2024

Active Transportation Plan

May 2024

2024 Active Transportation Plan (ATP)

May 2024

Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study
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Akron, OH 44308

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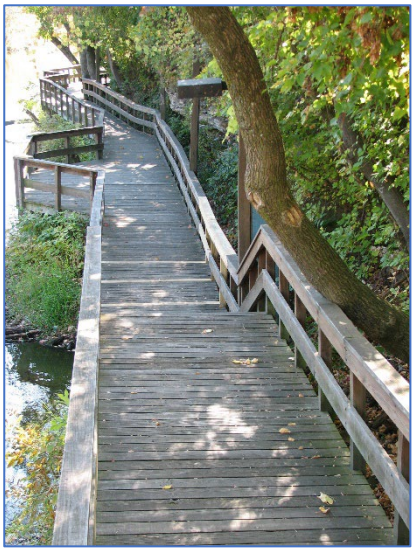
Cooperative transportation planning by the Village, City and County governments of Portage and Summit Counties and the Chippewa and Milton Township areas of Wayne County; in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Table of Contents

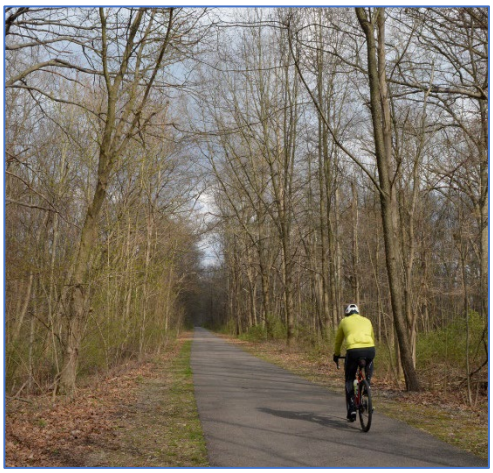
Chapter 1 — Introduction and Purpose

The Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Greater Akron area. Included in this area is Summit County, Portage County, and a portion of Wayne County. AMATS focus is to plan an efficient transportation system for the future of the region that considers all users.



Active Transportation, according to the United States Department of Energy, is defined as human-powered mobility, such as biking, walking, or rolling. This type of transportation is responsible for reducing fossil fuel emissions in addition to improving the health of the individual and the community as a whole. Examples of active transportation include walking, biking, and even scooters (referred to as micromobility), which has seen an increase in usage in recent years. AMATS believes that a healthy transportation system includes infrastructure for all users and has implemented policies to encourage active transportation in the Greater Akron area. Most vehicular users are also active transportation users at some point in their travels, while those without access to a vehicle are almost always users of active transportation. Therefore, it is essential to plan and encourage active transportation in the AMATS region.

The twin purposes of the AMATS Active Transportation Plan (ATP) are to highlight what has been accomplished within the region, and to identify additional recommendations for improving its active transportation network. AMATS, as the MPO for Summit and Portage counties and northeastern Wayne County, is responsible for distributing our region's federal transportation dollars. Over the last 10 years, AMATS Policy Committee has adjusted its funding policies to allow additional funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects. Because of these policy changes, our region has seen an increase in facilities for people who travel in ways other than vehicular.



Top-right: Riverfront Boardwalk in Downtown Cuyahoga Falls; Above: Main Street in Downtown Hudson; Right: The PORTAGE Hike & Bike in Franklin Township

Chapter 2 — Active Transportation and Why it is Important

Active Transportation is any transportation that is not powered by a motor, but by a human. Walking and biking are what comes to mind when thinking of active transportation, but micromobility and transit have active components that require consideration. Active transportation users are not only those who walk or bike to work, but include those who walk to a parking garage, use a bike to get to a bus stop or anyone walking a dog. Additionally, active transportation includes those using trails or sidewalks for recreation.

Active Transportation users are the most vulnerable on our roadways. From safety concerns to convenience issues, many may be deterred from being active, which may have ramifications for our area's overall health and environment. There are also many in our communities that rely on non-vehicular transportation daily to get where they need to be. Planning a connected system that considers all users of our roadways benefits us all.

Copley Road in Akron

Why is Active Transportation important for our communities?

Health
Physical activity has several health benefits for individuals, from controlling weight to strengthening hearts, lungs, and muscles, to reducing the risk of cancer, stroke, and Type 2 diabetes, and improving mental health. When we plan our communities to make physical activity easy to incorporate in our daily lives, the result is a healthier and more vibrant community.

Congestion and Environment
When humans can easily travel without getting in their cars, fewer vehicles on the road are the outcome. This generates a reduction in fuel emissions and congestion and improves air quality for everyone. Additionally, less congestion results in less deterioration on the roadways and fewer crashes.

Safety
Designs for pedestrian and bicycle traffic include reduced vehicular speeds and separation from vehicles. Complete Street principles and road diets result in safety improvements for everyone. As previously noted, active transportation users are the most vulnerable users of a roadway. It is vital to improve safety to encourage alternative modes of travel.

Economic
According to the residential real estate brokerage firm, Redfin, home values increase in walkable neighborhoods. Local businesses enjoy increased exposure when pedestrians and bicyclists can easily access them. Individuals using active transportation save wear and tear on their personal vehicles while lowering their fuel and parking costs. Communities that support active transportation spend less on roadway maintenance due to fewer cars and can devote less space to parked cars.

Supports Vibrant Communities
Active transportation infrastructure encourages movement by connecting people and places through safe and efficient facilities. When people can easily walk or bike where they want, communities are healthier and economically more stable. Infrastructure may not require repairs or replacement as quickly as heavily traveled vehicular corridors, which contributes to a more resilient community.

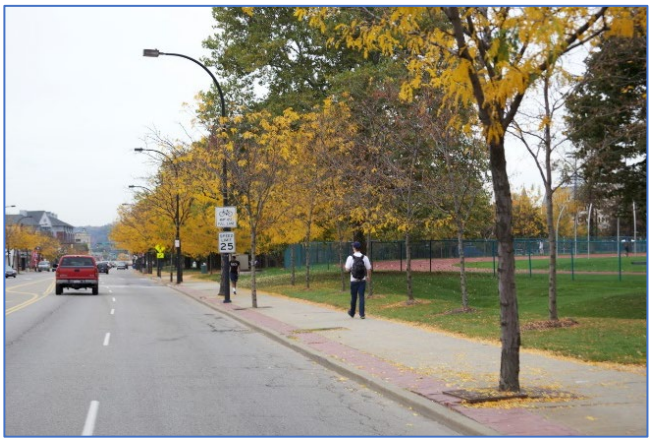
Equity
AMATS deems it vital to have the necessary infrastructure in place to allow everyone to travel in whatever way they choose. Building infrastructure for alternative modes of transportation gives all people the ability to move around. People with disabilities, low income, or those unable to drive can still get to work and access necessities in those areas that promote active transportation. Multiple options should be available to meet the needs of each and every person.

Lake Anna in Downtown Barberton

Chapter 3 — Pedestrian

The AMATS region boasts a population of over 700,000 people, according to the 2020 U.S. Census. Almost all of these people will likely become pedestrians at some point in their lives.

A pedestrian is a person who is either traveling on foot or using a wheelchair or other health-related mobility device along a roadway. Most everyone is a pedestrian sometimes, whether to walk to a bus stop, run for exercise, or walk from a parked vehicle to a destination, etc. Additionally, pedestrians are some of the most vulnerable active transportation users. For this reason, pedestrian safety should be of the utmost concern to communities and project sponsors when planning active transportation infrastructure.



East Exchange Street in Akron

Benefits of a Strong Pedestrian Network

Communities that invest in pedestrian infrastructure not only improve the quality of life for people, but tend to boost their local economies, as customers enjoy easier access to businesses. However, the economy is not the only benefit. People who walk daily improve the health of their bones, muscles, hearts, and lungs. Walking boosts moods and improves mental health. Having a connected pedestrian network reduces the number of vehicles on the road, easing congestion and improving air quality. With pedestrian accommodations, a community becomes more vibrant, allowing positive social interactions, and connecting people to community assets such as parks and trails.

In addition to a boosted economy, better health, less congestion, and improved air quality, a well-connected network of pedestrian infrastructure promotes mobility regardless of ability or income. This mobility is further enhanced when pedestrian networks connect to transit systems. Having sidewalks that connect to bus stops is essential to improving the lives of transit riders yet is not a universal practice. (This Plan discusses the transit system's role in active transportation in more depth in Chapter 5.)

Finally, and arguably more importantly, pedestrian infrastructure improves safety. Because crashes involving a vehicle and a human can be the most serious, it is of utmost importance that considerations be made to improve safety. Separating vehicular traffic from pedestrians reduces potential points of conflict. Slowing vehicular traffic reduces crash severity. Creating situations that increase pedestrian visibility to drivers utilizing lighting or signals also increases the safety of a pedestrian network. (Chapter 7 further explores safety considerations for pedestrians.)

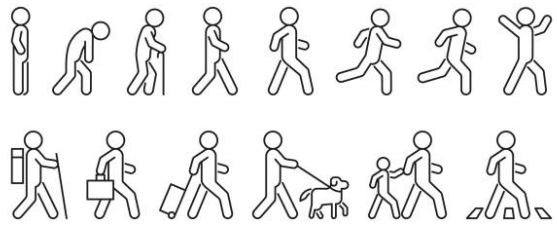
Characteristics of a Strong Pedestrian Network

Accessibility
Access to transportation is imperative to a strong economy. When a population can easily and freely move around, they can enter the workforce, and visit businesses, grocery stores, and doctor offices.

Not everyone has the means or ability to travel by vehicle, therefore a choice of transportation options contributes to a community's livability. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, almost everyone occasionally becomes a pedestrian and needs a safe means of traveling on foot. Sidewalks are the primary pedestrian infrastructure that make up the majority of the AMATS region's pedestrian network. However, they are not the only facility to improve the comfort and safety for a pedestrian. Crosswalks improve the visibility of pedestrians to drivers, pedestrian signals improve safety for people crossing intersections, while curb extensions encourage traffic to slow and reduce the distance a pedestrian must cross. These facilities and more can encourage pedestrian travel by not only improving access but increasing the comfort of pedestrians. (See Chapter 9 for additional pedestrian facilities and their definitions.)

Efficiency

A key characteristic of a strong pedestrian network is its efficiency in connecting people to the places that they want or need to be. The best networks are typically planned and give priority to pedestrians over vehicles.



The AMATS ATP urges area communities to make great effort to meet the needs of pedestrians. If a route is too difficult or too far, vehicular travel will become the preferred mode. Pedestrian networks that connect to desired destinations and have no missing connections are valued and utilized more frequently. Therefore, sidewalks should connect to bus stops and other sidewalks and trails, never stopping abruptly without a connection. Sidewalks should exist where pedestrians exist.

Existing Conditions

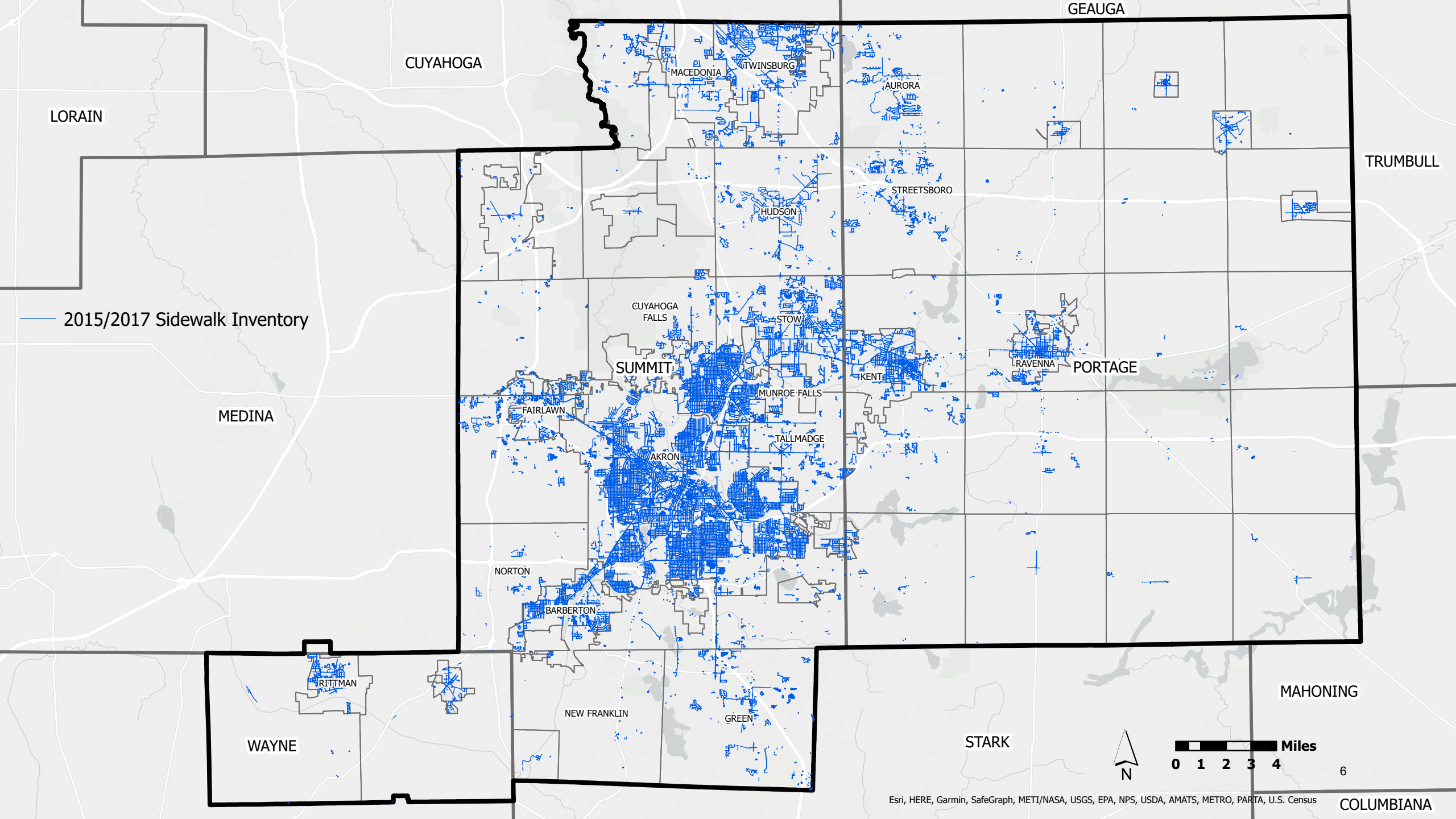
Sidewalk Inventory Map

A regional sidewalk inventory was taken by AMATS in 2015 and updated in 2017. Currently, the AMATS region contains approximately 2,900 miles of sidewalks. The Sidewalk Inventory Map on the next page shows a picture of significant sidewalk coverage in urban areas such as Akron, Cuyahoga Falls, Kent, Ravenna, Hudson, Silver Lake, Stow, and Barberton.

