

# THE VEHICLE

## Washtenaw Area Transportation Study

January 2008

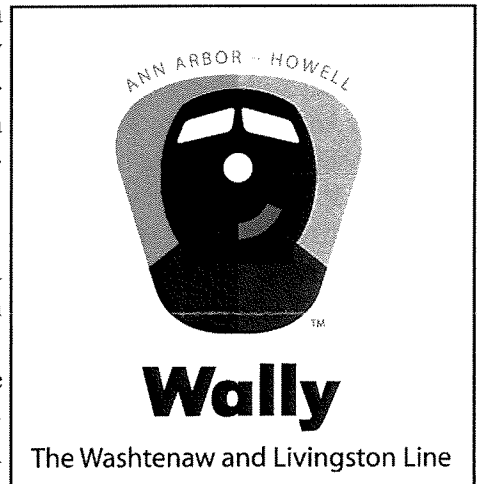
Vol. 1

### WALLY COMMUTER TRAIN PLANNING CONTINUES

The effort to initiate a commuter rail service continues to progress as those working on the project learn more about the process. The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners has approved articles of incorporation to form a rail authority. The Livingston County Board will be reviewing the formation of the authority and making a decision sometime in January or early February.

The North/South Rail Committees are compiling all of the information that has been gathered to date and will be requesting a formal peer review of the process and an identification of any missing pieces. The information gathered so far includes information on the budget, proposed train schedule, proposed bus schedule, environmental analysis, station information and preliminary design.

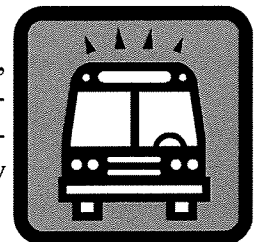
The North/South Rail Coalition has also submitted a grant application on behalf of the proposed authority for \$500,000 of Congestion Mitigation Air Quality funding for FY 2009 to assist in the operation of the service. It is expected that the review will take three to six months and then the project can continue to move forward. Another effort underway is a review of the capital needs required to upgrade the line to provide high quality bi-directional service. That work is expected to be completed in early January.



### WASHTENAW COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN - UPDATE

In October 2007, WATS conducted 11 public involvement meetings for the Washtenaw County Transit Plan. Attendees of the public involvement meetings had the opportunity to rank the plan recommendations; design a transit service that met ones needs and fund different types of transit service.

In November 2007, after addressing comments gathered from the public meetings, WATS completed a draft of the Washtenaw County Transit Plan. The draft plan was reviewed by the Transit Plan Steering Committee in late November 2007. WATS presented the Draft Transit Plan for Washtenaw County to the WATS Technical and Policy Committees in December 2007.

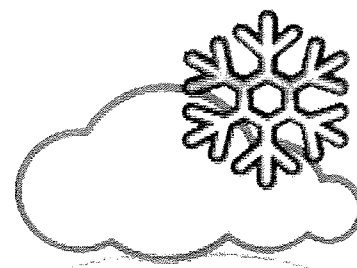


The Draft Transit Plan for Washtenaw County is available for public review on the WATS website ([www.miwats.org](http://www.miwats.org)). The public is encouraged to review and provide comments on the plan. The public review period will close on February 1, 2008. WATS anticipates final adoption of the plan at the WATS Policy Committee meeting on February 20, 2007.

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## WINTER DRIVING TIPS

The cold weather is here and along with it are slick and icy roads. Driving during winter can be particularly hazardous, even the most traveled and experienced drivers need to exercise caution. The harsh weather conditions combined with the annual deterioration of roads due to freezing and thawing can cause the roadways to be difficult to navigate. In order to make your winter driving experience safer, here is a list of precautions to take before getting behind the wheel this winter.



### **1. Know the Current Condition of the Road**

Know the weather conditions, prepare accordingly.

### **2. Allow Extra Time**

Expect traffic delays on the roads. Because of the snow and ice on the road, travel time is extended.

**3. Clear Snow and Ice from the Vehicle** You should be able to see all drivers on the road. Snow and ice that is left on the hood, roof or trunk of your car may suddenly break free, obstructing a drivers vision or causing damage to any vehicle in its path. It is also important to clear snow and ice from the front and rear lights of the car.

### **4. Make Sure That Your Battery and Charging System are Working**

This simple test can be performed at most locations that sell car batteries.

### **5. Keep a Safe Distance Behind Others**

The general rule is one car length per ten miles per hour with dry pavement, additional space is needed during inclement weather.

### **6. Keep an Emergency Winter Driving Kit**

The most common items in these kits are Jumper cables, flares, a blanket, first aid kit, tire inflator, flashlight, safety matches and a banner to signal help. These kits can be purchased at most auto parts stores.

### **7. Replace Wiper Blades**

Wiper blades lose their effectiveness over time. Installing new blades or winter blades at the beginning of the winter will enhance performance.

### **8. Check Your Anti-freeze**

Anti-freeze loses its effectiveness over time and must be replaced periodically. Good anti-freeze improves cold starts.

### **9. Keep a Full Tank of Gas**

In the event of a storm that paralyzes your car, a full tank of gas will assure that you have adequate access to heat before help arrives, which may be hours.

