



# AMATS

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## New Plan, New TIP, New Future for the Greater Akron area

The Greater Akron area has updated versions of two key elements for the region's transportation planning process - *Transportation Outlook 2040* and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Policy Committee of the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) approved both items during its May 25 meeting.

*Transportation Outlook 2040* is the long-range plan that identifies regional transportation needs and presents recommendations for highway, public transportation, bike and pedestrian projects that should be pursued over the next 23 years in the Greater Akron area. The new plan recommends over \$5.6 billion in highway infrastructure investments, a total that includes over \$4.3 billion for preservation of the existing system. The plan includes investment of over \$2 billion in the region's public transportation system and recommends \$33 million in bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

AMATS Director Curtis Baker says that *Transportation Outlook 2040* represents a continuation of the agency's emphasis on preserving the region's existing transportation systems rather than costly expansions, but there is also a recognition of new realities within its pages. "This is the first long-range plan that addresses emerging transportation technologies such as self-driving cars, connected vehicles and smart sensors," Baker continues, "Our agency is committed to working with our partners at the local, state and federal levels to ensure that our region is ready for autonomous and connected vehicles as they are developed." Baker adds that *Transportation Outlook 2040* also promotes smart regional land use strategies and development patterns, the integration of all transportation modes within the system, and the pursuit of increased mobility for all persons.

The TIP is the area's four-year program of highway, public transportation, bike and pedestrian projects scheduled to receive federal funding from fiscal year 2018 through 2021. The program includes more than \$686.5 million in highway and public transportation projects, including nearly \$7 million for bike and pedestrian projects. TIP Coordinator Dave Pulay says that the program – like *Transportation Outlook 2040* – emphasizes maintenance of the area's existing system, but includes a number of notable improvements.

"There are some very exciting and much-needed projects starting in the next four years. The Cuyahoga River Valley Bridge on state Route 8 is scheduled to be replaced and - at more than \$142 million - is by far one of the largest jobs in our new TIP. Other significant projects are modifications to the Central Interchange and new sidewalks in Montrose that will help the area become more pedestrian friendly," Pulay says. Among the projects to be funded under the new TIP are:

- A nearly **\$54 million pavement replacement project** on **state Route 8**, from Graham Road to just north of state Route 303, in the cities of **Hudson** and **Stow**.
- The **\$20.1 million Main Street Corridor improvement project** in **Akron** including the **State Street Bridge Reconstruction**.
- A nearly **\$10 million interchange improvement project** at **Tallmadge** and **Mogadore roads** and **Interstate 76** in **Brimfield Township**.
- A nearly **\$7.5 million project** to **upgrade signals with fiber optics** throughout **Streetsboro**.

To view *Transportation Outlook 2040*, please click [here](#). To view the TIP, please click [here](#).

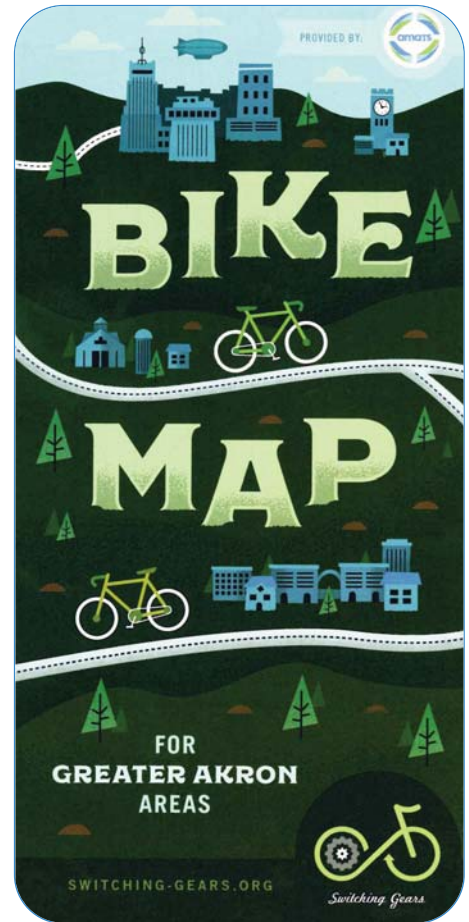
## Switching Gears releases new regional Bike Map

June brought more than a return of summer vacation days to the Greater Akron area. The month also brought the release of a new, updated regional *Bike Map* from AMATS' Switching Gears Program.

First released by the program in 2012, the *Bike Map* has proven to be a popular resource for the area's cyclists. Not only does the map rate major roads in Portage and Summit counties and a portion of Wayne County by level of difficulty from "Beginner" to "Expert," but it includes useful information such as the locations of bike shops, trailheads, and trailheads with restrooms. The new map also clearly identifies streets that include bike lanes and features new smaller maps detailing downtown Barberton and Hudson in addition to those of Akron and Kent.