There is less sidewalk coverage in the suburban and rural areas. Several communities in these areas have made strides in recent years to improve their walkability, with Green, Twinsburg, and Hudson receiving Connecting Communities Planning Grants to study specific corridors for active transportation improvements.

The village of Lakemore completed a Connecting Communities Planning Grant study in early 2024 to study walkability throughout the community, with connections to existing trails. Additionally, Bath Township has added sidewalks in the Montrose area, and Stow has been actively including sidewalks in

Sidewalks at Portage Crossing in Cuyahoga Falls


GEAUGA
CUYAHOGA
LORAIN
TRUMBULL
MACEDONIA
TWINSBURG
AURORA
STREETSBORO
HUDSON
2015/2017 Sidewalk Inventory
CUYAHOGA FALLS
STOW
SUMMIT
RAVENNA
PORTAGE
KENT
MUNROE FALLS
FAIRLAWN
TALLMADGE
AKRON
MEDINA
NORTON
BARBERTON
RITTMAN
NEW FRANKLIN
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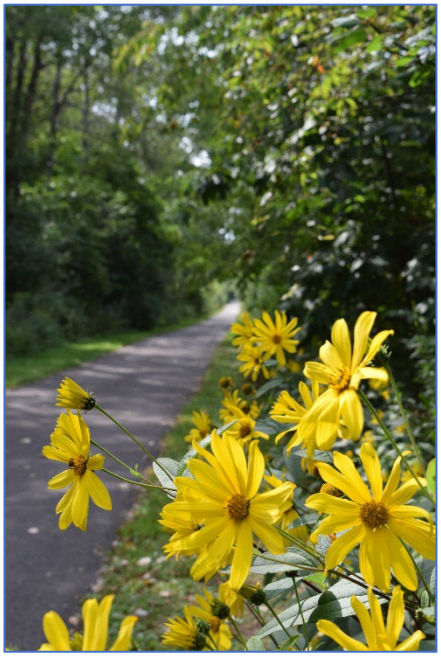
Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, AMATS, METRO, PARTA, U.S. Census

their road projects over the last several years. Notably, Hudson's *Sidewalk and Trail Master Plan 2021-2025* identified priority locations where sidewalks should be added, with the city committing $21 million over five years to accomplish this goal.

Despite this progress, there are areas that are not well-connected for pedestrians, including sidewalk gaps in urban areas that should be addressed. The ATP encourages continued sidewalk implementation as part of all development.

Trail and Shared Use Path Network and Development

Although sidewalks are the primary facility for pedestrian travel, shared use paths and trails are heavily used by both pedestrians and cyclists. A shared use path is typically 8 to 10 feet wide and separated from vehicular traffic. Its wide width allows multiple users simultaneously, allowing various active transportation modes. The AMATS region enjoys an extensive network of trails and shared use paths, due to the region placing a high value on trails for decades. A map of the region's existing bicycle network is in Chapter 4 and includes both bike lanes and trails. Summit County has significant trail coverage between the Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail and the Summit County Bike & Hike Trail, while Portage County boasts the PORTAGE Hike & Bike Trail. Although used primarily for recreation, trails and shared use paths can be combined with sidewalks where connections exist to extend walking trips and allow pedestrians the option to walk to closer destinations. Although not captured in the AMATS inventory, there are hiking trails throughout the region to support additional users and modes of travel.



Left: The PORTAGE Bike & Hike Trail; Right: Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail in Downtown Akron

Complete Streets

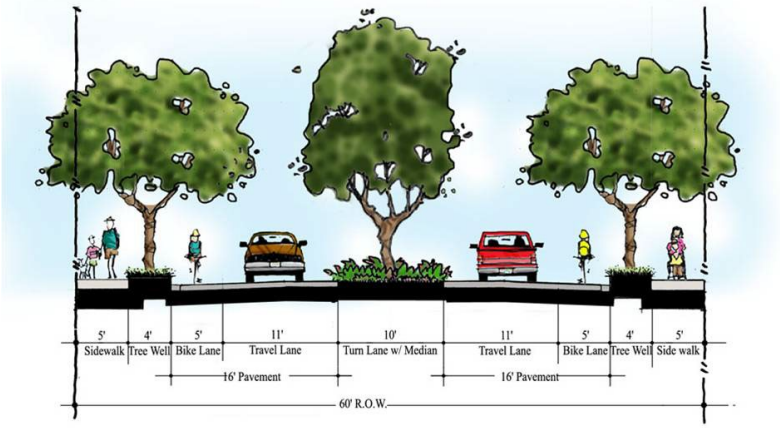
Pedestrian infrastructure cannot be examined without studying the complete street concept. A complete street is one that is designed with all users in mind, providing safe access to users of all ages and abilities. What this means is having facilities in place for cyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and vehicles. The AMATS region has seen several corridors converted into a complete street in recent years, including Main Street in Akron and Summit Street in Kent. A complete street will look different depending on where it is located and what is needed, but typically shares certain characteristics such as lower vehicle speeds, sidewalks, bike lanes, enhanced bus stops, and safe crossings for pedestrians, among other features. Amenities such as shared use paths, crosswalks, signage, lighting, mid-block crossings, ADA-accessible curbs, pedestrian signals and benches make pedestrian travel more attractive and contribute to a successful complete street. Fortunately, even communities with extensive sidewalk networks are looking to incorporate these facilities.

strongtowns.org

The above image, from *What is 'Complete'?*, an article written by Andrew Price of *Strong Towns*, depicts a street with many elements of a complete street added. Although a street can be complete without every element, this image illustrates many of the potential elements that can be included in a complete street. For instance, there are crosswalks, bump outs, and shared use paths, with bike lanes separated from vehicular traffic by on street parking. Street trees, benches, garbage cans, and lighting make this street a comfortable place to walk. Green paint is used to identify bike lanes. All of these elements can be used in various combinations to improve the pedestrian experience.

Complete streets do not look the same in every location. Elements should be added to meet the needs of the users, which will differ from urban to suburban to rural locations. Below is another example of a complete street, taken from http://bikestylespokane.com/2012/06/15/how-be-good-guygal-street/##BikeStyle. This complete street makes space for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles alike. The street trees reduce the sight distance for drivers, which has a traffic calming effect. Additionally, the median allows a safe refuge for pedestrians attempting to cross the street.

Greater connectivity of the area's pedestrian networks is an ongoing process, and one that should be prioritized. The intention of this connectivity is to provide safe and accessible infrastructure for all users. The ATP encourages a better-connected pedestrian network, with connections to destinations and existing pedestrian infrastructure which will provide comfort and efficiency to all users.



Chapter 4 — Bicycle

5Es for a Bicycle Friendly America

The League of American Bicyclists has identified the 5 Es of Bicycling, which are principles that are fundamental to the establishment and maintenance of a safe, bicycle-friendly community. These principles are:

- Engineering
- Education
- Equity & Accessibility
- Encouragement
- Evaluation & Planning

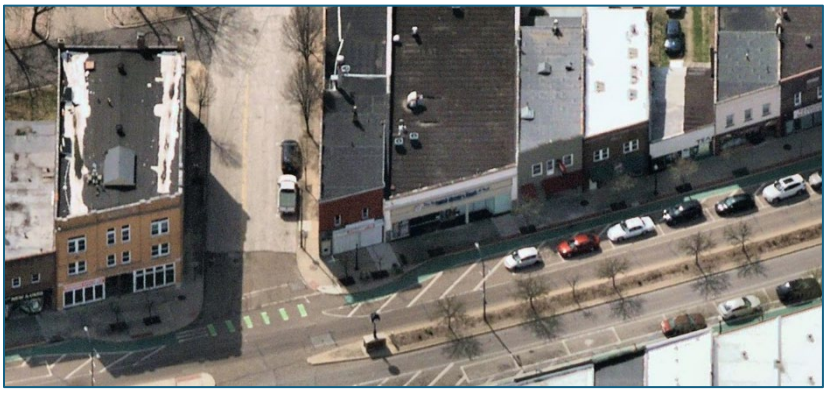
THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS since 1880

These principles and how AMATS will promote them in the Greater Akron area are elaborated below:

Engineering

A safe and inviting bicycle network is comprised of a variety of physical elements. Examples of infrastructure that may be considered for incorporation into the regional bicycle network include:

- Bike boulevards
- Bike lanes
- Bike routes
- Bridges
- Cycle tracks
- Road diets
- Shared use paths
- Wide shoulders



Kenmore Boulevard in Akron. New bike lanes were striped after the road diet occurred.

Maintaining road and trail surfaces to be free of potholes and debris is also critical to increasing a cyclist's safety and confidence. AMATS plays a key role in ensuring that the Greater Akron area's roads and trail surfaces are well-maintained. As the area's federally designated metropolitan planning organization, AMATS provides the financial and technical support that communities and project sponsors need to meet their maintenance demands.

AMATS administers several federal funding programs on behalf of the area. The Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Resurfacing, and Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) programs exist to assist communities with their construction and maintenance needs. Projects funded by these programs include capacity improvements, resurfacings, intersection improvements, and streetscape improvements. AMATS develops and applies the criteria - under the direction of its membership - for applicants seeking funding from these programs for various purposes.

The agency provides technical support through analyses of the area's transportation networks such as safety and Level-of-Service studies and through coordination when appropriate and necessary with other entities such as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Ohio and U.S. departments of transportation.

Education
Education includes the coordinated distribution of information regarding existing bicycle facilities and their role in the area's transportation system. AMATS provides education and outreach about bike-related events and promotes the region's network of trails through its website, amatsplanning.org, as described below.

- ***Bike-N-Brainstorm Events***—These are public meetings which include a bike ride and brainstorming session among AMATS staff and participants. Cyclists become active players in transportation planning by sharing their insights on how to improve biking and pedestrian access in a community. The agency uses feedback from these events when weighing bike and pedestrian projects for the region.


Examples of past Bike-N-Brainstorm events

- ***Bike User Map***—A free comprehensive map of streets and shared use paths in the AMATS region. The map rates cycling routes according to their respective levels of difficulty. AMATS periodically updates the map and distributes this item at events, bicycle shops, libraries, community centers, and other appropriate venues throughout the region. AMATS is currently conducting a comprehensive redesign of its *Bike User Map*, with a planned release date of June 2024.

Equity and Accessibility
Equity in bicycle-friendly communities means plentiful access to the network for everyone, especially those who rely fully on alternative modes of transportation. A bicycle network cannot truly provide equity and access for all unless it considers low-income and people of color as priority populations and allows input from these populations in a valuable way. AMATS promotes public involvement in the planning process through press releases, social media, and website postings. Equity is an important consideration in much of the work of AMATS, most notably in the Environmental Justice analysis that is part of the long-range plan process and the Transportation Improvement Program but is also considered directly in the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Action Plan and indirectly in the Connecting Communities studies.

Encouragement
Even with well-engineered facilities and sufficient education, people still need encouragement to bike. Encouragement may come from any combination of special events, riding groups, public advertising campaigns, health promotions, local cycling media and websites. AMATS promotes cycling through its social media channels and by participating in and planning events such as Bike-N-Brainstorms and Bike-to-Work Week.

Evaluation & Planning
Planning an effective bicycle network requires both the evaluation of systems already in place and the determination and design of new facilities to be integrated into the existing infrastructure. An important component of this latter consideration is the incorporation of elements such as those listed above (under Engineering) into the design of residential and commercial developments. Successful planning also focuses on assessing the present and projected extent of cycling in the Greater Akron area and access to attractions and destinations in the communities served by the area's cycling network. The ATP provides a truthful assessment of the network's status and offers direction for its future development based on connectivity and complete street approaches.

Greater Akron and the 5Es
AMATS accepts the five "E" principles put forth by the League of American Bicyclists as appropriate standards by which to assess and improve the Greater Akron area's bicycle network. The agency will apply these principles in the pursuit of the desired outcomes of fewer bicycle-related crashes and zero fatalities.

The cities of Akron, Barberton, and Hudson are recognized as Bicycle Friendly Communities, with Cuyahoga Falls receiving an Honorable Mention. This is a designation awarded by the League of American Bicyclists. Bicycle Friendly Communities are recognized as safe and convenient places for bicycling for people of all ages while encouraging and celebrating bicycles as a viable transportation option. AMATS encourages its member communities to consider working toward this award.

