

# The AMATS Quarterly

The Newsletter of the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study

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The AMATS Quarterly

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## A new plan, a new TIP, a new beginning for AMATS area

May was a busy month for the AMATS Policy Committee. During its May 11 meeting, the committee approved the *2030 Regional Transportation Plan* and the *Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2006 through 2009* (TIP).

Both documents are used by AMATS to plan for highway, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects in the AMATS area. The *2030 Regional Transportation Plan* is a long-term guide used by local government officials to pursue transportation improvements with federal funds. The TIP is the area's short-term program of projects scheduled to receive federal transportation funds over the next four fiscal years. (A project must be programmed in the TIP in order to receive federal funds.)

The *2030 Regional Transportation Plan* assigns priorities to previously identified needs and recommends financially constrained highway, public transportation and transportation enhancement improvements that are consistent with the goals and objectives set forth by the Policy Committee. The *2030 Regional Transportation Plan* recommends approximately \$2.7 billion for transportation improvements between now and 2030.

Of the \$2.7 billion in improvements, the Regional Transportation Plan recommends nearly \$2.4 billion in highway improvements, approximately \$294 million in public transportation improvements and about \$43 million in bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The new plan makes a substantial commitment to maintaining the existing system with \$1.7 billion or 63 percent of available funding being reserved for projects that preserve and maintain the operation of the existing transportation system.

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**RECORD TURNOUT:** Almost 200 people attended the Sixth Annual AMATS Meeting at Anthe's Restaurant on May 25. This year's featured speaker was Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Director Gordon Proctor, standing at podium. Proctor shared his insights regarding pending federal transportation legislation and ODOT's financial forecast. For more about the director's address, turn to **page 3**.

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## **AMATS approves multi-year, multi-million dollar documents**

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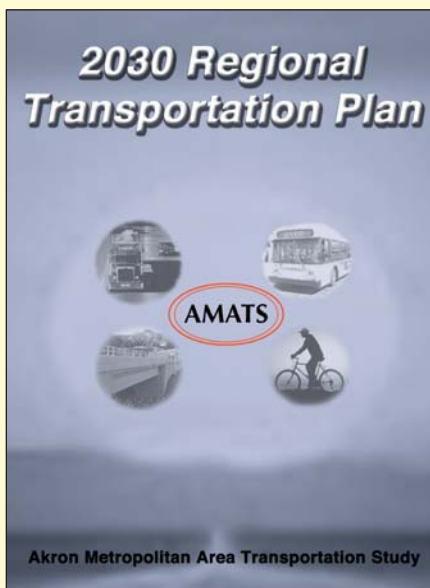
Among the more notable project recommendations are several large-scale highway improvements on State Routes 8 and 43 and Interstate 76. These projects include a \$99 million major upgrading of State Route 8, between State Route 303 and Interstate 271, in Summit County and two project recommendations totaling nearly \$33 million to widen State Route 43 to four lanes in Aurora and Streetsboro in Portage County. The plan also recommends a series of comprehensive projects totaling more than \$600 million on I-76, between State Route 21 and the Central Interchange. The projects, which include various interchange improvements and the widening of I-76 to six and, in some cases, eight lanes, were initially proposed in the *Interstate 76/AMATS Major Investment Study Final Report* approved by AMATS in early 2004.

Highway and transit projects totaling approximately \$637 million are programmed in the new TIP, a nearly 8 percent increase from the approximately \$590 million programmed in the previous TIP that spanned Fiscal Years 2004 through 2007. Of this total, \$251 million is for highway and bike-way capital projects and \$216 million is for highway maintenance projects; \$127 million is for transit operations and \$43 million is for transit capital, maintenance and planning projects.