### **10. Carry a Cell Phone**

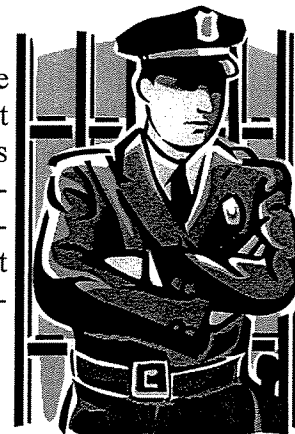
Operating cellular phones while driving is a dangerous behavior but bringing one along in case of an emergency will give you a life-line to road side assistance.

## MATTHEW RASCHKE ANSWERS CALL OF THIN BLUE LINE

WATS would like to thanks Matt Raschke for his service at the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study. Mr. Raschke has left WATS to pursue a career in law enforcement.

During his three years as an employee of WATS Mr. Raschke was instrumental in the development of both the Western Washtenaw Regional Transit Coordination Report and the Transit Plan for Washtenaw County. Mr. Raschke also assisted local agencies and WATS by managing the development of the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). As this marked the first time the TIP was a four year programming, Mr. Raschke assisted agencies not only in the creation of a new TIP but also in a new format that was mandated by the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Good luck Matt!



## WASHTENAW COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PROFILE FOR 2006

WATS has completed a draft of the Transportation Profile for Washtenaw County. The Transportation Profile is meant to be a snap shot of the current transportation system in Washtenaw County. To provide a complete annual snapshot of consistent data the year 2006 was used.

The profile is divided in to five sections on; demographic data, roadways, transit, non-motorized transportation, and freight. The main sections describe the current trends and system that existed in 2006. Highlights from each of the five sections are shown below.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Population** - From 1990 to 2000, the population of Washtenaw County grew from 282,934 to 322,595. This growth rate of 14.1% compares to a rate of only .62% for the previous study period from 1980 to 1990. The projected population for 2030 is 448,020, an estimated 38.8% increase from 2000.

**Employment** - It is estimated that the total employment for Washtenaw County was 198,090 as of 2005. A significant increase in employment of 32% has taken place since the 1990-92 edition of this report. It should also be noted that 35% of those working in Washtenaw County are non-residents.

### ROADWAYS

**Road Miles** - In 2005, there were 2,186 miles of public roads in Washtenaw County. That total includes 149 miles of trunkline, 588 miles of county primary, 160 miles of major, and 1,330 miles of local.

**Traffic Crashes** - Traffic crashes in Washtenaw County dropped by 16.4% between 2003 and 2006. While fatalities remained fairly constant through 2003-2006, personal injury and property damage crashes dropped each year.

### TRANSIT

**Ridership** - There were over 11,000,000 trips taken on all of Washtenaw County's transit providers in 2006.

**Other Transportation** - Amtrak service in Washtenaw County had consistent growth throughout 2006 with a total of 732,318 riders, the Ann Arbor stop was the busiest stop behind Chicago on the Detroit to Chicago Wolverine line.

### NON-MOTORIZED

**Planning** - Progress is being made in planning and developing non-motorized transportation. In 2006 WATS completed The Non-Motorized Plan for Washtenaw County, and several regional planning efforts have formed throughout the county.

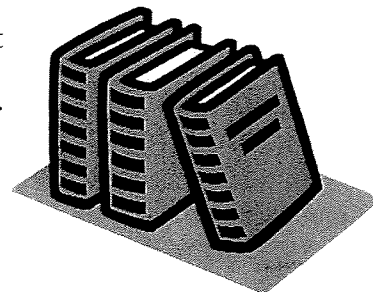
### FREIGHT

**Railroad** - Four rail lines transverse Washtenaw County. The companies operating these lines are Norfolk Southern, CSX, Ann Arbor Railroad, and Great Lakes Central Railroad.

This profile was completed for 2006 while the last Transportation Profile was completed in 1992. The 2006 Transportation Profile will be available on the WATS website [www.miwats.org](http://www.miwats.org) by the end of February after WATS committee approval. If you have any questions about the profile please contact Eric Bombery at [bomberye@miwats.org](mailto:bomberye@miwats.org) or at 994-3127.

## LATEST ADDITIONS TO THE WATS LIBRARY

- ◆ Southeastern Michigan Traffic Crash Facts 2006 / SEMCOG
- ◆ Evaluation of Innovative Emergency Vehicle Alert System (EVAS) Draft Report / Wayne State University
- ◆ At the Crossroads: Preserving our Highway Investment / National Center for Pavement Preservation
- ◆ Ann Arbor-Downtown Detroit AA/DEIS Transit Study: Consolidated Capital Cost Results Report / Parsons
- ◆ Ann Arbor-Downtown Detroit AA/DEIS Transit Study: Draft Operating and Maintenance Cost Methodologies and Costs / Parsons
- ◆ A Recommended Approach to Delineating Traffic Analysis Zones in Florida / Cambridge Systematics
- ◆ Act 51 Primer: A Guide to 1951 Public Act 51 and Michigan Transportation Funding / House Fiscal Agency
- ◆ Making the Grade in Michigan: An Analysis of the Ability of Michigan's Transportation System to Meet the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility / TRIP
- ◆ TCRP Report 34: Assessment of the Economic Impacts of Rural Public Transportation / Transit Cooperative Research Program
- ◆ Transit Oriented Development 2006 Status Report / RTD Fastracks
- ◆ Integrating Environmental Issues in the Transportation Planning Process: Guideline for Road and Transit Agencies / SEMCOG
- ◆ Design Guidelines for Active Michigan Communities / Multiple Authors
- ◆ Regional Transportation Operations Collaboration / USDOT
- ◆ Getting More by Working Together: Opportunities for Linking Planning and Operations / USDOT



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