



THE VEHICLE

Washtenaw Area Transportation Study

January 2005

Vol. 1

MRIDE PROGRAM A SUCCESS!

In the October 2004 issue of “The Vehicle” WATS reported on the historic agreement between the University of Michigan and the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority. The “MRide” agreement allows access to all AATA fixed route bus service for U of M students, faculty and staff.

“Overall our system has experienced a 12% increase in the number of boardings during the fall semester compared with the same time period last year,” AATA Executive Director Greg Cook said. “We are very pleased that larger numbers of students and staff have found the MRide program to be beneficial to them.”

During the Fall, both organizations solicited input from riders while they are developing priorities and determining where the increase in service will take place as a result of the MRide agreement. WATS will continue to keep you updated of the success of this exciting cooperative program.

CMAQ AND TEDF-F AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Transportation Economic Development Category F (TEDF-F) funds were recently awarded to several member agencies. CMAQ funding is available to air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas to help reduce congestion or improve air quality. Projects are eligible for TEDF-F funds if they improve access to the states all season road system. Both types of funding are awarded on a competitive basis and therefore, WATS is pleased to announce the following CMAQ and TEDF-F awards. Four Washtenaw County transportation projects have been selected by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to be awarded for the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program. One Project has been selected to receive TEDF-F funds.

Agency	Project Description	Award Type	Award Amount
AATA	Rideshare funding assistance	CMAQ	\$ 42,800
City of Ypsilanti	Signal Interconnect and modernization	CMAQ	\$ 908,000
MDOT	Traffic Signal interconnect on Huron/Washtenaw from Geddes to Seventh and Main from Huron to Beakes	CMAQ	\$ 900,000
MDOT	Construct a dedicated left turn lane on M-52 at Pleasant Lake	CMAQ	\$ 640,000
Washtenaw County Road Commission	Reconstruct Milan-Oakville to All Season standard from Milan City limit to .5 miles east of Gooding.	TEDF-F	\$ 300,000

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MICHIGAN AMTRAK RIDERSHIP ON THE RISE



According to statistics provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Amtrak ridership increased by more

than sixteen percent between 2003 and 2004 on Southern Michigan lines. Ray Lang, Amtrak's director of government affairs, credits the increase in ridership to higher gas prices and the company's improvement in marketing. Lang also cites highway congestion as another cause to the Amtrak passenger increase.

The only decrease in ridership is at the Canadian Boarder, between Port Huron, Michigan and Sarnia, Ontario. MDOT attributes this decline to the closure of the American/Canadian connecting line. Although, it is still possible to ride to Port Huron and continue to Toronto, a taxi or bus ride is required to cross the border. According to Therese Cody, Departmental Analyst at MDOT, the hopes are for Windsor, Ontario to become southern Michigan's main linkage to Toronto. Plans are for more trains to be routed through the Detroit/Windsor border in the future.

For more information on fare prices and

Did You Know...

You can find information about regional, state and national gasoline prices online? You can also determine the cost of gas on trips from metropolitan area to metropolitan area depending on the type of vehicle. Historical gas price information is also available.

Visit www.fuelguagereport.com for this and more!

FY 2004 STATION BY STATION MICHIGAN AMTRAK RIDERSHIP

Station	FY '04	FY '03	% change
Albion	1,021	896	13.9
Ann Arbor	108,498	94,264	15.1
Bangor	2,647	2,050	29.1
Battle Creek	43,847	42,285	3.6
Birmingham	16,112	11,164	44.3
Canadian Border	13,465	24,736	-45.6
Dearborn	65,509	57,376	14.1
Detroit	53,729	51,549	4.2
Dowagiac	1,944	1,628	19.4
Durand	4,522	3,168	42.7
East Lansing	30,737	22,634	35.8
Flint	15,540	11,157	39.2
Grand Rapids	47,026	37,588	25.1
Greenfield Village	576	268	114.9
Holland	31,902	27,283	16.9
Jackson	22,752	21,585	5.4
Kalamazoo	75,345	66,313	13.6
Lapeer	5,401	4,092	31.9
New Buffalo	1,833	1,581	15.9
Niles	16,600	14,956	11.0
Pontiac	12,802	10,125	26.4
Port Huron	8,359	6,276	33.2
Royal Oak	17,575	11,854	48.3
St. Joseph/Benton Harbor	6,979	6,179	12.9
Totals	604,721	518,461	16.6

Fiscal Year if from October 1st to September 30th

WATS HIRES NEW STAFF

David Krzeminski, Associate Transportation Planner, graduated from Central Michigan University with a degree in Geography in the fall of 2003. While at Central Michigan University, Mr. Krzeminski focused his studies on land use planning and Geographic Information Systems.



