



THE VEHICLE

Washtenaw Area Transportation Study

July 2004

Vol. 3

CLICK IT OR TICKET MOBILIZATION

The "Click it or Ticket" mobilization campaign has been going on for several years. The goal of this national enforcement act is to save lives by raising the percentage of drivers wearing seat belts. In 2002, 40% of the automobile crash related fatalities involved people that were not wearing seat belts. Michigan has set a goal of 90% seat belt usage but currently falls short of that. The most recent mobilization took place over the memorial Holiday from May 24th to June 6th. The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning estimated that in 2002, 85% of Michigan drivers were wearing seat belts. While Michigan hasn't reached its goal of 90% seat belt usage, it is higher than that observed prior to Michigan passing the primary seat belt law. Primary enforcement allows police to pull over and cite drivers not buckled up. In addition to the recent mobilization, planning for the next effort is already underway. The next scheduled mobilization will be August 27th to September 12th so remember, buckle up. The Michigan State Police report that increasing safety belt usage from 85 to 90% would save an estimated 50 lives in Michigan each year and save an estimated \$130 million in economic costs as a result. In Washtenaw County alone, 871 restraint citations were issued by the following law enforcement agencies as a result of the Click it or Ticket Mobilization over the two week period.



City of Ann Arbor Police Department
Pittsfield Department of Public Safety
Northfield Township Police Department
Saline Police Department
Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office
University of Michigan Department of Public Safety

Look for the "You Drink, You Drive, You Lose" campaign from June 25th through July 11th

ART FAIR IS HERE !

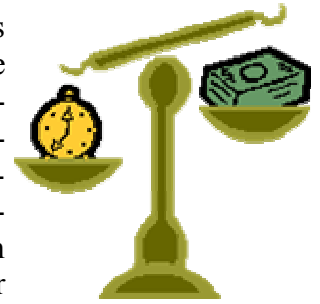
This year's Ann Arbor Art Festival will take place Wednesday, July 21st through Saturday, July 24th. More than 1,000 vendors in four separate art fairs as well as local business owners anticipate the arrival of around 500,000 prospective buyers and tourists. Once again the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA) will be providing shuttle service to and from the art fairs from one hour before to one hour after the fair, each day. Park and ride lots are available at Briarwood mall and Pioneer High School (southwest corner of Main and Stadium). The service costs \$1.50 for a one way ticket and \$3.00 for a round-trip ticket. Kids 8 and under ride free. Shuttle service will depart from the two park and ride locations every 5-15 minutes. If you would prefer to drive downtown, parking structure spaces may be available for \$10.

For more information about AATA visit: www.theride.org

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TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION REAUTHORIZATION

In June 1998, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st century (TEA-21) was passed, allocating \$218 billion to multi-modal transportation service, infrastructure and maintenance. As the legislation neared its sunset in 2003, the Bush administration authored legislation for a new transportation bill called SAFETEA; the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act. The Bush administration was quick to point out the significant increase in funding from TEA-21's 218 billion allocation to the SAFETEA's \$256 billion budget. Shortly after the legislation was released on May 14th, 2003 it became apparent that the \$38 billion increase over the six years of the bill would not even keep pace with inflation. The SAFETEA bill did not increase the minimum guarantee rate of return for states to 95%. Both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives took exception to the Bush administration's low funding levels. Both the Senate and the House developed bills, hoping to increase the minimum guarantee for donor states as well as increase total funding levels to better facilitate the maintenance of the country's aging transportation system. The Senate started the legislative tango with its release of S. 1072. On February 12th 2004, the \$318 billion Senate Bill was passed by a 76-21 vote.



The House discussed a 376 billion dollar bill that would far out do S. 1072 in both total funding and funding equity, ensuring a 95% minimum guarantee by the sixth year of the legislation. The Bush administration fired back with a veto warning on any legislation that would include a federal gas tax increase or use money from the general fund. Despite pressure from many of the 321 donor state house votes including Michigan's own John Dingel, the authors of TEA-LU, the Transportation Equity Act a Legacy for Users (members of the house transportation and infrastructure committee) scaled down the effort as a result of the veto threat, excluded the gas tax increase and reduced the amount to around \$275 billion and therefore eliminated provisions for donor state equity.

