



THE VEHICLE

Washtenaw Area Transportation Study

July 2005

Vol. 3

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE SET FOR TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

On Thursday, March 10, 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 417-9 to approve TEA-LU legislation (H.R. 3). The bill provides total spending of \$284 billion over a six-year period, Fiscal Years 2004-2009. This bill would fund new interstate lanes, parking garages and thousands of other home-state needs that lawmakers refuse to sacrifice despite record budget deficits. The bill, along with the manager's amendment, is available online at :

<http://www.house.gov/transportation/highway/tealu.html>

The legislation would guarantee funds of \$225.5 billion for the Federal Highway Administration, \$52.3 billion for the Federal Transit Administration and more than \$6 billion for safety programs. This bill is larger than the \$218 billion transportation package that expired in 2003 and was kept alive through multiple short-term extensions. \$284 billion is a compromise between what the White House originally wanted (\$256 billion) and what Congress asked for last year (\$318 billion). This disparity led to an unusual showdown last year between the president and congressional Republicans.

Failure to reach a deal on a bill last year was also a result of demands by some states that they receive a larger share of federal money. Under the old bill, states were guaranteed only 90.5 cents back for every dollar contributed to the highway trust fund. The reopening clause in the House bill -- and opposed by the White House -- would set a goal of a 95 percent rate of return by 2009. This measure does include a provision that will allow Congress to reconsider state funding allocation before the legislation expires in 2009. The White House has threatened to veto the bill unless that provision is removed from the final version. The bill also includes a provision that would ease decades-old federal rules against tolls on interstate highways. States could decide to impose tolls to address traffic congestion.

The Senate also passed its version of federal transportation reauthorization; SAFETEA the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act. The bill passed the Senate 89-11 and authorized a total funding amount of \$295 billion over 6 years. Nine days following the approval of SAFETEA by the Senate, conference committee members were named from the two bodies of congress. Michigan is represented on the conference committee by Representatives Hoekstra, Ehlers, Conyers and Dingell.

The conference committee was unable to reconcile the differences prior to the expiration of the previous extension which retained the formulas and funding levels of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st century (TEA-21). Congress passed its seventh continuing resolution on May 31st. This most recent extension is for 30 days and expired on June 30th. It is unlikely that the committee will be able to come to a consensus and a new multi-year funding authorization will be passed prior to the July 4th congressional recess. An additional 30 day extension is expected, WATS will continue to keep you updated on Federal Transportation Legislation Reauthorization.

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WATS HIRES NEW STAFF

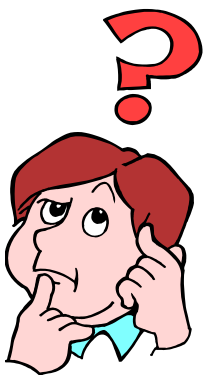
Eric Bombery, Associate Transportation Planner, graduated from the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Michigan State University on May 7th, 2005. At Michigan State University, Mr. Bombery spent time in the Engineering program before switching his major to Urban and Regional Planning.



Mr. Bombery is originally from the Grand Rapids, Michigan area where he was a Co-op Engineering Student at Steelcase Inc. for four consecutive summers. Mr. Bombery has come to the East side of the state to join his wife who attends the University of Michigan Medical School.

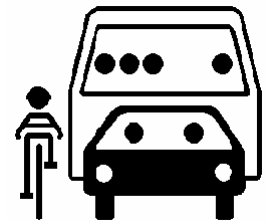
Eric Bombery

Mr. Bombery will be representing WATS at the AATA Local Advisory Committee, GIS Regional Committee, and Governor's Traffic Safety Committee. Presently, Mr. Bombery is working on traffic counts and the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS); he will also be working on the Crash Program and newsletter while supporting in many other projects.



WHAT IS WATS?

The Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) is a key player in both short term and long term transportation planning. WATS is a multi-jurisdictional agency that coordinates transportation planning matters with road and transit agencies and local governments.



The agencies main responsibility is to maintain Washtenaw County's eligibility to receive federal and state funds for transportation. To maintain this eligibility WATS must fulfill federal requirements set forth by United States Code Title 23 and enforced by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under the guidance of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). WATS works closely with SEMCOG, MDOT and the Federal Highway Administration to fulfill these requirements.

WATS is a Transportation Management Area (TMA) as the agency's jurisdiction covers a continuous Urbanized Area (UA) greater than 200,000. The Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Urbanized Area currently has a population of around 260,000. WATS works to complete the federal requirements with the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), which is the area's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) which covers the seven county region of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

For short-term planning, WATS creates and maintains the Transportation Improvements Program (TIP). The TIP is a three year programming document that lists approved funding programs developed using funding estimates and projects that have been awarded money on a competitive basis by other funding mechanisms.

