

THE VEHICLE

Washtenaw Area Transportation Study



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TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREA

WATS provides continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning to guide the use of state and federal transportation funds in Washtenaw County

WATS Meetings

- Technical Committee
1st Wednesday 9:30 am
- Policy Committee
3rd Wednesday 9:30 am

WATS Products

- Long Range Transportation Plan
- Transportation Improvement Plan

Project Funding Awards

Funding for transportation construction projects is available via several mechanisms. Some communities such as the City of Ann Arbor have a dedicated millage to raise funds for local construction projects. Money raised from the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF), including state fuel/diesel tax and vehicle registration revenues are distributed to cities, villages and road commissions for transportation projects on a formula basis via the state's revenue sharing program.

Several special funding pots allow transportation agencies to compete for project funding that would have the greatest impact on the objective of the respective funding source.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)

CMAQ funds seek to reduce pollution from vehicle congestion and inefficient vehicles by improving traffic operations, replacing or retrofitting high polluting diesel motors and supporting public transit. Candidates recommended for funding in recent FY 2012 CMAQ call for projects include

- City of Ypsilanti - replacement street sweeper
- WCRC - roundabout at State and Ellsworth
- TheRide - transit outreach and ridesharing programs



Safety

Safety program funds are awarded for projects that reduce crashes through projects such as curve modifications, access management and signal optimization/implementation. Projects funded in the FY 2012 Safety program include:

- WCRC - Rawsonville at Martz, Add center-left turn lanes in all four quadrants and install traffic signal
- WCRC - Carpenter at Packard access management. Install concrete raised medians to limit left turn movements, install permanent signs and raised pavement markings

Upcoming Meetings

- August 10 - Complete Streets Plan 10:30-Noon, Washtenaw County LRC, 4135 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor - Public welcome!

New on MIWATS.org

- Complete Streets needs criteria and maps (draft)
- Resolution to ensure matching for Federal High Speed Rail funds

Transit Master Plan - Updates

Transit Master Plan (TMP) momentum continues as TheRide board considers the final TMP report and communities across Washtenaw County plan for their involvement in managing the regional authority that will implement the TMP.

Communities sharing a board seat must create a transit committee and appoint a representative.

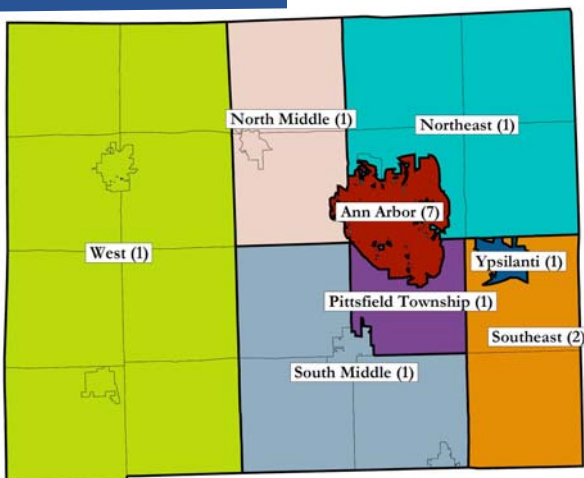
(possible countywide board seats below)

TMP Board Endorsement

At their June 16 meeting, TheRide board passed a resolution to endorse the TMP. The action allows TheRide staff to move the TMP to a preliminary countywide transit authority, beginning the implementation process for recommendations within the plan. The TMP is a long term strategy to address a variety of transportation needs in Washtenaw County. The TMP will be implemented in incremental steps, evolving with the changing needs of the region and will include continuous involvement from the Washtenaw communities, and other local transit service providers.

Governance

Washtenaw County communities are currently deliberating over a governance structure for a countywide transit authority. Communities are exploring Michigan Public Act 7 Interlocal Agreements which allow joint exercise of powers over shared areas of responsibility. To date, Ann Arbor and Superior Townships have approved Act 7 agreements.



The new transit authority will begin as an unincorporated board finalizing the scope, implementation schedule and funding mechanism for the TMP, as well as approving articles of incorporation and bylaws.