This revised version of the bill passed the House T & I committee on March 24th 2004 without the gas tax increase or the 95% minimum guarantee. Shortly after its passage through committee, Governor's from 12 donor states, including Michigan's Governor Jennifer Granholm, joined forces in a strongly worded letter to Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert regarding donor state equity. The House recently passed TEA-LU with its lowered funding levels. The Senate and House conference committees must now reconcile the disparities between the bills before it is taken before the President to sign into law or to veto. An additional point of frustration for many transportation professionals is that the current House bill has a large amount of earmarked funds.

As both bills are constantly changing and evolving and the conference committee process is dragged out, it looks like TEA-21 will endure at least one more continuing resolution which will take us nearer to the election in November. WATS has passed several resolutions urging Michigan representatives and specifically Washtenaw County representatives to work towards a fully funded 6 year transportation bill. While the Michigan legislation has been very unified on this topic, as a national issue it requires even more support.

The House recently named its members of the conference committee and met on June 9th, over two-thirds of the representatives, were from donor states including 4 Michigan representatives.

Without a fully funded six year bill, WATS, MDOT, FHWA and FTA all feel the squeeze of the funding uncertainty. WATS will work to keep you informed of the progress or lack of progress of the Congresses and the President in regards to a new 6 year transportation law. For more information please contact the WATS office or visit : www.fundingfairness.com

MEETING WETLAND PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS

Last month, on Earth Day, President Bush announced a new national goal of restoring, improving, and protecting at least three million additional acres of wetlands over the next five years. This commitment is timely for several reasons, among them:

- 1) Since the Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1977, our understanding of the importance of wetlands in maintaining and improving our overall water quality, the environment, and our health has continued to expand;
- 2) We have previously compromised or mismanaged a significant amount of our nation's natural wet lands.



The importance of wetlands is their ability to protect and improve our environment by filtering water, reducing flood damage, preventing erosion, recharging ground and surface water, and providing habitats for fish and wildlife, opportunities for recreation, and sources for food, fuel, and forest products.

The laws are not designed specifically to protect our wetlands, but to protect our water quality. To this end, guidelines for wetland use call for a three step process:

1. Avoid adverse impacts if practicable alternatives exist;
2. Minimize adverse effects if avoidance is not possible;
3. Compensate for unavoidable impacts through mitigation actions. These mitigating actions include creating new wetlands to replace those being lost, restoring a compromised wetland, enhancing the function of an existing wetland, and preserving into perpetuity other important wetlands or aquatic resources.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is responsible for ensuring that applicable federal and state requirements affecting Michigan's wetlands are administered and met. In conjunction with the US Army Corps of Engineers, they requires owners to submit a Joint Permit Applications (JPA) for all land uses affecting wetlands. This includes all activities that require filling dredging or removing soil or minerals; draining of surface water; or constructing, operating, or maintaining any use or development. No work can begin until the JPA is approved. Subsequently the MDEQ monitors the site for three years.

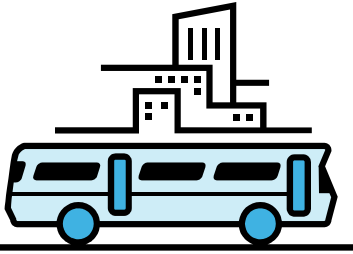
In addition to the MDEQ, between 25% and 30% of local governments have ordinances addressing wetlands. The best way to avoid costly missteps and delay is with thorough and accurate assessments and planning. Specific steps to be taken include:

- ◆ Research existing documents, including township, county and United States Geological Survey maps and surveys
- ◆ Obtaining topographic site surveys to understand surface hydrology
- ◆ Identify soil types
- ◆ Evaluate the characteristics and condition of existing plants and wildlife
- ◆ Review regional watershed characteristics
- ◆ Develop scientifically appropriate mitigation plans, including monitoring and reporting functions.

Help is available directly from the MDEQ (www.michigan.gov), as well as from qualified engineering/environmental/planning consultants.

This article was reprinted courtesy of Midwestern Consulting

AATA BOARD APPROVES LOCAL MOTION AS CONTRACTOR FOR PARATRANSIT SERVICES



Local Motion ITS, Inc., a nationally recognized provider of paratransit services, was approved by the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA) Board of Directors at its June 23rd meeting as the new contractor to provide AATA's A-Ride and Senior transportation services beginning October 1, 2004.