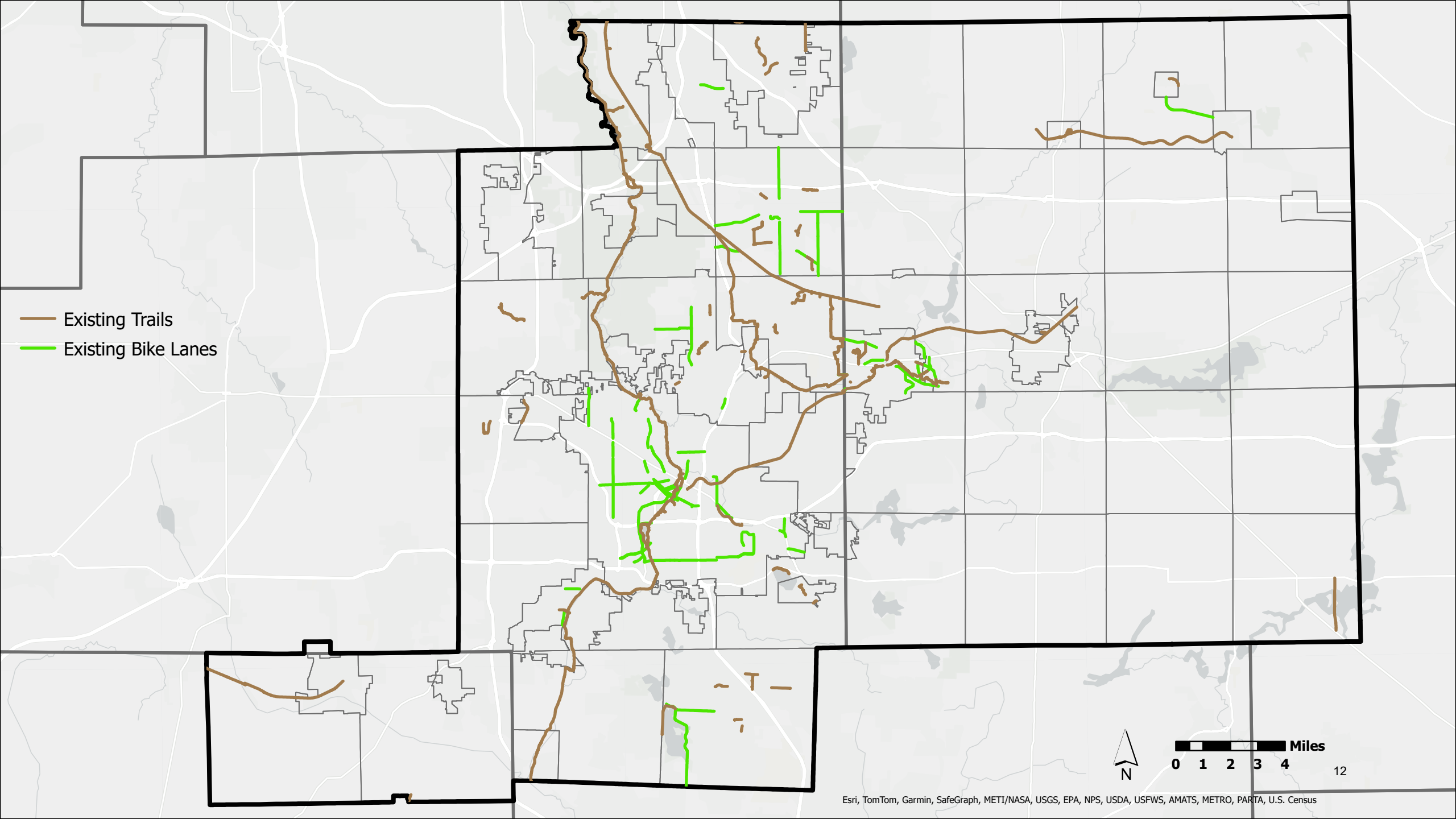
Existing Conditions

Bicycling in the AMATS region has continued to grow in recent years, with the help of bicycle advocacy groups and communities willing to build various bicycle facilities, such as shared-use paths, bike lanes, and trail connections. Bicycle infrastructure is a vital piece of the transportation network in the AMATS region, and building connections to accommodate cyclists is an ever-increasing need. Embracing bicycle infrastructure can have direct impacts on the health, property values, local economy, and environment in the AMATS region.

Different people have different levels of comfort when it comes to cycling. Some cyclists are comfortable riding on the roads with vehicles. Others may feel more comfortable with a barrier between them and automobiles. Still others will never ride on roads, specifically looking for trails or shared use paths to get where they want to be. This Plan aims to push the region to plan for the most careful cyclist to make cycling a possible choice for everyone. Cycling can become a viable transportation option if shared use paths and trails connect to commercial hubs and downtown areas.

Freedom Trail

The following map represents the bike lanes and trails in the Greater Akron area. Although there are gaps in bicycle infrastructure, the region features an extensive trail system that continues to grow.


Existing Trails
Existing Bike Lanes
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Miles
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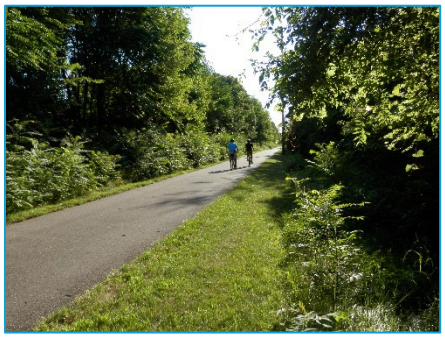
12
Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS, AMATS, METRO, PARTA, U.S. Census

AMATS Bicycle Network

In the fall of 2023, AMATS staff requested the assistance of member communities to update the Bicycle Network Map. The result is a map that is up to date with trails and bike lanes. Currently, the AMATS bicycle network includes 158 miles of shared use paths and 60 miles of bicycle lanes for a combined network 218 miles of bicycle infrastructure. This shows an increase of 46 miles of added infrastructure since the 2019 ATP.



Freedom Trail in Tallmadge

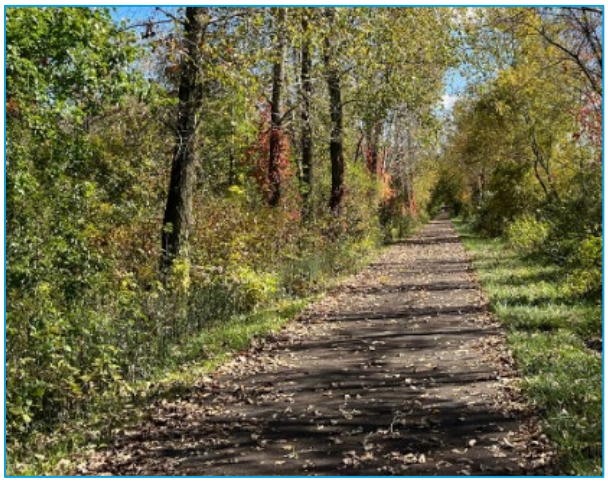
Summit County is well served by the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, which runs from the north to the south. To bolster the north-south trail connections in Summit County further, the Summit Metro Parks Bike & Hike Trail runs north from the Portage County line near Stow, connecting to the Cleveland Metroparks Trail in Sagamore Hills. This trail runs 34 miles, following the course of two abandoned rail lines, created in the 1970s as one of the first "rails to trails" in the country. Smaller scale community trails such as the Lakemore area's Spartan Trail and Bath's Nature Preserve Bike Trail exist throughout Summit County.

Unfortunately, cyclists still have some difficulty crossing east to west anywhere in Summit County without trails to connect them. The Freedom Trail traverses over eight miles, connecting Akron to the PORTAGE Hike & Bike Trail near Kent. Freedom Trail Phase 4 will connect Mill Street to Rosa Parks Boulevard in Akron. This connection will allow access through Akron and to the Towpath Trail. Additionally, there are plans to connect the Heartland Trail in Wayne County to the Towpath Trail in Norton. Although there are limited trails connecting east and west in Summit County, many communities have bike infrastructure such as bike lanes, shared use paths, and cycle tracks that provide safety, visibility, and comfort for cyclists.

Bike & Hike Trail in Boston Heights

The ***Portage County*** trail network is somewhat less developed than its neighbor to the west. The PORTAGE Hike & Bike Trail runs seven miles from Ravenna to Kent, with a project beginning soon to connect the PORTAGE Hike & Bike to the Freedom Trail in Kent. This connection will provide a trail from Ravenna to Akron. Additionally, a project to construct a new bridge in Franklin Township will add lanes for the Hike & Bike Trail, making a safer connection across Ravenna Road. The Headwaters Trail also runs through northern Portage County, and funds are in place to extend this trail west into Aurora. Communities such as Aurora, Brimfield, Mantua, Rootstown, and Streetsboro have an opportunity to add bike lanes or trails and connect into the existing trail network.

Headwaters Trail between Mantua and Garrettsville



County Line Trail west of Rittman

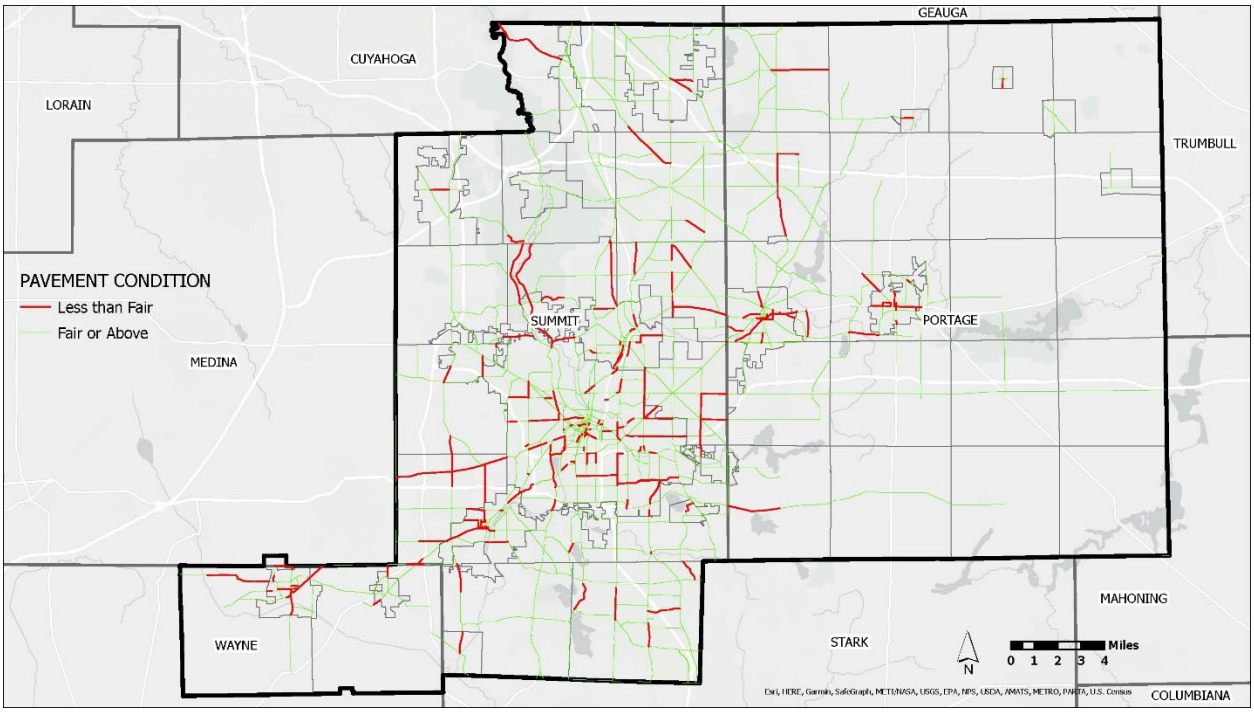
Finally, the portion of ***Wayne County*** in the AMATS region includes Chippewa and Milton townships. These areas benefit from the northern end of the Heartland Trail and the County Line Trail. Funding is in place to extend the Heartland Trail through Chippewa Township, with plans to connect to Clinton and the Towpath Trail in the future.

Pavement Condition Map

As previously mentioned, some cyclists prefer to ride on roads, and poor pavement conditions are a barrier to on-road riding. Rough roads can be an annoyance in a vehicle but are potentially hazardous for cyclists. This Plan encourages communities to maintain roadways for all users, including bicycles. Fortunately, communities with less than fair pavement can apply to AMATS funding for resurfacing projects. The Ohio Department of Transportation *Pavement Condition Rating Manual* explains that pavement ratings are found through observing the roadway and deducting points for visible roadway distress. Pavement Condition Ratings (PCRs) are on a 100-point scale, as shown in the corresponding table.

Pavement Condition Ratings (PCRs)					
100-90	90-75	75-65	65-55	55-40	40-0
Very good	*Good*	*Fair*	*Fair to Poor*	*Poor*	*Very Poor*

The following map highlights roads that may be an impediment to on-road cycling. The red lines on the map identify roads and streets where the pavement condition is considered poor or less than 65.



Other Considerations

Benefits of Cycling as Transportation

A completed network of trails and shared use paths has compounding benefits to the community. Similar to walking, cycling strengthens bodies and minds. When cycling is an accessible option, individuals have a choice in their mobility. With infrastructure in place, cycling can be a simpler option when making trips, the outcome of which is fewer cars on the roads leading to less congestion and improved air quality. Local economies see gains from easier access to business, which encourages people to make frequent trips. This enhanced mobility creates equity in the community where everyone can get around regardless of income or ability. All of these factors result in vibrant places where people want to be.

Complete Streets

Complete streets, as mentioned in the previous chapter, support all modes of transportation through thoughtful design. Just as there are accommodations for pedestrians, there are purposeful facilities that can be added for the comfort and safety of cyclists. Bike lanes, bollards, cycle tracks, green-colored pavement, shared bus/bike lanes, and wayfinding are some features that can be added to complete street design for the benefit of cyclists. Furthermore, traffic calming measures not only slow vehicles, but provide comfort for cyclists and pedestrians. Examples of traffic calming measures include speed humps, street trees, and bump outs. For additional information about these elements, Chapter 9 includes terms and definitions.