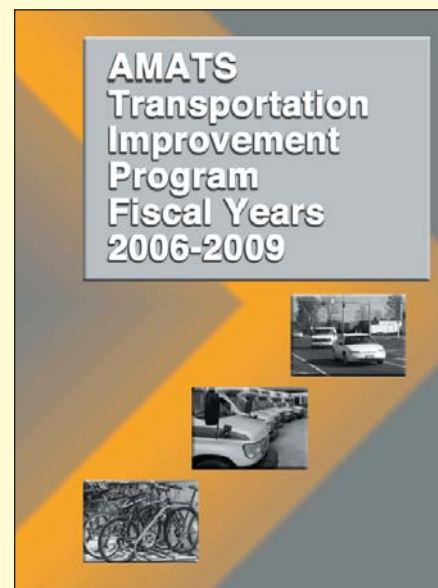
2005 is unique in that the triennial update of the Regional Transportation Plan coincided with the biennial update of the TIP. AMATS found itself in the position of having to update both of its most important documents almost simultaneously.

In April, AMATS hosted a series of meetings to present drafts of the Regional Transportation Plan and TIP to the public for review and comment. Both documents were also available for public review at the AMATS and Ohio Department of Transportation District 4 offices as well as the AMATS web site during a 30-day comment period that began March 30.

Approval of the Regional Transportation Plan and the TIP by the Policy Committee is not the final step in the approval process for either document. The Ohio and U.S. departments of transportation must issue their concurrence on both documents and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency must determine whether the documents conform to air quality standards. AMATS submitted the plan and the TIP to both departments and the agency for review in late May.



**NEW PLAN, NEW TIP:** The 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, left, and the AMATS Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2006 through 2009 are available as pdf files on the Transportation Plan and TIP pages of the AMATS web site.



## **ODOT Director talks of future at AMATS Annual Meeting**

Things are good, they're getting better and we hope that they continue to do so. That was the message of Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Director Gordon Proctor during the Sixth Annual AMATS Meeting. A record turnout of nearly 200 people attended the meeting at Anthe's Restaurant on May 25 to hear what the director had to say about the state of Ohio's transportation system and its future.

Proctor said that Ohio has witnessed an unprecedented level of sustained investment in its highway system thanks to the state's 10-year, \$5 billion *Jobs and Progress Plan*. Launched in 2003 by Ohio Gov. Bob Taft, the plan provides more than \$500 million annually for infrastructure improvements.

The director said that modernizing the state's aging highway system is a "very expensive and daunting task," especially considering that half of the pavement under the state's roadways was originally poured 50 years ago at the start of the National Highway System. But, as difficult as the challenges have been, Proctor noted that progress has been made on several fronts.

Ohio has managed to stabilize its pavement and bridge conditions, slow the growth of congestion, double the amount of funding for stand-alone safety projects, and improve the aesthetic standards of projects.

"We don't have money for every project, but we do have a credible fiscal plan to carry us through the year 2015," Proctor said.

The director cautioned, however, that whether sustained investment would continue depends upon what happens in Washington, D.C. in the coming weeks. Congress and the Bush administration are still hammering out a successor transportation authorization to the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which expired in September 2003 and has since had six temporary extensions. Half of the anticipated funding for projects under the state's *Jobs and Progress Plan* is based on federal funding.

Proctor said that ODOT is hopeful that the six-year, \$295 billion transportation bill approved by the U.S. Senate in May is the spending bill that will be ultimately approved by Congress and the administration, rather than the \$284 billion bill approved by the U.S. House of Representatives in March and supported by President Bush.

The House bill would leave ODOT considerably short of its needed \$250 million in annual federal funds and approximately \$500 million short of its preferred funding levels over a five-year period.

Proctor said that ODOT officials made a promise to the state's Congressional delegation that, if Ohio receives its necessary level of funds, those funds would be used for highway capacity projects. He added that ODOT made a related promise to AMATS and the state's other metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs).

"We promised that, if we received a raise in federal funding, there would be a commensurate increase in funding to MPOs," but he added, "If there is no increase, then funding would be flat."



***"We don't have money for every project, but we do have a credible fiscal plan to carry us through the year 2015."***

- Gordon Proctor, director,  
Ohio Department of  
Transportation -

## **Manchester Road to be part of ODOT corridor safety study**

Making the journey along State Route 93 safer for motorists has become a priority for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The state route is one of seven highway corridors that the department is studying under the state's new Corridor Safety Program.