AATA Executive Director Greg Cook said, "Our evaluation team made a thorough evaluation of the proposals for this service based on our own paratransit experience and input received from many of our A-Ride and Senior customers.

This move will allow AATA to reduce the cost of our paratransit services and consolidate them under a single provider, while continuing to provide paratransit at a level which exceeds federal and ADA requirements."

Currently, A-Ride and Senior trips are provided through a combination of services provided by AATA and an outside transportation contractor.

"We would like to reassure our A-Ride and Senior customers that their service will remain uninterrupted, and that the fares, service hours and availability of trips will remain the same as the current service," Cook added, noting that same-day services would continue to be provided within Ann Arbor.

AATA Board Chairman Jim Saalberg said, "We believe that this change will be a win-win for all those who use and depend upon this service, as well as the AATA system. A-Ride users will receive a full range of services at the same level of quality as that provided in the past or higher. Local Motion, our new contractor, and AATA are committed to making this happen."

"The Entire system will benefit from the substantial cost saving, more than \$500,000 this coming year, that this new arrangement allows." Saalberg added.

"On behalf of the Board, I particularly want to thank those in the disabled community who spent so much time consulting and working with us to shape this important decision. Their questions, critiques and ideas have been invaluable. We believe the result has been the best possible decision." said Saalberg.

Under contract, Local Motion, based in Elk Horn, Iowa, will provide the project management, reservation and customer service components of the paratransit service, while its parent company, MV Transportation, Inc., of Fairfield, California, will provide the operations management.

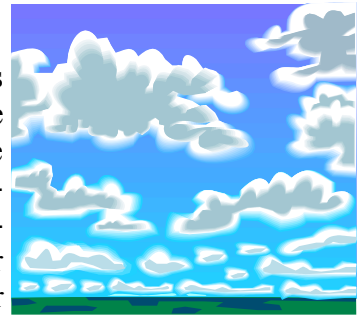
Among the factors the AATA evaluation team considered in recommending Local Motion, were the quality of service expected by AATA customers, the firm's ability to meet the provisions of the proposed contract, its demonstrated knowledge of the requirements for paratransit service, and its approach to customer service.

Also evaluated were Local Motion's use of dedicated vehicles and accessible van service solely for paratransit customers' use., the company's commitment to driver appearance and its dedication to professional training courses in such area as sensitivity and disability awareness.

Local Motion President Ryan Larsen said, "Local Motion ITS Inc. and our parent company MV transportation are very excited to be selected to operate the A-Ride Service. ADA clients will continue to receive great service from our company in the tradition that they have received from AATA."

Story continued on page 4

AIR QUALITY UPDATE



The new ozone areas have been released but there are still many questions which have not yet been answered. In the January edition of *The Vehicle* the new air quality non-attainment designations and some possible changes in the way air quality monitoring and planning were explained. Air Quality attainment has to do with an area meeting the National Ambient Air Quality Standard, or the NAAQS. In order for an area to be in attainment, the three year average of the fourth highest eight hour average ozone reading must be lower than .08 ppm. As this new standard begins to be implemented, The State of Michigan and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) worked with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to determine how and what areas should be designated and at what levels outlined in the Clean Air Act and subsequent amendments. Initially, it appeared that Lapeer Lenawee and Genesee counties would be included in the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments planning area. The final non-attainment area will include the seven county SEMCOG region plus Lenawee County.

How the new air quality standards will be implemented is now what is still largely up in the air. The release of EPA's requirements for State implementation have been delayed several times.

Transportation conformity is yet another issue that is linked closely with air quality. Long range transportation plans and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), developed by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) must pass a conformity test. The conformity test uses air quality models to test the results planned transportation improvements will have on air quality. For the test, all projects with a potential affect on air quality must be modeled and their must be a finding that the improvements will not have a detrimental effect on air quality. For areas that are found to be non-attainment but are not classified as severe or moderate non-attainment areas, the plans and TIPs must show that the emissions will be less than or equal to 2002 emissions levels while areas classified as the more severe air quality non-attainment areas will have to show an overall reduction in emissions from 2002 levels and against a no-build air quality model run.

Yet another complication of this process is that despite the fact non-attainment areas do not follow MPO boundaries, conformity analysis will need to be performed on plans and TIPs at the same time even though MPO planning schedules are staggered. Some MPO's are required to create new long range plans every 3 years as a result of previous air quality designations, some every five. Many questions still remain especially in the implementation process. WATS will work to keep you informed of new developments in the ongoing quest to improve our county and our nation's air-quality.