AMATS encourages the inclusion of bicycle infrastructure in street design through public discussions and funding policy decisions. AMATS hopes that both trails and on-road connections will continue to be made to grow the current system, allowing increased transportation choice for many, and vibrancy in our communities.

Chapter 5 – Transit

Nearly every transit user begins their journey either walking, cycling, or via a mobility aid. An integrated and connected active transportation network can improve the quality of life for all transit users of the region. This section highlights the current conditions of the ATP network.

Greater Akron Area Transit Providers

The following infographics provide a snapshot of the area's three transit agencies. For the most up-to-date schedules and services, please refer to the respective transit authority's official websites. METRO RTA , PARTA and Wayne County Transit.

METRO Regional Transit Authority (METRO)

Mid-size Urban Tranist Authority

Offers 24 Fixed Routes with Fleet of 141 Large Buses and 90 Small Demand Response Vehicles

Downtown Akron RKP Transit Center: Regional Connections to Portage, Stark and Greyhound Services

Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA):

Service Area: Operates in Portage County.

Regional Connections: Express Routes: Serves downtown Akron and Cleveland.

Services Offered: Fixed route and demand response services for eligible individuals.

Small Urban Transit Authority

Serves Rural and Urban Portage County. Operating out of Downtown Kent Central Gateway

16 Fixed Routes with Demand Reponse Services Offered

Wayne County Transit (WCT)

Portions of Wayne County-operated by SARTA. In partnership with Community Action Wayne/Medina

Service Hours: Monday through Saturday from 6 am to midnight

Service Type: Reservation-based; no fixed route offered

How Transit Relates to Active Transportation

Transit Network and Pedestrians

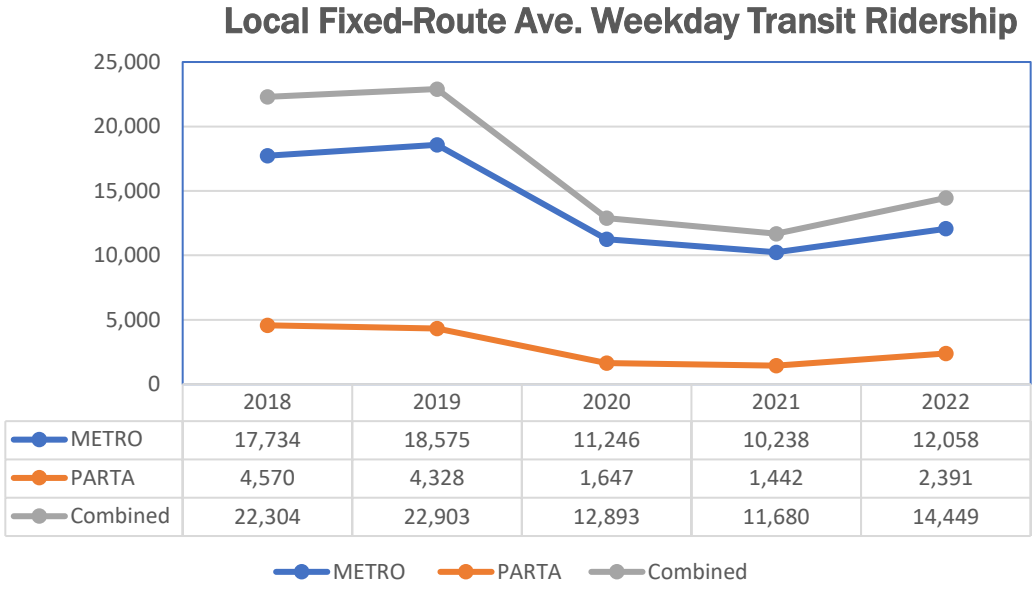
Some individuals may choose alternative transportation options but still have access to a personal vehicle, for many others, they're an essential part of life. Based on the area 2023 Regional Coordinated Transportation Plan there are approximately 22,981 carless households throughout the AMATS region without access to a private vehicle, referenced in the table below utilizing 2017-2021 American Community Survey data.

Zero-Vehicle Households in the AMATS Area				
	Summit	Portage	Wayne *(AMATS Portion)*	Total Region
Number	18,119	4,436	426	22,981
Percentage	7.94%	7.00%	5.26%	7.65%

Regional public transit options in our area are accessible; yet their routes or operating hours might not align with locations and employment shift schedules. Consequently, transit trips often involve at least one segment traveled by foot, bicycle, or another mobility aid. These segments, commonly referred to as first mile/last mile_connections, prioritize establishing safe and comfortable active routes between destinations. Enhancing pedestrian connections to the transit network highlights the positive impacts associated with both transit and walking such as, individual physical and mental health benefits from walking, and an overall positive impact on the local environment from carless individuals using transit.

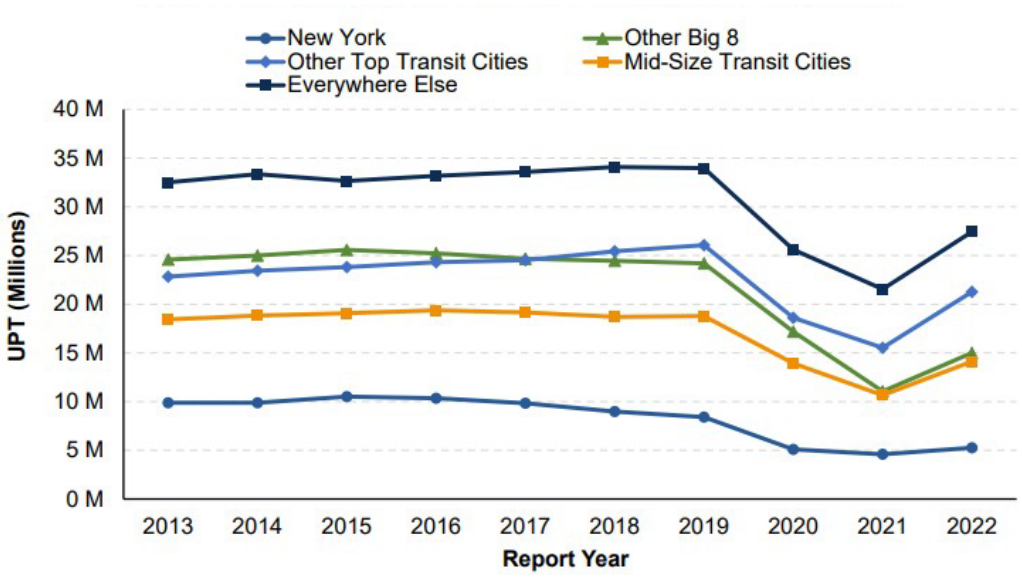
Sidewalk connections and shared use paths benefit pedestrians. Connected walkways between bus stops are crucial to maintain a walkable pedestrian transit network. These individuals rely on a safe and dependable active transportation infrastructure, and the walkability of their surroundings significantly impacts the stress levels that they experience during transit journeys. A goal of the ATP is to encourage collaboration between municipalities and transit agencies to prioritize the addition of sidewalks along transit routes, thereby fostering a supportive environment for pedestrians.

Understanding the volume of daily transit riders serves as a valuable metric for assessing the potential utilization of the sidewalk network by pedestrians each day. The graphs below and on the following page show average weekday fixed-route ridership has been gradually rebounding to pre-pandemic



levels for the past three years. According to data from the National Transit Database (NTD), the average fixed-route weekday daily ridership (UPT=unlinked passenger trips) for the AMATS region was 22,903 in 2019. However, by 2021, it had decreased to 11,680, although both regional transit agencies have been showing steady growth since 2021, which mirrors national trends.

National Fixed-Route Ave. Weekday Transit Ridership



The number of area households without cars closely aligns with the average daily ridership in 2019. This similarity implies that a significant majority of daily riders rely on our regional transit system. Based on these statistics, it can be estimated that approximately 22,000 pedestrians, bicyclists, and/or mobility device users access and rely on the regional transit system daily.

Transit-dependent pedestrians, whose daily commute relies on the active transportation network, may encounter stressful situations. Various factors such as the availability of safe and walkable sidewalks or paths, the type of roadway, the surrounding area and traffic volume contribute to the levels of stress experienced by pedestrians. A Pedestrian Stress Level Analysis published in 2021 indicates the importance of considering these factors when evaluating the stress levels by specific roadways. "Higher levels of stress were generally associated with walking in proximity to collector and arterial streets and in areas with industrial and mixed (e.g., offices, retail, residential) land uses. Stress levels were tempered in lower-density residential land uses, as well as in forest, park, and university campus environments." (Lajeunesse, Ryus, Nordback, 2021)

Many suburban neighborhoods also had relatively comfortable pedestrian environments, due to low speeds and traffic volumes. The least comfortable high stress walking environments are primarily arterial and collector corridors with low quality or no walking environments with higher speeds and wider roadways.

The photos below are examples of low and high stress walking environments located on transit routes. The first photo is downtown Akron on Main Street, which underwent and is still experiencing many changes. The road is a two-lane, two-directional street which includes widened sidewalks, bike paths and maintained vegetation. Main Street also features access to the Ohio and Erie Towpath Trail and access to Lock 3 Park. Main Street is a comfortable downtown environment for active transportation users. The second photo is of Vernon Odom Boulevard, west of I-76, which is a four-lane road with traffic in both directions, high traffic volume, with no sidewalks located on a transit route making it stressful for individuals looking to walk alongside this route to access the bottom or top of this hill.

Low Stress (Downtown Akron Main St.)

High Stress (Vernon Odom)

To foster a better environment for walkability, area transit authorities and local municipalities can implement various strategies to make walking a more attractive and convenient mode of transportation. Transit and municipalities can work together to help fund the initiatives or strategies to improve the walkability and sidewalk travel for potential transit riders. Initiatives like Complete Street projects, further explained in Chapter 3, are examples of how to improve walkability for transit users. A recent local example of this is the Reimagining the Gateway project, which involves a partnership between the city of Kent, Kent State University, ODOT and PARTA to make the community more walkable and friendly to pedestrians.

The goals of the project are to:

- Jointly improve safety and aesthetics for all users.
- Balance vehicular congestion with improvements to other modes of transportation.
- Enhance adjacent neighborhoods.
- Integrate with Kent State University's Gateway Master Plan
- Provide reasonable access to adjacent properties and side streets.

Transit Network and Bicycles

There are numerous transit riders who utilize bicycles to cover their first and last miles of travel. METRO and PARTA both equip all fixed-route buses with bike racks that can hold up to two bikes per bus.

The AMATS area boasts numerous regional bike trails, roads featuring bike lanes, and ample space for bicycle travel, all linking residents to parks, entertainment venues, employment hubs, and neighborhood locales. This interconnected bicycle network has allowed individuals to utilize the transit systems of the region to either complete the first and last leg of a journey or to connect to another regional bike trail. To grasp the extent of bicycle riders' reliance on transit, several transit authorities have initiated the tracking of these statistics, aiming to enhance their understanding of passengers' travel behavior.

PARTA Bike Rack—This feature enables cyclists to attach their bikes easily and securely to the front of the bus, expanding travel options for those who rely on bicycles to reach specific destinations, nearby shared paths, or regional trail networks.

The table below shows bicycles transported on METRO fixed route buses displaying a steady increase in bicycle users over the past three years. When looking a little more in-depth at the 2023 numbers based on individual fixed routes, show that the highest traveled transit/bicycle routes are correlated with higher ridership routes via the #1, #2, #3, #8, and #10 fixed routes, which show significant usage.

Bikes on METRO RTA			
	2021	2022	2023
Total Counted	7,570	10,600	17,857
% increase yr to yr	n/a	40%	68%

Overall, understanding the presence and behavior of bicycle riders in their region enables transit authorities to better serve the diverse transportation needs of their communities, while promoting sustainable and accessible mobility options.

Transit Network and Micromobility

The term "micromobility "refers to mostly electric scooters and electric bicycles that have become popular throughout major cities and college campuses nationwide. Micromobility will be further explored in Chapter 6.

Transit organizations in the U.S. have collaborated with micromobility service providers to integrate these options into their transit systems in a variety of ways. The purpose of this integration is to provide commuters with a seamless and convenient journey while addressing the challenges associated with the first mile/last mile gap in public transportation. Micromobility integration helps users connect with transit where walking might not be a feasible or desired option.

Because micromobility is a relatively new mode of transportation for this region, it remains to be seen if there is a need for local transit authorities to partner with micromobility providers. Some examples of partnerships between micromobility providers and transit authorities include payment and trip planning integration between both pay and travel planning platforms which can provide seamless travel between modes. Another example is co-location planning by micromobility providers, to position potential charging stations and "micromobility hubs" at heavily used transit stops and facilities. Co-locating can create access to transportation and mobility options within communities, while enabling seamless first-mile/last-mile connections for bus and multimodal journeys. Collaboration between transit operators and shared micromobility services can optimize the location of stations or hubs through strategic planning and partnerships.

Chapter 6 — Micromobility

About Micromobility

What is Shared Micromobility?

Any small, low-speed, human, or electric-powered transportation device, including bicycles, scooters, electric-assist bicycles (e-bikes), electric scooters (e-scooters), and other small, lightweight, wheeled conveyances. -FHWA

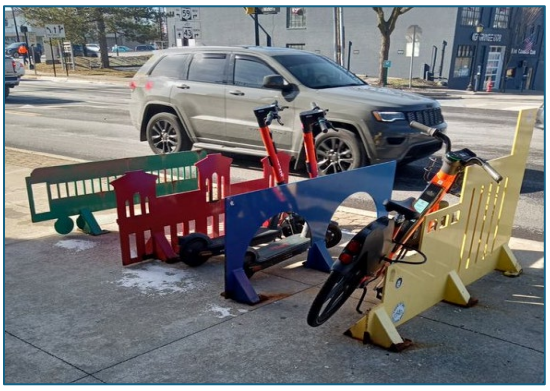
This chapter provides a brief overview of micromobility throughout the area. AMATS will soon be publishing a full report on micromobility that will dive deeper into the nuance of this new emerging transportation option.