AMATS Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Coordinator Seth Bush says that the *Bike Map* was created using the latest GIS data available to the agency. The Turnpike Trail in Hudson and the latest extensions of the Freedom Trail are among the new details included in the updated map.

Copies of the map are available at the AMATS office and area bike shops and will be provided by the agency at special events, such as the upcoming Switching Gears Conference in Barberton on July 26 (See [BARBERTON](#), Page 3). To request a map, please visit [Switching-Gears.org](http://Switching-Gears.org).



## Barberton Switching Gears Conference set to roll July 26



AMATS, the city of Barberton, and the Barberton Community Foundation are hosting a July 26 Switching Gears Conference at the Barberton High School. The day's events include presentations by Barberton Mayor William Judge, Jason Roberts of The Better Block Foundation, and Charles Marohn of Strong Towns.

The Better Block Foundation empowers communities to reactivate built environments to promote the growth of vibrant neighborhoods. Strong Towns is a media organization challenging every American to rethink how cities are built. Attendees will also have their choice of a walk or a bike ride through Barberton's "Magic Mile" corridor. Scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m., the event includes a continental breakfast and a lunch. The day's activities are expected to conclude at 3 p.m.

The event is \$15 and registration ends July 19. To register, contact AMATS at [330-375-2436](tel:330-375-2436). To view our YouTube feature, click [here](#).

## Greater Akron area crash totals jump matching state, national trends

The number of traffic crashes on Greater Akron area roadways and intersections increased between 2013 and 2015, according to the latest three-year crash report compiled by AMATS. This upward trend is a continuation of one that began in 2009, when area crashes hit their low point, and is similar to overall trends across Ohio and the nation. The agency's *2013-2015 Crash Report* shows year-over-year increases in total area crashes. There were 18,639 crashes in 2015, which was 780 or 4.3 percent more than in 2014. This increase came on top of 17,859 total crashes in 2014, which was 623 or 3.6 percent more than in 2013.



These findings are based on the agency's analysis of nearly 54,000 motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian-related crash records for the area provided by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). AMATS Transportation Engineer Dave Pulay says that high-crash locations identified in the report may be used by communities as a starting point when seeking federal Highway Safety Program funds through ODOT for safety improvement projects. The *2013-2015 Crash Report* marks two firsts for AMATS: It is the agency's first crash report to be prepared using Geographic Information System (GIS) information and it is the first that will be used to meet new federal performance measures. GIS software allows the agency to pinpoint the location of crashes and count how many occurred near crash segments and intersections.

"We believe that our latest report will help our region meet new federal performance measures," Pulay explains. Under these measures, metropolitan planning organizations such as AMATS must set targets to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. He adds that the measures may be arriving at a good time for the region. Pulay sadly notes that area crash fatalities increased by eight deaths from a low of 39 in 2014 to 47 in 2015. "Unfortunately, this matches similar state and national trends. This may be due to more driving in general and distracted and impaired drivers," he observes.

For the *2013-2015 Crash Report*, the agency identified 175 high-crash roadway sections and 308 high-crash intersections in the region. Among the findings of the *2013-2015 Crash Report* are that:

- Akron is home to four of the 10 highest ranked high-crash roadway sections and seven of the highest ranked high-crash intersections in the Greater Akron area.
- Akron's Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, between the West Market Street Bridge and North Broadway Street, is the highest ranked high-crash roadway section in the area. (A major project to improve conditions at this section is under construction and should be completed by fall.)
- In Portage County, the highest ranked high-crash roadway section is state Route 44, from Tallmadge Road to Interstate 76, in Rootstown Township, while the highest ranked high-crash intersection is at the Tallmadge Road/I-76 ramps in Brimfield Township.
- There were 301 bicycle-related crashes during the three-year period with 251 or 83 percent resulting in an injury and three in a fatality.
- There were 484 pedestrian-related crashes during the period with 427 or 88 percent resulting in an injury and 12 in a fatality. The number of pedestrian-related crashes jumped by 15.6 percent from 153 in 2013 to 177 in 2015.

The *2013-2015 Crash Report* is available by clicking [here](#).

## Community Focus: Stow

*Community Focus* presents information about communities within the Greater Akron area. The area that became the city of Stow has been a member of AMATS since December 1962.