For more info : www.michigan.gov/deq

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"It's a win-win for the disabled clients, the taxpayers of the Ann Arbor area, and our family of companies. We manage the entire paratransit process— from reservations to service delivery— for many of our clients. Additionally, the Local Motion team has a significant amount of experience with the scheduling software that is being used to improve efficiency."

"MV Transportation is the nations largest provider of paratransit service as well as the largest African America-owned transit company in the United States." Larsen added.

Approximately 5,000 active A-Ride and Senior card holders log more than 177,000 trips annually through AATA's door-to-door services, which are partially funded by federal grants in the amount of \$160,000.

Questions on the contract award may be directed to 734.973.6500 or www.theride.org.

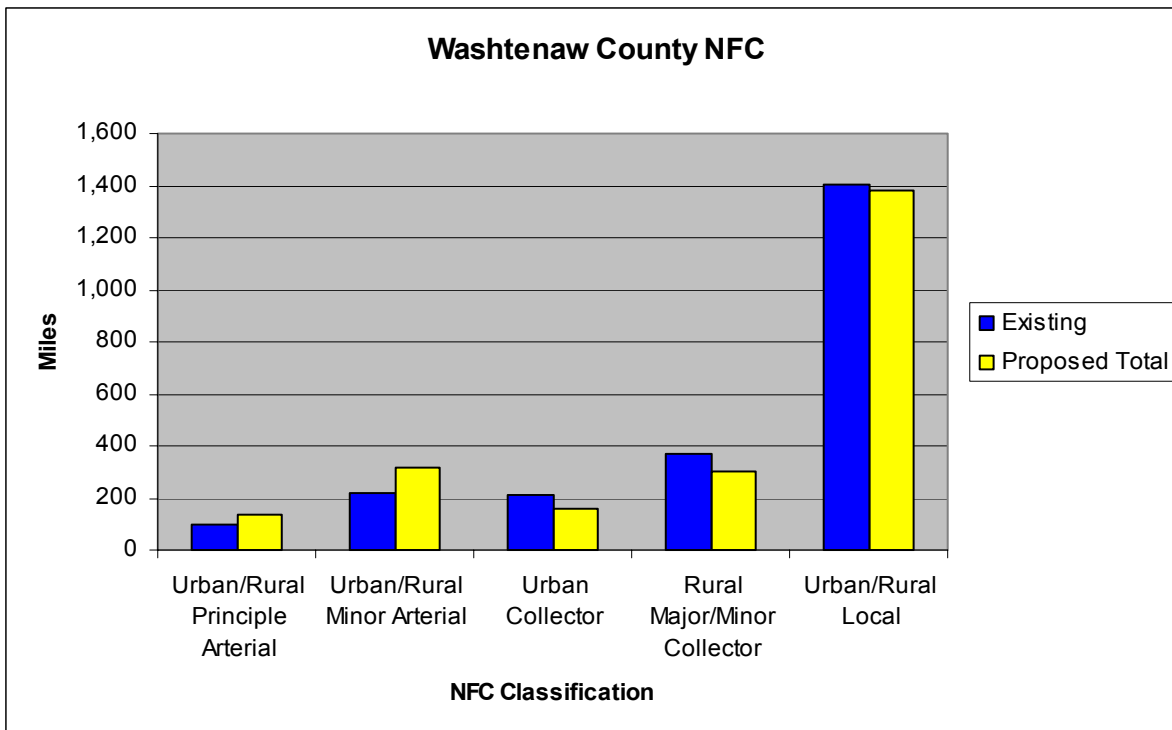
NFC UPDATE

The National Functional Classification (NFC) is a system of classifying all roads eligible for Federal-Aid by the way they function. The hierarchical system breaks down the federal aid road network into; principle arterial, minor arterial, major collector and minor collector and these categories are further broken down into urban or rural designations based on the federal aid urban boundary (FAUB).