Where does shared Micromobility Function?

E-scooters and bikes can be an effective mode of transportation in dense downtown, urban core, college campuses and areas with high non-vehicular traffic. Many cities are implementing urban planning strategies to consider how to improve walkability within a 15-minute walkshed, often referred to as "15-minute cities or neighborhoods". Micromobility options can help support this type of strategy by helping people rethink daily travel patterns and connect individuals to other neighborhoods, services, and areas of interest.

Benefits and Challenges

Public-shared micromobility rental options are becoming more popular in city centers and on college campuses nationwide. Individuals can rent an electric-powered scooter or electric-powered bicycle and are charged a rate based on distance and time. Areas that agree to offer these public-shared devices allow people to travel faster to destinations or other transportation options, opening the possibilities for people to connect to places that they normally would be isolated from.



Public-shared micromobility in Downtown Kent

Private usage of e-scooters and e-bikes has also increased exponentially since 2020 throughout the nation, and the industry has grown to accommodate the new demand, as individuals in populated areas enjoy an alternative environmentally friendly transportation option that these electric devices provide. Micromobility options can positively serve the overall transportation network by promoting a more car-independent network and providing a solution to first mile/last mile challenges.

Micromobility devices do come with some challenges as municipalities must plan for safety, legal and infrastructure changes when deciding to allow public and private micromobility devices. Decisions must be made on where these devices can operate, either on roadways mixed in with other traffic or on sidewalks where safety for pedestrians are a risk.

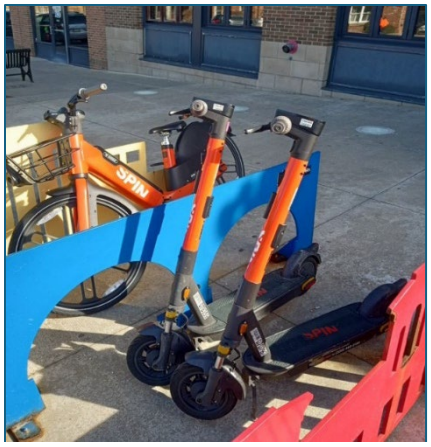
Another challenge includes scooters and bikes being left all over cities and in many cases left on the sidewalks until another user or service provider re-locates the device. This causes safety concerns and unseemly cluttering of city streetscapes. As public e-bikes and scooters remain a relatively new concept, most cities do not have proper regulations in place for how these programs are allowed to

run. This leaves governments to figure out how to deal with the sudden appearance of fleets of bikes and scooters popping up around their cities. With the massive influx of companies rushing to establish their own ride-share systems within a city, various municipalities have begun discussing laws to regulate the establishment and usage of these bike and scooter systems.

Greater Akron Area Current Outlook

Local Operations

In August 2020, the city of Akron launched a partnership with *Spin*, a dockless e-scooter company that provides a micromobility option in key corridors of the city around downtown Akron and the University of Akron (UA) campus. *Spin* also formed a partnership with the city of Kent in March 2022. The company provided e-scooters and e-bikes around downtown Kent and Kent State University (KSU) campus. Hundreds of these scooters have been seen in use throughout downtown and heavily populated urban neighborhoods of Akron and Kent.



Bike and scooter rental in Kent

Generally, e-scooters and bikes are popular and work well in high density, downtown, urban core, college campuses and areas with high non-vehicular traffic.

Regulations

On April 15, 2021, Ohio House Bill 295 governing micromobility devices went into effect which defines and describes where these devices can be operated. The law states that "A low-speed micromobility device may be operated on the public streets, highways, sidewalks, and shared-use paths, and may be operated on any portions of roadways set aside for the exclusive use of bicycles in accordance with this section." (Ohio HB 295). The law also allows local governments and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to regulate their use.

When regulating micromobility programs, AMATS encourages cities and policy makers to evaluate conditions at a local level, including parking options—from lock-to requirements to dedicated street space for shared active transportation. AMATS urges regulators to utilize community engagement programs designed towards safety education. Many cities are using incentive-based permitting mechanisms to encourage companies to provide services that meet their mobility and equity goals.

Thoughtful, smart management of new mobility options is essential for local governments as they work to protect the public right of way, increase mobility, and ensure that everyone benefits from new mobility options in a safe manner. As these new mobility options become more popular, cities must think about their active transportation network and the importance of having adequate shared use paths, bike lanes or other safe spaces for micromobility users.

Conclusion

Micromobility has emerged as a key element of a multi-modal urban transportation ecosystem, as cities strive to create a more sustainable urban transport system. Given micromobility's many potential benefits, there likely exists an equilibrium that serves the interests of cities, citizens, and service providers. Like many other emerging mobility issues, there is no single formula that applies equally everywhere. That is why communities and service providers must collaborate to ensure the safety and health of their constituents and the transportation network.

Chapter 7 — Safety

As with all modes of transportation, safety is the paramount consideration when considering active transportation. Whether facilities already exist or are in the early planning stages, it is imperative that all users can travel safely within their transportation network.

AMATS strongly supports the development of separate facilities for pedestrians and cyclists as it reduces the chance for conflicts with motorized vehicles. Many area crashes occur because safe facilities, such as sidewalks or well-marked crosswalks, do not exist. Like most areas in the United States, the Greater Akron area has numerous roads designed to accommodate efficient vehicular movement, at the expense of pedestrians or cyclists.

AMATS Area Crash Evaluation

AMATS evaluates the safety of area roadways, including for cyclists and pedestrians, via two processes.

Traffic Crash Report

This document is published annually and evaluates all crashes that occur within the AMATS planning area over a three-year timeframe. Section 3 of the report specifically pertains to active transportation modes. All crashes are mapped, and data is collected on where and when crashes occur. The most recent Traffic Crash Report covers the years 2020-2022 and can be found at: amatsplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020-2022-Traffic-Crashes-Report-FINAL.pdf

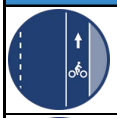
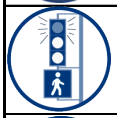
Safe Streets for All Action Plan

AMATS completed its first-ever *Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Action Plan* in the spring of 2023. This report focuses specifically on fatal and serious injury (FSI) crashes for all modes of transportation. Areas with multiple FSI crashes, or any FSI bicycle and pedestrian crashes, are included within a High Injury Network (HIN). The HIN evaluates crashes over a five-year timeframe and currently covers crashes spanning the years 2017-2021. Chapter 4 of the *SS4A Action Plan*, details pedestrian and bicycle crash trends and evaluates the following:

- Time of day
- Day of week
- Month of year
- Lighting conditions
- Weather conditions
- Location (e.g. intersection, crosswalk, shoulder)
- Location by roadway classification
- Crashes by age group

The *SS4A Action Plan* also includes a list of prioritized project and strategy recommendations aimed at reducing the area's most severe crashes. Project-based recommendations are framed around FHWA's Proven Safety Countermeasures (PSCs), which are solutions proven to be effective at improving safety. PSCs are listed in the table below, though more information about each of these countermeasures can be found in Chapter 7 of the AMATS *SS4A Action Plan*. The current plan can be found at: amatsplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/SS4A-Action-Plan.pdf

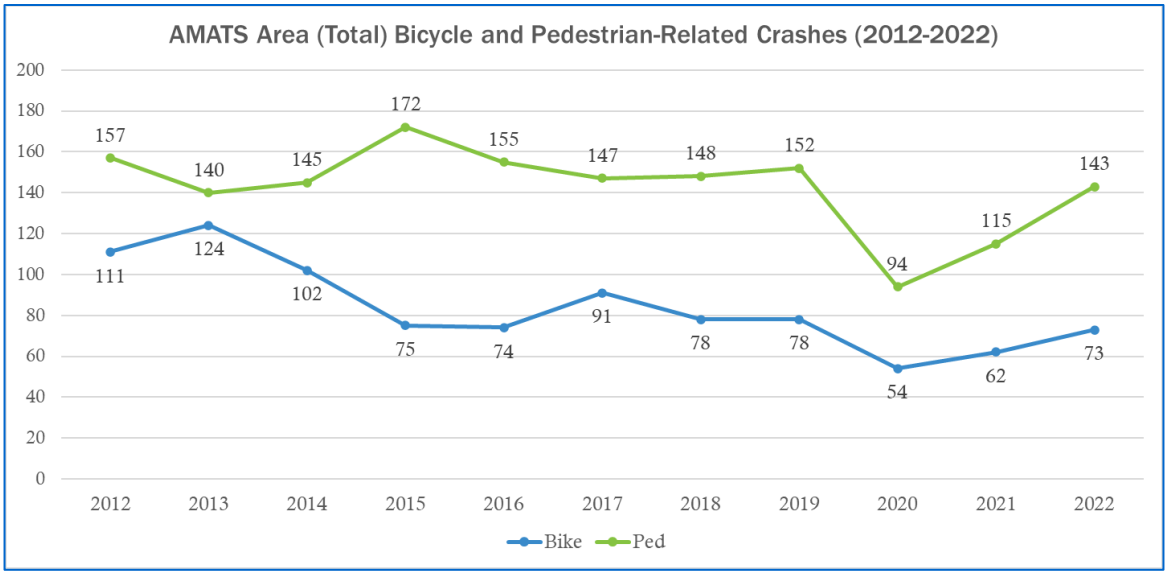
Active Transportation-Related Proven Safety Countermeasures

Countermeasure		Description
	Bicycle Lanes	Dedicated facilities to be used by bicyclists to reduce conflicts with vehicles.
	Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements	Enhancements that make crosswalk users more visible to drivers, including lighting, signage, and pavement markings.
	Leading Pedestrian Interval	An adjustment to signal timing that gives crosswalk users 3-7 seconds to enter the crosswalk before vehicles are given a green light.
	Medians and Pedestrian Refuge Islands in Urban and Suburban Areas	A defined area between opposing lanes of traffic to separate motorized and non-motorized users of the roadway. A pedestrian refuge island is intended to protect non-motorized road users.
	Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons	At midblock crossings, or intersections without signals, this beacon allows a pedestrian to cross the roadway safely. With two red lights above a yellow light, it is activated by a pedestrian to stop vehicular traffic and allow the pedestrian the right-of-way.
	Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB)	RRFBs have two rectangular-shaped yellow lights that, when activated, flash alternatingly to warn drivers of pedestrians trying to cross
	Road Diets (Roadway Configuration)	Restriping a road to reduce the number of dedicated vehicle lanes allows for the addition of facilites for alternative purposes, such as bicycle lanes, on-street parking, transit stops, and pedestrian refuge islands.
	Walkways	Any defined path meant to be used by pedestrians, including sidewalks, shared-use paths, and roadway shoulders.

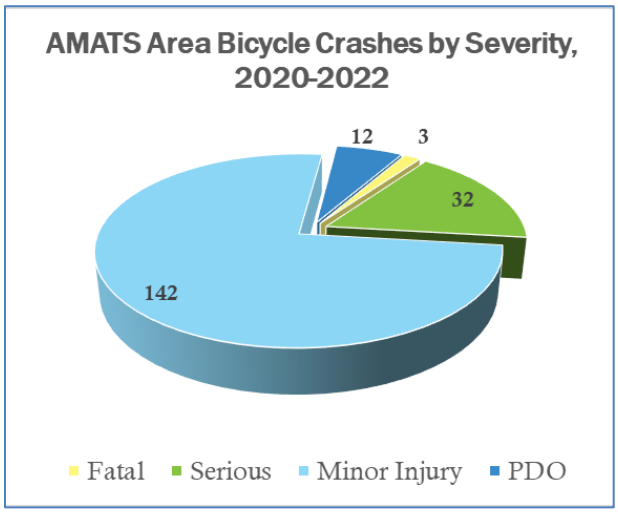
AMATS Area Crash Trends

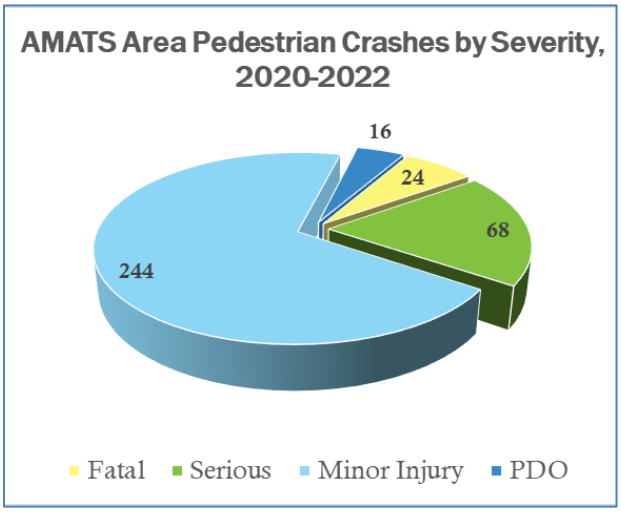
AMATS' two safety-related reports provide a significant amount of information about bicycle and pedestrian crash trends. While complete details and trends are not repeated within this plan, some of the most significant safety findings are summarized below and on the following page:

Bicycle and pedestrian crashes are increasing within the AMATS planning area, but are still below numbers from a decade ago.
For both of these modes, crashes decreased significantly during the first year of the COVID-19 Pandemic (2020), but have increased somewhat modestly since then. Pedestrian crashes are increasing more sharply than bicycle crashes. The graph on the following page shows overall crash numbers for each mode between 2012-2022.