There are many ways to make your commute more sustainable!



getDowntown Commuter Challenge

The commuter challenge engages additional participants every year, including all WATS staff members in the 2011 commuter challenge! Though the month long event has significant benefits to our health and the environment, the important lesson to learn is that sustainable commuting can be a year round good habit. WATS continues to practice green commuting, hopefully you can too!

Commuter Challenge Stats:

- **Participating organizations:** 192
- **Participants logging at least 1 commute:** 1,817
- **Commutes logged (May 2011):** 21,452
- **Green miles logged:** 331,301 miles
- **Co2 reduced:** 283,559 lbs
- **Most popular commute logged:** Walk
- **Commute with most growth over 2010:** 28% more bus commutes were logged in 2011

WATS Legislative Day

Washtenaw County transportation agencies coordinate efforts and stretch funding to the extent possible. Considering, however, the deteriorating state of our transportation system, WATS was moved to convey the urgency of Michigan not raising enough revenue to match federal funds available to the state and limited options for raising local transportation revenues to state and federal elected officials.

The Washtenaw Area Transportation Study Policy Committee held a special meeting for legislators on Friday, June 17. The meeting was attended by State Representatives Jeff Irwin, Rick Olson, Mark Ouimet, David Rutledge and staff from Congressman John Dingell and Senator Debbie Stabenow, as well as members of WATS Policy and Technical Committees and the public.

Legislators were reminded that Michigan's transportation infrastructure, including transit and non-motorized modes, is effectively being disinvested in as shown by falling Asset Management rankings and federal funds available to Michigan being turned over to other states.

Legislators recognized the need to enhance transportation funding, especially concerning :

- diesel fuel parity with gasoline
- acknowledging the gas taxes are not long term solutions
- the need for good infrastructure as it attracts economic development
- raising funds to match the federal grant opportunities available to Michigan
- no direction or certainty regarding renewal of federal transportation funding legislation
- how to insure transportation funds raised remain dedicated to transportation related issues

Following a presentation by WATS Director Terri Blackmore and remarks from the legislators, WATS Policy Committee members (many local elected officials) expressed the important local transportation issues not being met. Concerns included transportation impacts on the local economy, issues with transit funding and a call not to pass on transportation costs to the local level.

All attendees felt strongly about the need for legislators to increase the amount of transportation revenue collected despite the political challenges associated with revenue debates.

Did you Know?

The Michigan state gasoline tax is 19¢ but the diesel tax is only 15¢ per gallon.



Alternatives

Current per-gallon fuel tax revenues are falling as vehicles become more efficient.

One alternative is a vehicle-miles-traveled approach which would accurately account for wear-and-tear on the transportation system.



Above - From left to right: Representative Ouimet, Representative Irwin, Representative Dingell staff Jeremy Kenney, Representative Rutledge, Representative Olson, Senator Stabenow staff Barbara McCallahan Right top - WATS Policy Committee members Right bottom - WATS Chair Jim Carson

"Donor State"

Michigan DOT will not raise enough revenue to recapture available federal funds in 2013.

This will cut the MDOT budget for trunkline projects in 2013 from \$1.1B to \$674M .

Ozone Action Days

Southeast Michigan's Ozone Action program began May 1. The first Ozone Action day was June 8.

Ground-level ozone is a result of hot, sunny days. Elevated levels can be a health hazard, particularly for the elderly, the young, and those suffering from respiratory ailments such as emphysema or asthma.



Visit www.semcog.org/ozoneaction (any day) to see if today is an ozone action day. On action days, you can take steps like not refueling your vehicle, grilling or operating gas powered lawn equipment to reduce environmental impacts from ground level ozone.



You can help by spreading the air quality message to your friends and neighbors, residents and employees!

Complete Streets

WATS held two Complete Streets public involvement forums in May. Attendees were able to provide feedback on Complete Streets needs in the County and design their ideal complete street.

If you were unable to attend a meeting, but would like to provide your comments, please email wats@miwats.org or visit <http://miwats.blogspot.com>.



Stay tuned, additional opportunities for involvement will be announced in upcoming editions of *The Vehicle* and at www.miwats.org.

WATS IS COMMITTED TO AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE OFFICE.

EMAIL [WATS@MIWATS.ORG](mailto:wats@miwats.org) TO RECEIVE AN ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER.

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