Following each decennial Census, Staff from WATS, SEMCOG and MDOT work to update the federal aid urban boundary to more accurately reflect the changing population of Washtenaw County. Following this change is the update of the NFC. Currently there are 2,305 miles of federal aid eligible roads. An interagency task force met to propose changes to the NFC of roads in Washtenaw County. Staff from WATS worked with the local road agencies and using local knowledge, developed initial proposals. A representative from SEMCOG came to add a regional perspective on the proposed changes and a staff person from MDOT worked to identify any potential problems in the proposal, a Wayne County Federal Aid Committee representative was also present. The group looked at all the proposed changes and made recommendations based on connectivity, regional significance, spacing and traffic volumes.

Roads classified as collector and above are eligible for Federal aid and the NFC can be used as a tool to help prioritize transportation projects. The way the proposal stands now, Washtenaw County is proposing to change the system to make the total number of miles of federal aid eligible road 2,300. In July 2004, the WATS Policy will vote to adopt a recommendation to the proposed NFC changes. Following the recommendation by the WATS Policy Committee, the proposal will go to SEMCOG and will be considered with the proposed changes from the other six counties in the region. The SEMCOG proposal will be submitted to MDOT, once approved by MDOT the NFC changes will be forwarded to FHWA for approval. The graph below shows a breakdown of the NFC system as it exists and with the WATS proposed changes.





In January, 2004 the demolition of the first building on the brownfield redevelopment site "Water Street" in Ypsilanti occurred. This residential development will include 872 condominium residential units with beautifully landscaped parks along the shores of the Huron River, flowing directly East of the City's Central Business District.

The project was originally scheduled to begin construction in spring of 2004 but was held up due to some land acquisition problems. The city acquired some of the property through eminent domain and court dates were pushed back causing the delay in demolition and construction. Back on track for now, construction of the project is expected to begin in late 2004 or early 2005, with the first residential units expected to be occupied in the Summer of 2005. Biltmore homes is the developer working with the City to help bring Water Street from a dream into fruition. Hamilton Anderson worked with the City as the main consultant. Several visioning sessions were held in Ypsilanti to hear what the residents of Ypsilanti were looking for in the development. The plan and development is being funded by a clean Michigan initiative grant, other state funding sources, as well as some City bonds. The bonds will be paid back using the taxes generated by the development.

The Water Street development differs from some of the new urbanistic, traditional neighborhood designs that are becoming more popular for both developers and planners, because it is almost entirely residential units. However, this development truly embodies the spirit of new age planning and infill redevelopment. Located only a block away from the Ypsilanti central business district (CBD), Water Street Residents will have quick access to all of the stores in downtown and depot town. This type of development brings a sense of place to both the neighborhood and in many respects the CBD itself. An added bonus of this type of development is the effect it has on the travel patterns of the residents, since the residents of the 38.4 acre development will be near to stores in Ypsilanti's downtown, Historic Depot Town and the EMU college of Business. In general, residents in developments such as Water Street take fewer trips and a higher percentage of the trips are walking. This helps take cars off the road and helps congestion, the environment and the residents quality of life.

For more information about the project, contact Brett Lenart from the City of Ypsilanti's Planning and Development Department at :
734-483-9646

If you would like more information about the layout of the area and specific information on the homes, visit the Biltmore Website at :

www.biltmore-homes.com

click on "Communities" and then click "Water Street".



WATS REQUESTS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TO INITIATE NON-MOTORIZED PLAN



During the Summer, WATS staff will initiate work on a county-wide non-motorized plan. WATS will begin the planning process by establishing a set of goals for the non-motorized plan. WATS will also take an inventory of the non-motorized facilities within the County. Having an accurate inventory of existing facilities provides the basis for analysis of the existing system.

Non-motorized facilities will be mapped using a GIS system. WATS plans to identify non-motorized infrastructure deficiencies as well as to identify “gaps” in the non-motorized network. Currently work is underway to complete a “border to border” non-motorized path that will connect Livingston County to the north with Wayne County to the east using the Huron River as the major path corridor. The Greenways Advisory Committee is made up of local officials from the Cities of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County to ensure that work progresses towards completing this non-motorized connection.

The WATS non-motorized plan is still in the developmental phases and we ask that you provide comments and recommendations on what you would like to see in a study. Using this information, staff will better be able to assess the needs and desires of Washtenaw County residents. WATS views non-motorized transportation as a critical, viable, yet often overlooked means of transportation. It is a goal of this organization to bring to the forefront of public knowledge ways our transportation system can evolve to ensure a high quality of life for all residents.

Please call or email your comments and suggestions to WATS at 734.994.3127 or wats@miwats.org