Launched in January, the program identifies long highway corridors with crashes and fatalities above the state average of 1.64 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. Locations with the highest density of fatal crashes will be studied using a cross-jurisdictional approach that combines engineering, enforcement and educational resources to reduce crashes and save lives.

ODOT identified 16 such corridors throughout the state and found that seven could be studied this year. One of these seven corridors is State Route 93, a portion of which extends through Summit County as Manchester Road.

State Route 93, which extends for 217 miles between Summit and Lawrence counties, had a total of 34 fatal crashes between 1999 and 2003. (Of that total, four of those fatal crashes were within Summit County.) The corridor is one of several with fatality rates significantly above the state average. These totals underscore the need for the State Route 93 Corridor Safety Study. The study began April 29 in Zanesville with a brainstorming session of the State Route 93 Safety Corridor Review Team, which will study, recommend and implement an action plan for the corridor.

Michelle May, project manager for ODOT's Highway Safety Program, said that the team will proceed with the study in three stages. The first stage, which began in January, consisted of preliminary analyses of crash data within the corridor, particularly of those crashes that included fatalities. During the second stage, which is currently underway, the team will review the corridor data and propose methods and strategies to reduce crashes in the corridor. In the third stage, scheduled to begin this summer, the team will present its recommendations to the public for review and comment before a final corridor plan is implemented.

May says that some of the preliminary analyses of corridor data have been revealing.

"We found that 71 percent of the fatal crashes in the State Route 93 corridor involved people who weren't wearing safety belts. Another 24 percent of fatal crashes involved a motorcycle, bicycle or a pedestrian," May says. Another, perhaps more troubling, statistic is that 35 percent of fatal crashes on State Route 93 involved alcohol. These types of data will be used by ODOT to channel resources into projects and programs that will hopefully lower the corridor's crash and fatality rates.

"We're looking at different strategies, from changing dangerous driver behavior to improving roadway components," May says.

The team has also identified seven problem areas within the State Route 93 corridor including a portion of Manchester Road extending from the Stark County Line to Akron. AMATS is participating in the State Route 93 Corridor Safety Study by providing crash data and technical assistance as needed and attending team meetings within its area.

***"We're looking at different strategies, from changing dangerous driver behavior to improving roadway components."***

**- Michelle May, project manager,  
ODOT Highway Safety Program -**



## Project Updates

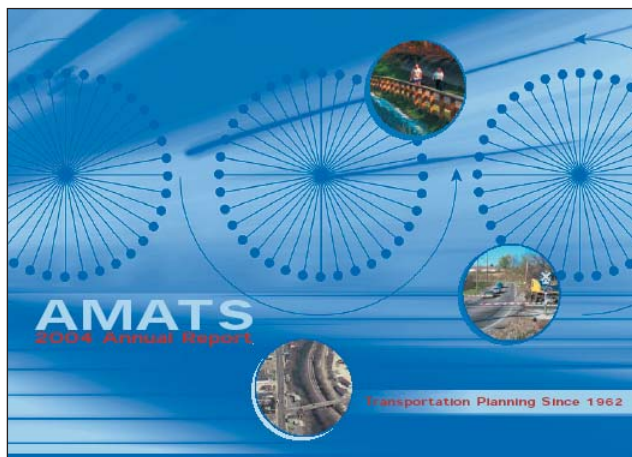
The following table lists transportation projects that have been bid or awarded in the past three months. Projects that have been bid, but not awarded as of the publication of this newsletter, are denoted with an asterisk by the contractor's name. Contractors noted with an asterisk (\*) are the apparent low bidders on projects.