When a bicyclist or pedestrian is hit, crashes tend to result in injury.
The most recent year of data available (2022) indicates that approximately 92% of bicycle crashes and 89% of pedestrian crashes result in some level of injury or in a fatality. These percentages are representative of the rates found in recent years. Fatal crash rates are much higher for pedestrians and bicyclists than for vehicle-only crashes. In the years 2020-2022, most bicycle and pedestrian crashes resulted in minor injury. However, within this timeframe, the AMATS area had three fatal bicycle crashes and 24 fatal pedestrian crashes; the odds of a bicycle or pedestrian crash resulting in a fatality were 1.6% and 6.8%, respectively during this time period. Victims from fatal bicycle and pedestrian crashes comprise 13.1% of all traffic crash fatalities within the AMATS area. The charts below display crashes by level of severity for both bicyclists and pedestrians.

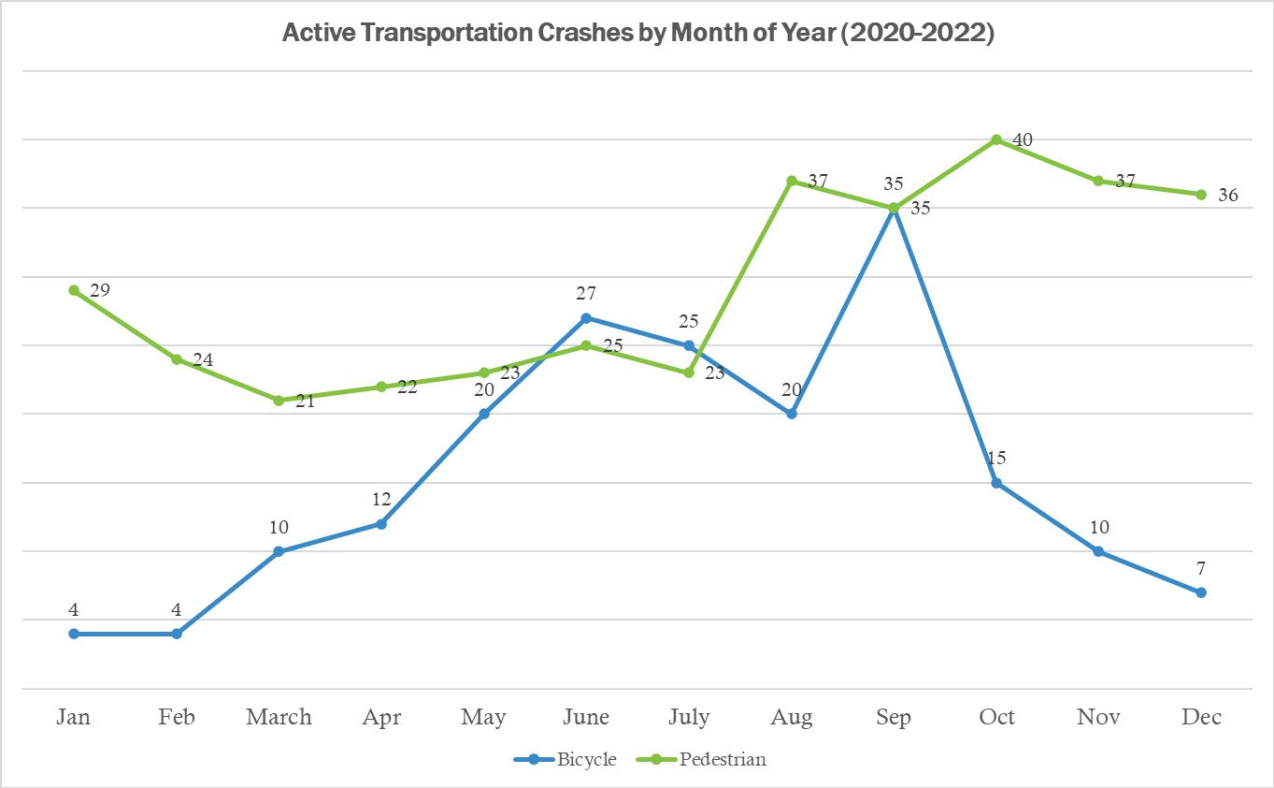




Note: Fatal crashes result in at least one fatality. Serious crashes include incapacitating injuries. Minor Injury crashes include any injury or possible injury crashes that were not serious injuries. PDO, or Property Damage-Only crashes, imply that no injuries were reported.

Seasonal trends are consistent.
Bicycle crashes typically are highest in the late summer or early fall timeframe, while pedestrian crashes nearly always reach their peak in October. These trends are generally consistent year after

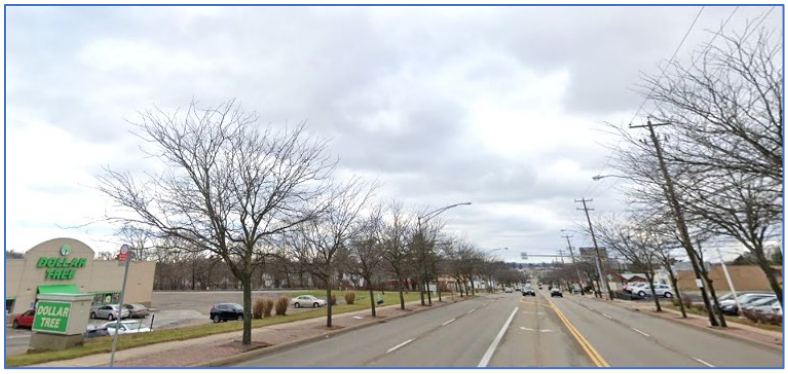
year. These months tend to have mild and favorable weather combined with shortened daylight hours. The graph below shows active transportation crashes by month during the 2020-2022 timeframe.



Night crashes are common, but not a majority of active transportation crashes.
The *SS4A Action Plan* revealed that about 1 in 4 (23%) of bicycle crashes and nearly half (45%) of pedestrian crashes occurred during times of darkness or the transition times of dusk and dawn. Crashes resulting in a fatality or serious injury were not significantly more or less likely to occur during non-daylight hours.

Active transportation crashes tend to be in urban and suburban locations. The area's older and more densely populated communities such as Akron, Barberton, Cuyahoga Falls, and Kent, contain most of the area's active transportation crashes. Large portions of these communities were built prior to the automobile's ubiquity and tend to have a greater number of pedestrians and bicyclists traveling within their borders. Numerous crashes occur along higher volume arterial roadways, often with multiple travel lanes in each direction and where vehicles can easily speed. These crashes occur not only in or near the central business districts, but in the lower-density suburban areas

Canton Road in Springfield Township is an example of a higher volume arterial roadway with high numbers of active transportation crashes.



Another example of a higher volume arterial roadway with high numbers of active transportation crashes: E. Tallmadge Avenue in Akron

surrounding them. Such corridors often have some of the area's highest traffic volumes, more lanes, wider lanes and are more likely to not have designated places for pedestrians and bicyclists, such as sidewalks and bike lanes.

AMATS Area Crashes

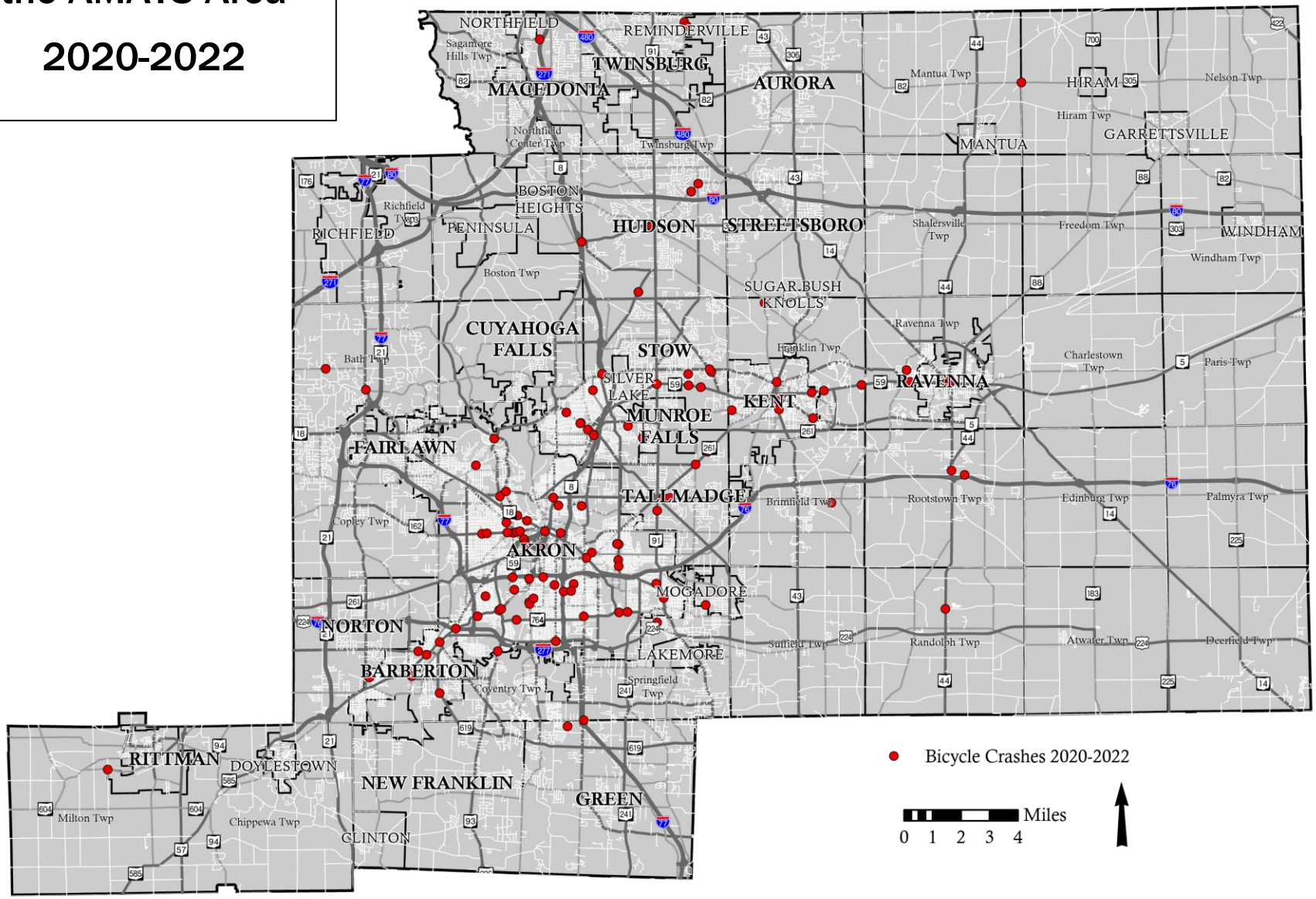
The maps on the following pages show the locations of all reported bicycle and pedestrian crashes within the AMATS area over the past three most recent years for which data is available. Detailed information on individual crash locations can also be found on the AMATS Safe Streets for All High Injury Network Webmap (covering years 2017-2021).

https://akrongis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d3b866db810e470fb3de4b6a1ab81784

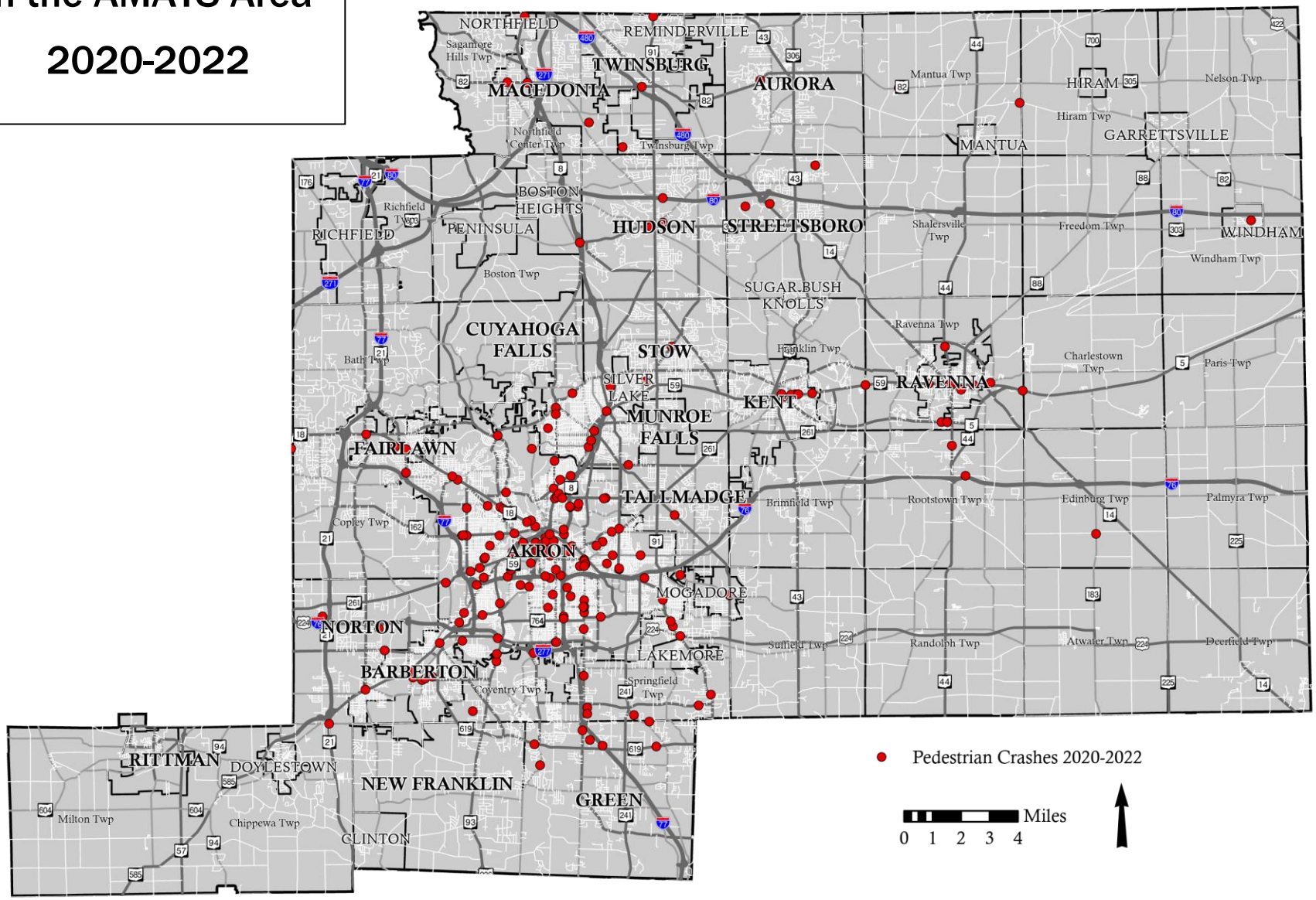
Getty Images

Bicycle Crashes in the AMATS Area

2020-2022



Pedestrian Crashes in the AMATS Area 2020-2022



Chapter 8 — What is AMATS doing to improve Active Transportation?