Long-term, WATS develops a Long Range Plan (LRP) which has a minimum of a 20 year planning horizon. The long range plan helps to identify transportation deficiencies that implementing road agencies should address with projects. The plan also lists projects developed by local agencies to address deficiencies. The plan is fiscally constrained using funding estimates produced by SEMCOG.

When WATS isn't working on the TIP or LRP, the office works on a host of other projects. Currently WATS is working on a countywide non-motorized transportation plan. WATS continually works to educate the public as well as decision makers in ways to improve the way our transportation system operates and is maintained.

ALL ABOUT AIR

EPA DENIES REQUEST TO DESIGNATE WASHTENAW COUNTY TO ATTAINMENT FOR PM 2.5.

The Environmental Protection Agency designated the entire Southeast Michigan Region as non-attainment for PM 2.5 (fine particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter) in late 2004. This fine particulate matter can include dust, dirt, soot, smoke, and liquid droplets that can be suspended in the air. Both Monroe and Wayne Counties were found to be in violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for PM 2.5 using monitoring station data from 2001-2003.

The EPA designates areas as non-attainment for various pollutants if the levels of the pollutants are found to be in violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) or if the area contributes to another area's non-attainment, the latter being the reasoning behind the designation of the entire region as non-attainment. A monitoring station is in violation when data averaged over a three year period has an annual average over 15 microns per cubic meter.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality requested that only Wayne county be designated as non-attainment since the six other counties in the region besides Wayne had readings below the NAAQS using the more recent monitoring station data from 2002-2004.

The EPA denied the request because the counties surrounding Wayne county are contributing to the poor PM 2.5 air quality readings in Wayne County. The six other counties shall remain designated as non-attainment even though the readings in the counties were below the NAAQS. This ruling will mean the region will have to address PM2.5 as part of the work plan towards non-attainment.

OZONE ACTION SEASON

The recent EPA denial to have Washtenaw County be designated as attainment for PM 2.5 comes on the heels of a heat wave across the Midwest which unofficially started the Ozone Action season. Ground level ozone is caused when sunlight and warm temperatures mix with volatile chemicals such as that produced by automobile exhaust or refueling vehicles. Temperatures reaching into the 80's and 90's over the recent weeks have made conditions favorable for the formation of high levels of ground level ozone. The reasoning behind ozone action is that if many individuals make small changes to improve the air quality then large benefits can be seen in lower levels of ground level ozone forming. Below is a list of a few small things that everyone can do to make a big difference in the quality of the air we breathe during the warm summer months.



- ◆ Refuel cars during the evening since vapors pollute less when it isn't hot and sunny.
- ◆ Park in the shade. Avoid evaporative emissions from your sun-heated gas tank while parked.
- ◆ Consolidate trips when running errands.
- ◆ Mow your lawn in the morning or late evening when cooler temperatures stop ozone from Forming.
- ◆ Ride your bike. It's a great way to travel and it can help you and the air get into condition. Vehicles on the road create more than 25% of all air pollution nationwide.

2005 Overlay Programs

Township	Location	Miles
Augusta	Rawsonville - Talladay to Judd	1.00
Salem	N. Territorial - Weed, easterly	1.20
Scio	Dexter - Ann Arbor - Zeeb to Village of Dexter, with 3' paved shoulders	1.75
Ann Arbor	Hogback - Clark to Dixboro	0.60
Ann Arbor	Warren - Whitmore Lake to Pontiac Trail	1.30
Northfield	N. Territorial - Whitmore Lake to Nollar	1.40
Ypsilanti	Textile - Munger to Stony Creek	1.90
Total Overlay Miles:		9.15

All projects have been approved by the Washtenaw County Board of Road Commissioners. If you have specific questions about one of the projects you can contact the Road Commission at 734-761-1500.

2005 Sealcoat Programs - Primary and Local

Township	Location	Miles
Augusta	Bunton - From Willis, South	2.00
Lima	Seitz - Fletcher to end of pavement	1.20
Lima	Luick - Old US-12 to Freer	1.40
Lima	Freer - Approaches at I-94	0.30
Lodi	Pleasant Lake - Parker to Ann Arbor - Saline	5.00
Lodi	Zeeb - Liberty to Waters	2.00
Pittsfield	Bemis - Platt to Moon	2.00
Pittsfield	Fosdick - US-12 to Bemis	1.30
Saline	Macon, Jordan, Goodrich, Arkona and Hack	7.50
York	Ridge - Hack to Mooreville	1.90
York	Dennison - Hack to Mooreville	1.40
York	Willow - Carpenter to Platt	1.00
York	Whittaker - Willow to Milan-Oakville	2.00
Ypsi/Aug	Bunton - Textile to Willis	3.10
Total Sealcoat Miles:		32.10