PROJECT	BID DATE	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATES	CONTRACTOR/ APPARENT LOW-EST BIDDER	AMOUNT
<b>Arlington Road</b> - Turn lane construction and signalization improvements on Arlington Road, from Krumroy Road to Swartz Road, in Coventry and Springfield townships.	05/05/05	11/01/05	Kenmore Construction Co. - Akron -	\$1,466,289
<b>State Route 532</b> - Bridge replacement on State Route 532 (Cleveland Avenue) spanning the Little Cuyahoga River in Mogadore.	03/25/2005	09/30/2005	Karvo Paving Co. - Cuyahoga Falls -	\$1,250,230
<b>Interstate 76</b> - Signage improvements at various locations on Interstate 76 in Summit and Portage counties.	03/09/2005	09/30/2005	Lake Erie Construction Co. - Norwalk -	\$255,895
<b>State Route 43</b> - Resurfacing of State Route 43, from the Stark County Line to Tallmadge Road, in Suffield and Brimfield townships.	03/09/2005	09/30/2005	Kenmore Construction Co. - Akron -	\$1,191,542
<b>State Route 261</b> - Construction of a bridge on a bikeway spanning State Route 261 in Franklin Township.	03/09/2005	09/30/2005	Jet Excavating Co. - New Middletown -	\$547,910
<b>Akron-Peninsula Road</b> - Bridge replacement spanning Mud Brook in Cuyahoga Falls.	03/02/2005	09/30/2005	A.R. Lockhart Development Co. - Akron -	\$638,813
<b>State Route 43</b> - Two-lane resurfacing of State Route 43, from Rockwell Street to the Kent North Corporate Limit, in Kent.	02/23/2005	06/30/2005	Shelly Co. - Thornville -	\$291,222
<b>State Route 176</b> - Two-lane resurfacing of State Route 176, from Becksville Road to Cuyahoga County Line, and State Route 303, from Medina County Line to Brecksville Road, and from Black Road to the Village of Peninsula.	02/23/2005	08/31/2005	Karvo Paving Co. - Cuyahoga Falls -	\$1,027,343
<b>Revere Road</b> - Second phase of reconstruction of Revere Road, from Yellow Creek Road to Bath Road, in Bath Township.	02/16/2005	10/31/2005	Karvo Paving Co. - Cuyahoga Falls -	\$1,193,416
<b>State Route 59</b> - Two-lane resurfacing on State Route 59, from the Portage County Line to east of the CSX rail line, in Kent.	02/02/2005	08/15/2005	Shelly Co. - Thornville -	\$1,103,313

## AMATS adjusts two TIP projects during March meeting

The AMATS Policy Committee approved two resolutions to amend the *AMATS Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2004 through 2007* (TIP) during its March 23 meeting. These amendments are summarized in the table below. Detailed information about amendments to the Highway and Transit portions of the TIP is available on the AMATS web site.

Project Description	Amendment Action
Tallmadge Avenue Reconstruction	Revised the amount of AMATS-suballocated Congestion Mitigation Air Quality funds to fund only the project's traffic signalization-related items and added AMATS-suballocated Surface Transportation Program funds for all other items of the project.
Waterloo Road Towpath Trail Underpass	Rescheduled \$80,000 in AMATS-suballocated Transportation Enhancement Program funds from the project's construction scheduled for Fiscal Year 2007 to its right-of-way acquisition in Fiscal Year 2006.



**YEAR IN REVIEW:** The *2004 AMATS Annual Report* is now available to the public.

The latest annual report features sections concerning AMATS' planning activities during the year, significant highway projects, special studies and the development of the Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program.

**TURNING THE SHOVEL:** A host of dignitaries were on hand to help the city of Barberton and the Summit County Engineer's office to break ground for the new Robinson Avenue Bridge. The April 7 ceremony kicked off construction of the new \$18 million bridge that will connect Robinson Avenue to Wooster Road in Barberton. Manning the shovels from left are Summit County Councilman Tim Crawford, Summit County Engineer Greg Bachman, Ohio Department of Transportation District 4 Deputy Director Mohamed Darwish and Barberton Mayor Randy Hart.



## **Improvements boosting Akron-Canton Airport to new heights**

Improvements at and near the Akron-Canton Airport (CAK) are hastening its transformation from a small, hometown airport to one of the region's major air hubs.