Connecting Communities

In 2010, the AMATS Connecting Communities Initiative identified recommendations for encouraging better connections for all road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists. Out of this initiative grew the Connecting Communities Planning Grant Program. Since its inception, this program has awarded over $500,000 in planning grants to 13 communities for studies to identify solutions for gaps in the active transportation network. Some notable results from this program are listed in the table below, with other accomplishments including new trails, sidewalks, and crosswalks. Any AMATS member communities are welcome to apply for a program grant, which is a partnership between the community and AMATS.

Connecting Communities Successes

Community	Planning Grant Successes
Barberton	Medical Mutual Magic Mile
Akron/METRO	Downtown Akron Shuttle (DASH)
Bath Township	Sidewalk on north side of Rt. 18 and Springside Dr.
Kent	SR 59 complete street improvements (funded 2027)

Funding

AMATS has several funding programs, with two being directed toward active transportation infrastructure. The Transportation Alternatives Set- Aside (TASA) Program is available every two years and can provide up to $1 million per project. Additional points are awarded to projects that are recommendations from a Connecting Communities Planning Grant. These funding dollars are awarded to projects for bicycle and pedestrian improvements and Safe Routes to School projects. The table below shows the recipients of AMATS' most recent round of TASA funding.

January 2024 TASA Project Awards

Sponsor	Project	Location	Description	Total Project Cost	TASA Award
Portage Park District	Headwaters Trail Phase IX	Diagonal Rd to Mennonite Rd	10' wide multi-use trail (1.5 miles) along public road rights-of-way, separated from road traffic with a grass berm or barrier.	$1,279,905	$1,000,000
Portage County Engineer	Stow/Summit St. Pedestrian Improvements	Portage Bike & Hike Trail to Franklin Ave	Preliminary engineering for wider rehabilitated bridge over Cuyahoga River to include 8' sidepath, sidepath/wide sidewalk, high visibility crosswalks at Franklin Ave	$250,000	$200,000
Akron	Rubber City Heritage Trail Phase 3	E Exchange St/Hunting Ave Intersection to Brown St/Johnston St Intersection	Multi-use trail along former ABC rail line (0.84 miles), wayfinding signage, conduits for fiber optic network expansion, trail amenities (benches, trash cans, bike racks, info kiosks), enhanced crossings where appropriate, possible trailhead	$2,015,000	$1,100,000

The AMATS Policy Committee approved new *Funding Policy Guidelines* in September 2023 that included TASA Supplemental Funding, a pilot program that creates a reservoir list of existing AMATS projects that could use additional TASA funding. Provided that there is a balance of TASA funding available in a fiscal year, up to $500,000 of additional TASA funding can be awarded to projects that include TASA eligible elements.

In addition to the TASA and TASA Supplemental Funding programs, AMATS incentivizes the inclusion of active transportation amenities within its other projects. For example, AMATS' largest

funding source—Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding—provides significant additional points for complete streets components such as new sidewalks, bicycle lanes and crosswalk improvements. Projects also receive additional points if the proposed improvements were suggested in a previous Connecting Communities study. Together, these incentives make it almost impossible to receive STBG funding from AMATS without considering active transportation improvements.

Outreach

In 2012, AMATS developed Bike-N-Brainstorm events, a new initiative to increase public participation in decision-making for bicycle infrastructure improvements. A Bike-N-Brainstorm event is held in a community looking to improve biking conditions and connections and includes a bike ride followed by a discussion to gather feedback. Hundreds of area residents have participated in 28 events since 2012. AMATS continues to work with communities on these events, encouraging safe riding as well as improvements to make cycling an option for everyone.

AMATS is often involved in community events for the purpose of promoting cycling as an alternative mode of transportation. Staff have attended a Bike Rodeo event for children in Copley Township, have set up booths at other events to hand out safety devices such as bike bells and lights, and regularly distribute *Bike User Maps* to area businesses and residents. Additionally, AMATS staff discuss active transportation issues regularly during AMATS Citizens Involvement Committee meetings.

Finally, AMATS partners with other agencies across the state of Ohio to provide the ridesharing platform, Gohio Commute, to residents. Although this program's original goal was to encourage carpooling for commuters, the program can now log cycling and walking trips. Users have the ability to calculate cost savings and track their progress. In the past, AMATS has promoted Bike-to-Work Week locally with challenges and prizes. In September 2023, AMATS partnered with agencies across the state on the Gohio Commute Challenge. The challenge lasted two weeks and encouraged users across Ohio to log trips daily for entries into prize drawings. Future challenges will continue to take place statewide.

Above: Preparing for a Bike-n-Brainstorm event, Akron's Middlebury neighborhood (2023); Below: Copley Township's 2023 Bike Rodeo

Chapter 9 — Common Terms and Definitions

Throughout this report, terms are used that may be unfamiliar to the reader. For clarification purposes, the following listing of definitions of many of these terms is provided.

Active Transportation - Active transportation includes non-motorized transportation options such as walking and biking and is ideally linked with transit networks. The pursuit of active transportation options that are realistic, affordable, and convenient for all users would promote health, economic development, environmental and safety benefits.

Active Transportation Plan (ATP) - A comprehensive set of strategies to ensure better options for biking, walking and transit. ATPs include recommendations for prioritizing infrastructure improvements and outline recommendations for new policies, processes, and infrastructure based on public and stakeholder input.

Accessible Pedestrian Signal

Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) - This is a traffic signal that provides auditory and/or vibrotactile information to pedestrians who are blind or have low vision.

Bicycle Facilities - A general term denoting improvements and provisions made by public agencies to accommodate or encourage bicycling, including parking and storage facilities, and shared roadways not specifically designated for bicycle use.

Bike Boulevard – These streets give priority to bicycles, often through the use of signage, pavement markings, bike lanes, speed bumps, bulb-outs, vehicular speed reduction, and other elements to improve safety for all road users.

Bike Lane - This is a dedicated lane for bicyclists that is separated from motor vehicle traffic by pavement markings and is signed for preferential or exclusive use by bicyclists. Bike lane widths can range from 4 to 6 feet and should be striped, signed, and marked in accordance with the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD).


Bike Boulevard

Bike-N-Brainstorm - A public outreach tool used by AMATS to engage cyclists with the aim of improving the Greater Akron area's biking infrastructure. AMATS encourages and hosts these events which include a bike ride along a predetermined route followed by a discussion among participants regarding how communities may improve their bike networks and related amenities.

Bike Route - This is a system of bikeways designated by the jurisdiction having authority that includes appropriate directional and informational route markers. Bike routes can be an option where space does not permit, or the need does not exist, to create additional pavement width for cyclists. Bike routes are typically found on low volume, low speed streets. They are especially helpful in way finding to link neighborhoods with networks of greenways and other types of bike facilities.

Bikeway - A generic term for any road, street, path, or way which in some manner is specifically designated for bicycle travel, regardless of whether such facilities are designated for the exclusive use of bicycles or are to be shared with other transportation modes.

Bollards – Short, strong posts often used to protect perimeters, to separate bike lanes from lanes of traffic, to create boundaries and provide visual guides for traffic.

Above: Bollards; Below: Bump Out on N. Water St. in Kent

Bump Out - Also known as curb extensions or bulb-outs, extend the sidewalk space into the street and provide benefits to pedestrians by shortening the crossing distance and improving visibility for both pedestrians and vehicles.

Chicane - This is a type of traffic-calming strategy to reduce the speed of vehicles for safety. Chicanes are created by installing a series of staggered mid-block bump outs on alternating sides of the street. On two-way streets, chicanes can either deflect both lanes or narrow the roadway to one lane used by both directions.

Chicanes

Complete Street – A complete street is one that is designed for the safe travel of all users regardless of age or ability. Some elements of a complete street include sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, bump outs, shared use paths, designated bus lanes, and refuge islands.

Connecting Communities Program - The AMATS Connecting Communities Program encourages the pursuit of vibrant livable areas by helping communities strike a balance between their land use decisions and transportation investments. The grant program supports community studies that promote alternative forms of transportation to motor vehicles such as walking and cycling.

Connectivity - This term refers to the extent to which urban forms permit or restrict movement of people or vehicles in different directions. Connectivity is generally considered a positive attribute of an urban design, as it permits ease of movement and avoids severing neighborhoods. Urban forms which lack connectivity, e.g., those severed by arterial roads or with many long cul-de-sacs, are considered to discourage movement on foot and encourage longer journeys by car. (This concept is also occasionally referred to as "permeability.")

Crosswalk - A place designated for pedestrians to cross a road. Crosswalks are designed to keep pedestrians together where they can be seen by motorists, and where they can cross most safely across the flow of vehicular traffic.

Example of Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements

Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements – Enhancements that increase the visibility of crosswalk users to motorized traffic. This can include pavement markings, lighting, and signage.

Cycle track – A bike path on a roadway specifically for cyclists, separated from vehicular traffic and sidewalks using barriers such as bollards or parking spaces.

Demand Response – This type of bus service requires advanced scheduling of trips "for qualified individuals" and is not part of a fixed-route system.

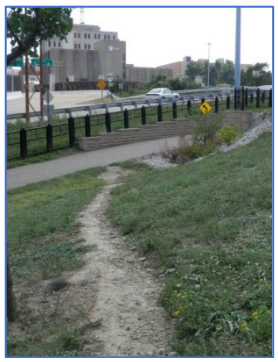
First Mile / Last Mile – This refers to the distance traveled to reach a bus stop and the distance from the bus stop to a final destination.

Fixed-Route Service – A fixed-route bus system operates on a time and route schedule using large buses and designated bus stops to pick up and drop off riders.

Footpath - This is a type of thoroughfare that is intended for use only by pedestrians and excludes other forms of traffic such as motorized vehicles and cycles.

Geographic Information System (GIS) - A system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present all types of spatial or geographical data.

Goat Path - A path created as a consequence of foot or bicycle traffic. The path usually represents the shortest or most easily navigated route between an origin and destination. Width and erosion severity can be indicators of how much traffic a path receives. Goat paths emerge as shortcuts where constructed ways take a circuitous route, have gaps, or are non-existent. (These paths are also known as a "desire line," "social trail," "cow path," "goat track," "pig trail" or "bootleg trail.")



Goat Path

Green-Colored Pavement - This pavement was granted statewide interim approval for bike lanes by ODOT in 2011. Green-colored pavement within a bicycle lane increases the visibility of the facility, identifies potential areas of conflict, and reinforces priority to bicyclists in conflict areas. The pavement may be installed within bicycle lanes as a supplement to other pavement markings and is commonly applied at intersections, driveways, conflict areas, and along non-standard or enhanced facilities such as cycle tracks. Motorists are expected to yield right of way to bicyclists at these locations.

Greenways and Park Trails - A greenway is a linear parcel of land set aside to preserve open space. Greenways are generally located in floodplain areas and along wooded stream corridors that are unsuitable for development. Greenway and park trails typically are 8 to 10+ feet wide and may be paved.

High-Intensity Activated CrossWalK (HAWK) - A traffic signal used to stop road traffic and allow pedestrians to cross safely. The beacon flashes yellow, then is steady yellow, then a steady red, then flashes red to make drivers aware to stop. The purpose of a HAWK beacon is to allow protected pedestrian crossings and stops road traffic only as needed. Where standard traffic signal 'warrants' prevent the installation of standard three-color traffic signals, a HAWK provides an alternative. It is also known as a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon or "PHB."

HAWK Signal

Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI) - Signal timing that provides the walk signal several seconds before vehicles are given a green signal. LPI provides pedestrians with an advanced start so that they are more visible in the crosswalk.

Lighting – Adequate lighting improves safety for everyone, allowing all users of the road to see obstacles before they are encountered, and can encourage participation in active transportation.

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) - The Federal Highway Administration standards for signs, signals, and pavement markings.

Mid-Block Crossing - This is a crossing at non-intersection locations where marked crosswalks have been provided. Mid-block crosswalks can facilitate direct crossings to places that people want to go, but which are not well served by an existing traffic network.

Pedestrian - This is a person traveling on foot, whether walking or running. For the purposes of this plan, wheelchair users are considered as pedestrians.

Pedestrian Level of Service (LOS) - This is a measure that assesses the quality of the pedestrian experience through an analysis of sidewalk conditions, traffic volumes and speeds, and other characteristics of the roadway.

Above: Pedestrian Refuge Island
Below: Pedestrian Scramble

Pedestrian Refuge Island – A defined area between opposing lanes of traffic to separate non-motorized and motorized users of the roadway. This is sometimes more simply referred to as a median.

Pedestrian Scramble/Diagonal Crossing – These crossings designate one interval of a traffic signal exclusively for pedestrians, stopping all vehicular traffic and allowing pedestrians to cross simultaneously in all directions, including diagonally. Also known as a Barnes Dance.

Pedestrian Signal – These signals allow safer crossings for pedestrians at signalized intersections by communicating "Walk" and "Don't Walk."