**Founded** – 1804

**Population** – 34,837 (2010 U.S. Census Bureau)    **Area** – 17.32 square miles

**Policy Committee Member** – Mayor Sara Kline

**History** – Stow is named for Joshua Stow, a member of the party led by Moses Cleaveland to survey the lands of the Connecticut Western Reserve around present-day Cleveland in 1796. The land that would eventually be known as Stow Township was the survey township "Town 3, Range 10" of the Western Reserve and was initially 25 square miles. Stow Township incorporated in 1957 as a village and became a city following the 1960 United States Census

**Transportation Challenges** – Stow is in east-central Summit County on the border with Portage County. It directly borders Kent to the east, Tallmadge and Munroe Falls to the south, and Cuyahoga Falls to the west and south. On the northwest corner, it touches Boston Township, with Streetsboro on the northeast corner and Brimfield Township on the southeast.

With three interchanges off of state Route 8, Graham Road, Steels Corners Road and Seasons Road, Stow's location provides access from all directions. The area around the Seasons Road interchange has recently experienced significant industrial development with the establishment of the Seasons Business Park. State Routes 8, 59 (Kent Road) and 91 (Darrow Road) run through the city. The METRO Regional Transit Authority and the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority have bus lines that serve in Stow. The Kent State University Airport is also located in the city. The 33.5-mile Summit County MetroParks Bike and Hike Trail runs through Stow beginning near the Pambi Farm Estates and Roses Run Country Club. The paved trail parallels a scenic section of the Cuyahoga River and can be used for hiking, biking and rollerblading as well as cross-country skiing. Summit County MetroParks also maintains a paved bike and hike trail in the northeast part of Stow that extends to both Hudson and Portage County as well as a trail that runs parallel to state Route 8 and extends into Hudson.

**Web site** – [stowohio.org](http://stowohio.org)



## Project Updates

The following table lists significant projects that were awarded between June 23, 2016 and April 24, 2017.

PROJECT	ESTIMATED COMPLETION	AMOUNT
<b>Frost Road</b> - Turn lane addition, from Ellsworth Road to Phillips Parkway, and widening, from Sunny Lane to state Route 43, in Streetsboro. Project includes construction of left turn lanes along all signalized intersections and upgrading and interconnection of traffic signals.	09/28/2018	\$5,515,521
<b>State Route 91</b> - Turn lane addition and signal improvements at Main and Prospect streets in Hudson.	10/16/2017	\$1,483,737
<b>Hiram Hike &amp; Bike (North)</b> - Construction of multiuse trail for pedestrians and bicycle access between Hiram College and state Route 305 in the village of Hiram. Project will provide parking access and bike racks (trailheads) at various locations.	07/31/2017	\$559,215
<b>Freedom Trail Phase 3</b> - Construction of a multipurpose trail, from Mill Street to Eastwood Avenue, in Akron. (See <b>TRAIL MIX</b> below)	05/19/2017	\$1,722,000
<b>North Van Buren Avenue/Fairview Avenue</b> - Resurfacing of North Van Buren Avenue, from Robinson Avenue to Fairview Avenue, and resurfacing of Fairview Avenue, from Norton Avenue/Coventry Road to Fifth Street NW (state Route 619), in Barberton.	11/03/2016	\$593,786
<b>Steels Corners Road</b> - Resurfacing, from State Road to Wyndam Ridge Drive, in Cuyahoga Falls. Project includes restriping pavement markings and replacement of traffic loops.	09/30/2016	\$344,088



**TRAIL MIX:** Phase 3 of the Freedom Trail in Akron is under construction, shown at right. The new trail section will connect with an existing portion that links Akron to Kent, shown above.



## Making the Grade

AMATS hosted a March 14 meeting in downtown Akron as part of its four-year federal certification review as the Greater Akron area's metropolitan planning organization. The public was invited to share their thoughts regarding the agency with Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration officials.

In mid-May, federal officials informed AMATS that the agency's planning process was certified for another four years. The agency also received a commendation for its innovative public outreach efforts, such as its Bike-N-Brainstorm and Better Block events. To view a YouTube feature about AMATS' certification review, please click [here](#).



## Dates to Remember

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Committee/Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
July 4	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - July 4th Holiday
July 26	8:30 a.m.	Switching Gears Conference	Barberton
September 4	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Labor Day
September 7	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
September 14	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
September 21	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
October 6	8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Annual Meeting	Sheraton Suites Akron Cuyahoga Falls
October 9	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Columbus Day
November 10	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Veterans Day
November 16	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
November 23-24	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Thanksgiving
December 7	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
December 14	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
December 25	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Christmas Day

Persons with disabilities needing assistance are asked to contact Billy Soule, Assistant to the Mayor for Community Relations, 166 S. High Street, Room 200, Akron, Ohio 44308, (voice) 330-375-2189, (TDD) 330-375-2345, at least seven (7) days in advance.

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This report was prepared by the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Ohio Department of Transportation, and the Village, City and County governments of Portage and Summit Counties and a portion of Wayne County. The contents of this report reflect the views of AMATS, which is responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official view and policies of the Ohio and/or U.S. Department of Transportation. This report does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation.