• Is a lack of roadway capacity and developable land really the root of our economic problems in Ohio?
What should we do today?

• Recognize demographic changes
  – Stagnant population growth, declining VMT
  – Changing tastes and preferences of younger residents
  – Slow growth is an opportunity to reflect/rethink

• Restructuring mode
  – Prioritize maintenance of existing infrastructure
  – Encourage land use and transportation decisions that reduce oil dependence
  – Address revenue shortfalls
  – Strategically invest in transportation alternatives

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What is AMATS doing?

- Transportation Outlook 2035
  - Embodies sustainable transportation policies
- Connecting Communities Initiative
- Complete Streets
- Bicycle Initiatives
  - Bike User Map
  - Switching-Gears.org
  - Bike-N-Brainstorm

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Connecting Communities

• An initiative to better integrate land use and transportation planning
• Promote public transit, bicycle and pedestrian transportation
• Improve connectivity & accessibility
• Encourage traditional development patterns
• Aid AMATS in targeting federal investment
Connecting Communities
Planning Grant

- Provides funding to help local governments develop plans that better integrate land use and transportation

- Goals:
  - Increase transportation choices
  - Encourage sustainable land use and urban design decisions

- 2013 Recipients: Barberton; Copley & Bath Twps (Montrose)
Montrose Planning Grant

- Improve pedestrian, bike & transit infrastructure
- Improve internal traffic circulation & wayfinding
- Improve aesthetics & urban design
- Improve parking utilization
Transit stop on Flight Memorial Pkwy in front of Wendy’s.
Looking west down SR 18 in Bath Twp. There are no sidewalks along this stretch of SR 18.
One of two bike racks we found in the area. Both in West Market Plaza.
Bike stored on guardrail in Fairlawn.
Two separated parking lots both with access to SR 18 (Applebee’s & Olive Garden).
Extensive signage in Copley provides little direction.
Separated parking offers strips of green vegetation, but no connections.
SR 18 left turn lane leads directly into Montrose Ford which is disconnected from the retail development.
A sea of parking in Copley Twp.
Complete Streets

• Complete streets are designed to provide safe access for all users
  – Pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders & motorists

• Complete streets may include:
  – Street trees
  – Benches
  – Bicycle lanes and racks
  – Pedestrian amenities
  – Bus shelters
Bike Initiatives

• Bike User Map
• Switching-Gears
• Bike-N-Brainstorm
Green Bike-N-Brainstorm
Kent Bike-N-Brainstorm
Thank You!

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