Mr. Krzeminski interned with Clinton Township and Pittsfield Township planning departments. Mr. Krzeminski plans to continue his education, pursuing a Masters degree in the Urban and Regional Planning program at Eastern Michigan University.

Mr. Krzeminski will be representing WATS on a variety of committees including the Tip Development Committee, the Special Services Transit Committee and the Huron Valley Traffic Safety Committee. Currently, Mr. Krzeminski is in the process of amending the 2004-2006 TIP, developing the 2006-2008 TIP and assisting in the development of the non-motorized plan.



Matthew Raschke, Associate Transportation Planner, is a graduate of Eastern Michigan University's Urban and Regional Planning program.

Mr. Raschke is currently pursuing a Masters degree in the Urban and Regional Planning program at Wayne State University. Before joining WATS staff, Mr. Raschke worked part-time for the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) in the Data Center.

Mr. Raschke will be representing WATS on a variety of committees including the Local Advisory Committee, the SEMCOG Data Advisory Council, the GIS Regional Committee and the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee. Currently, Mr. Raschke is processing HPMS data, updating the 2030 Long Range Plan as well as assisting with the development of the non-motorized plan.

Debbie Carlton joined the WATS team in September as Safety Technician for the WATS crash reporting program. Debbie inputs all information from UD-10 crash forms in to our in house database. She has worked to streamline the processing of UD-10 crash reports and is working to ensure that the forms are filled out completely and correctly. Ms. Carlton has already proved herself to be an extremely valuable addition to the WATS office. Debbie is the proud mother of three young men.



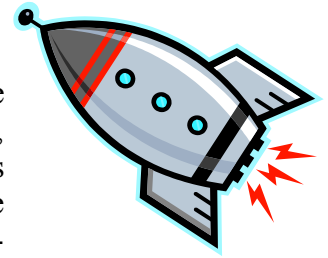
CALL FOR SAFETY PROJECT APPLICATIONS

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) issued a call for FY 2006 Surface Transportation Program-Safety (STP-S) projects on November 5, 2004. STP-Safety funding must be used for safety improvements such as guardrail changes, curve corrections, traffic signal alterations/installation, intersection improvements, sight distance improvements, and drainage improvements. The last call for safety projects occurred in 2004 when three projects were submitted for safety funding. The Village (City) of Chelsea received \$190,000 to help install a traffic signal at Chelsea High School. A second project will use \$200,000 of STP-S money to construct a center left turn lane at the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Mansfield on the border of the City of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township. A third project, scheduled for construction in 2006 will install a roundabout at the intersection of Geddes and Superior in Superior Township.

WATS sent out a call for projects to member agencies on December 20, 2004. Applications for safety projects seeking STP-S funding are due to WATS no later than January 21, 2005.

LINK RIDERSHIP SKYROCKETS!

The Link is a downtown Ann Arbor circulator route which uses three bright purple buses to connect the four major shopping and dining areas of Ann Arbor: Kerrytown, State Street, Main Street and South University. The route has 24 stops and travels within one block of all major parking structures and parking lots in Ann Arbor. The route also makes it easy to transfer to other AATA routes or the University of Michigan bus routes. Each bus stop lists points of local interest and includes a timer that provides an estimate of when the next bus will arrive, which is approximately every eight minutes.



The 625 daily trip average in the month of November 2004 was more than triple the number for an average weekday in November of 2003.

Funding for the route was from a Congestion Mitigation Air Quality grant and began in August 2003. The grant is due to expire this summer. AATA revenues have provided the local share of the operating cost until January 2005 when the DDA was able to provide some additional funding to allow the service to continue.

The table to the right illustrates the increase in monthly LINK ridership in 2004 compared to 2003.

Month	2003	2004	Change in Ridership
September	5,887	11,845	+101%
October	5,368	13,253	+147%
November	4,766	13,525	+184%
December	5,210	13,245	+154%