One of the projects that is helping the airport's transformation is the nearby Interstate 77 improvement project. Portions of Interstate 77 in Summit and Stark counties are undergoing significant improvements as part of an eight-year, \$250 million plan to reconstruct and widen I-77 to three lanes in each direction between Akron and Canton.

Construction of the final piece of the I-77 improvement project within the AMATS area is underway. Scheduled for completion by late September 2006, the \$16.6 million project will widen I-77 to six lanes from north of the airport interchange to south of State Route 241 in Summit County.

Also in the AMATS area, the Lauby Road improvement project is expected to begin construction in the near future. The more than \$1 million project, located at the intersection of Lauby Road and the airport entrance, will realign the I-77 southbound off ramp, reconstruct the intersection and add turn lanes and signalization improvements.

Outside of the AMATS area, the \$24 million Shuffel Road interchange improvement project began construction in August 2004. Scheduled for completion this August, the project will realign Shuffel Drive over I-77 and build a new interchange.

Improvements haven't been limited to highways near the airport. Four years ago, CAK launched its Soaring with Terminal Access Runway Improvements (STAR) Program. STAR is a multi-million dollar, five-year capital improvement program to prepare the airport for an anticipated 1.6 million passengers annually.

The first phase of STAR is complete and the second and third phases are scheduled for completion by mid-2006. Phase 1, which began in 2001 and ended in late 2003 at a total cost of about \$28 million, included an extension of Runway 1/19, a new baggage claim area, new restrooms, an expansion of parking facilities, and a revamped food court.

Phases 2 and 3, which began in late 2003 and

are still in progress, will add a new second-level passenger concourse and atrium, an additional Transportation Security Administration screening lane, wireless Internet service, and various other facility improvements at a total cost of about \$24 million.

Another project that is not part of the STAR Program, but overlaps with it, is the \$75 million project to extend Runway 5/23, the airport's main runway. The project will add another 1,600 feet to Runway 5/23's southern end bringing its total length to 8,200 feet.

These improvements couldn't be timelier as the airport appears to be on track to meet its goal of 1.6 million passengers annually. CAK officials believe that the airport's growth is being fueled by a combination of two factors: an increase in the number of low-fare airlines at CAK and greater destination choices.

AirTran Airways, Delta Connection, Northwest AirlinK, United Express and US Airways Express all now serve the Akron-Canton region. Since 1996, when it began flights from the airport, Air Tran Airways has added the cities of Atlanta, Boston, Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, New York and Tampa as destinations. In 2004, US Airways Express increased service to Charlotte and added new flights to Philadelphia while Delta Connection added larger 70-seat aircraft for its Atlanta and Cincinnati routes. In June, Frontier Airlines will offer daily, non-stop flights to Denver.

As a result of adding these airline and destination choices, CAK has watched its passenger numbers climb. In 2004, more than 1.3 million passengers used the Akron-Canton Airport compared to slightly more than 1.1 million in 2003. The first quarter of 2005 saw more than 317,000 travelers pass through the CAK terminal, compared to 290,000 during the first quarter of 2004, an increase of more than 9 percent. In March 2005 alone more than 119,000 passengers used the airport compared to 108,600 in March 2004.

CAK Director Fred Krum expects the number of passengers using the airport to continue to increase as it has the last three years. "We have worked hard to become an airport of preference, providing an easy-to-use terminal, shorter walks and a bit more sense of calm. With a new gate concourse coming, travelers will continue to find Akron-Canton a better way to go," Krum says.

**Dates to Remember**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Location</u>
June 22	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Stow Safety Building
June 23	7:00 p.m.	CIC	Silver Lake Village Hall
June 29	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Martin University Center, The University of Akron
Sept. 15	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Stow Safety Building
Sept. 15	7:00 p.m.	CIC	Silver Lake Village Hall
Sept. 21	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Martin University Center, The University of Akron

Persons with disabilities needing assistance are asked to contact Richard Johnson, office of the ADA Coordinator, 166 S. High St., Akron, Ohio 44308, **330-375-2189** (voice), **330-375-2345** (TDD), at least seven (7) days in advance.

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