Rail-Trail - A shared-use path, either paved or unpaved, built within the right-of-way of an existing or former railroad.

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) - A beacon attached to the standard pedestrian crossing sign and activated by pedestrians.

Right-of-Way - A general term denoting land, property, or interest therein, usually in a strip acquired for or devoted to transportation purposes.

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon

Right of Way - The right of one vehicle or pedestrian to proceed in a lawful manner in preference to another vehicle or pedestrian.

Road Diet - A road diet reduces the amount of space for motor vehicles, either through eliminating lanes or shrinking the width of lanes. The reclaimed space from a road diet is then re-allocated for other uses, such as more sidewalk space or a pedestrian refuge island.

Roadway - The portion of the highway, including shoulders, intended for vehicular use.

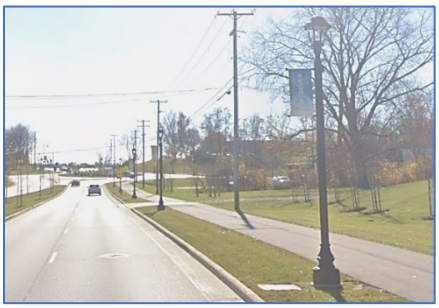
Rumble Strips - A textured or grooved pavement sometimes used on or along shoulders of highways to alert motorists who stray onto the shoulder.

Rumble Strips

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) - This is a national movement to improve safety of walking and biking to school, improve pedestrian and bicycle access to schools, and encourage biking and walking to school. SRTS includes state and federal funding programs and local programs.

Shared Bus/Bike Lane – Commonly on streets where there cannot be separate bike lanes, bicycles are permitted in the bus lane if bus traffic is low to moderate. These lanes are not preferred over separate bus and bike lanes, but can be beneficial to both bike and bus in certain situations.

Shared Use Path - A bikeway physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier and either within the highway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way. Shared-use paths may also be used by pedestrians, wheelchair users, and other non-motorized users. Shared use includes side paths and rail to trails.



Shared Use Path; Massillon Rd. in Green

Shoulder - This is the portion of the roadway contiguous with the travel lane for accommodation of stopped vehicles, emergency use and for lateral support of sub-base, base and surface courses. The shoulder is on the same level as the existing roadway surface.

Sidewalk - The portion of a street or highway right of-way designed for preferential or exclusive use by pedestrians. Generally, a sidewalk is paved path along the side of a road. A sidewalk may accommodate moderate changes in grade (height) and is normally separated from the vehicular traffic by a curb. There may also be a road verge, which is a strip of vegetation, grass, bushes or trees or a combination of these, more commonly referred to as a "Devil's Strip" in Northeast Ohio, either between the sidewalk and the roadway.

Signed Shared Roadway (Signed Bike Route) - This is a shared roadway which has been designated as a preferred route for bicycle use.

Thoroughfare - This is a road or street that connects one location to another.

Traffic Calming - Measures that consist of physical design, including narrowed roads and speed humps, put in place on roads for the intention of slowing down or reducing motor vehicle traffic and to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Trail - This is a type of facility that is physically separated from motor vehicle traffic by an open space or barrier or is located in an independent right-of-way. Trails are usually shared with other non-motorized users including pedestrians.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) – A planning concept that encourages walkable, mixed-use development near transit that supports sustainable communities and allows better access to jobs, retail, and residential areas. This type of development encourages equity and supports sustainable and vibrant communities.

Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) - The TASA Program provides funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Funding for TASA projects is assigned to MPO areas by Congress with ODOT suballocating a portion of its statewide TASA funding to Ohio MPOs. All TASA projects must relate to surface transportation and address a transportation need, use, or benefit. Project categories include pedestrian and bicycle facilities including Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects.

Urban Design - This is the process of designing and shaping cities, towns and villages. Urban design deals with the larger scale of groups of buildings, streets and public spaces, whole neighborhoods and districts, and entire cities, with the goal of making urban areas functional, attractive, and sustainable.

Vertical Traffic Calming - Vertical traffic calming devices, such as speed bumps, speed humps and raised intersections, are devices that are placed in the middle of a roadbed and require vehicles to slow down to cross over them.

← *Example of Vertical Traffic Calming*

Vision Zero - Vision Zero is a national campaign to eliminate all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries. Local governments can elect to become a Vision Zero community by setting clear goals for reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries, committing resources to achieving those goals, developing a plan or strategy around those goals, and establishing a Vision Zero Task Force.

Walkability - A measure of how conducive an area is to walking. Walkability has many health, environmental, and economic benefits. Factors influencing walkability include the presence or absence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, building accessibility, and safety, among others. Walkability is an important concept in sustainable urban design.

Walking Audit - This is an assessment of the walkability or pedestrian access of an external environment. Walking audits are often undertaken in street environments to consider and promote the needs of pedestrians as a form of transport. They can be undertaken by a range of different stakeholders including local community groups, transportation planners/engineers, urban designers, local police officers, and local officials. Walking audits often collect both quantitative and qualitative data on the walking environment.

Walk Friendly Community/Bike Friendly Community - Communities can gain designation as a Walk Friendly Community (through the Walk Friendly Communities Program) or as a Bike Friendly Community (through the League for American Bicyclists). Both designations require communities to conduct a self-assessment about policies and programs that impact active transportation. In addition to recognition, communities also receive feedback and resources to improve their local active transportation network and culture.

Walkshed - This is the land area within a defined walking range of a specified location such as a transit stop.

Walkway – Any defined path meant to be used by pedestrians, including sidewalks, shared-use paths, and roadway shoulders.

Wayfinding - Directional guidance for pedestrians, including signs, maps, and kiosks.

Wide Curb Lane Facility - Travel lane that is 14 feet or more, allowing a bicyclist to pass a four-wheel vehicle.

Wayfinding Signage in Barberton

Chapter 10 — Goals and Strategies

Continuously Improving the Active Transportation Network

Vision
The AMATS *Active Transportation Plan* envisions a region full of safe and comfortable places for walking and biking, and destinations worth visiting. At a general level, this can be achieved by implementing Complete Streets principles, promoting transportation choice, and focusing on connecting public spaces. AMATS' *Connecting Communities Guide* is a useful tool for improving connectivity and provides a framework for active transportation that is relevant today.

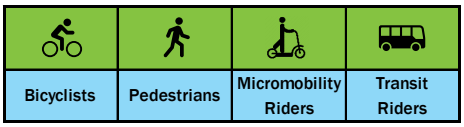
Goals and Strategies
The matrix on the following pages provides numerous goals and strategies that support the vision of safe and comfortable places that matter. Goals are divided into two types:

Infrastructure-related—Six goals and 13 strategies focused on how to build a better active transportation network. All these goals and strategies are project focused.

Outreach and Engagement-related—Four goals and nine strategies focused on planning and promotion of active transportation. These goals and strategies are activity focused and many of them can be done without a monetary cost.

Using the Goals and Strategies Matrix

- ***Goals*** are listed and defined in the green and yellow-shaded sections of the matrix.
- ***Strategies*** corresponding to each goal are listed below each goal.
- ***Benefit*** notes which users would benefit from the strategy being implemented. Benefit is divided into two groups: direct/primary and potential/secondary. Symbols for pedestrians, bicycles, micromobility riders, and transit riders—shown in the image to the right—are included where appropriate.

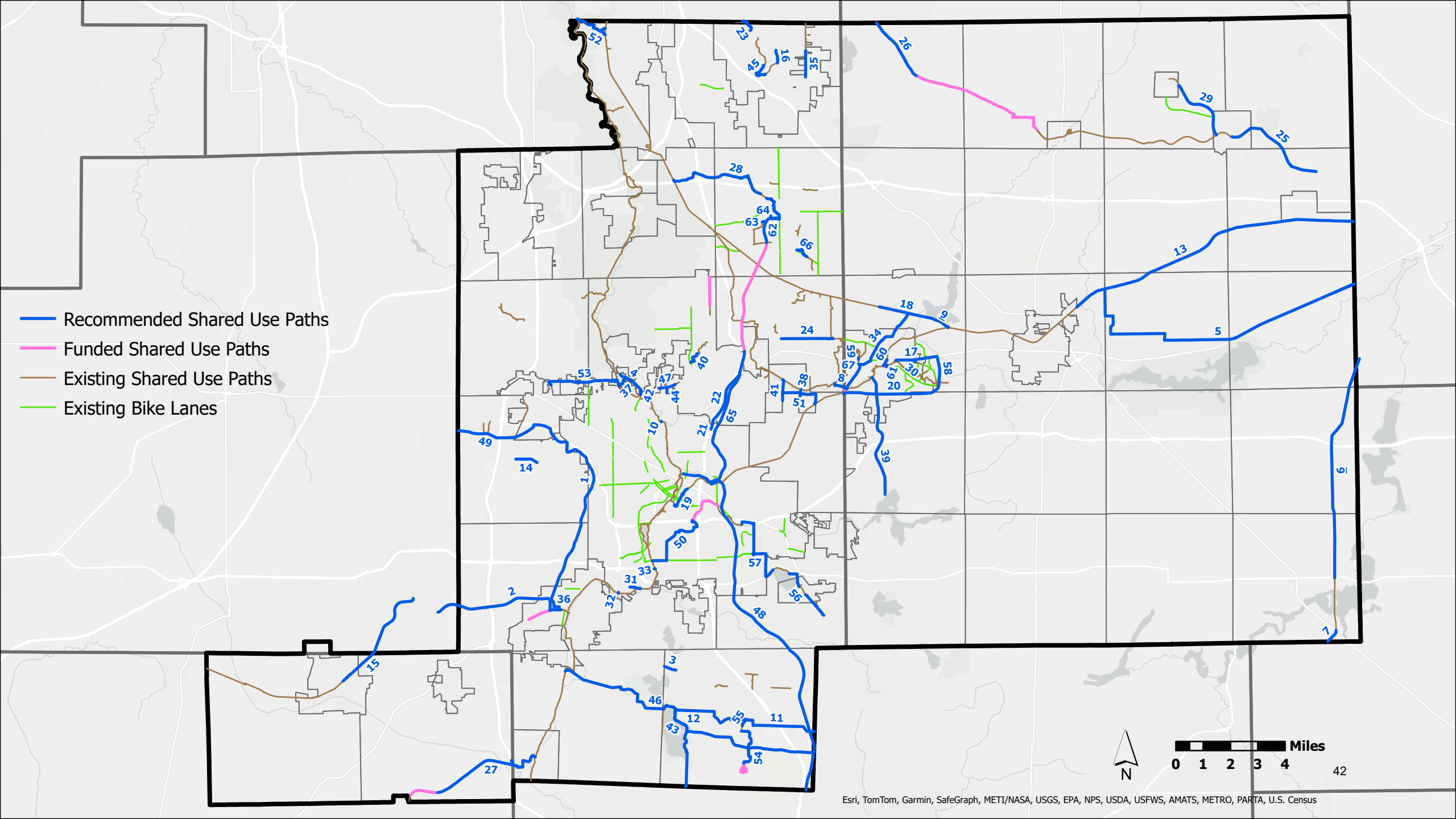


- ***Implementation*** lists the agencies responsible for putting the strategies into action. Lead agencies would be those leading the effort, while supporting agencies include those who would likely participate.
- ***How to Do It*** provides brief information on how to get started, including weblinks to learn more where appropriate.

Active Transportation Plan Goals and Strategies

Goal	Strategy	Benefit		Implementation		How To Do It
		Direct/Primary	Potential/Secondary	Lead	Support	
Infrastructure Goals	**Construct Additional Shared Use Paths -** *Shared use paths separated from vehicular traffic significantly contribute to the comfort and safety of people using other modes of transportation.*					
	Apply to AMATS funding sources such as TASA, STBG, and CRP and ODOT Safety programs to construct new bicycle trails and/or shared use paths along roadways.			Municipal governments, park districts, transit agencies	AMATS, ODOT	Focus on recommended/future shared use paths identified in this ATP and/or future planning study recommendations, e.g., Connecting Communities plans.
	Increase the Number of Bike Lanes - *Constructing bike lanes along roadways provides a dedicated space for cyclists and some level of separation and added protection from vehicular traffic.*					
	Consider road diets (where appropriate), reducing travel lanes and reappropriating roadway space to bicycle lanes.			Municipal governments	AMATS	Refer to 2015 (and forthcoming) AMATS *Road Diet Report* for possible locations.
	Apply to AMATS funding sources such as STBG to construct bicycle lanes on roadway projects.			Municipal governments	AMATS, transit agencies	Focus on recommended/future shared use paths identified in this ATP and/or future planning study recommendations, e.g., Connecting Communities plans.
	Increase the Quantity and Quality of Sidewalks - *Well-designed sidewalks allow for safe pedestrian travel, keeping pedestrians separated from vehicles and vegetation. Sidewalks are the most basic and most popular upgrade to a standard roadway.*					
	Apply to AMATS funding sources such as TASA, STBG, and CRP and ODOT Safety programs to construct new sidewalks along roadways, especially in areas where known sidewalk gaps exist.			Municipal governments	AMATS, transit agencies, major employers	Sidewalks should be considered along nearly all urban and suburban roadways within the AMATS planning area, and any areas with potential pedestrian demand.
	Apply to AMATS funding sources such as TASA, STBG, and CRP and ODOT Safety programs to upgrade existing sidewalks. Consider widened sidewalks especially in areas of higher pedestrian traffic.			Municipal governments	AMATS, transit agencies, major employers	Refer to AMATS' SS4A HIN web app to target areas of past pedestrian crashes. Indentify gap areas through the AMATS sidewalk inventory.
	Increase the walkability of transit stops by targeting the construction of new or improved sidewalks within a half mile of transit stops, particularly along priority routes and/or areas of high ridership.			Municipal governments, transit agencies	AMATS, Social Service agencies	Communities can work with METRO and PARTA to analyze transit stop data and assess areas where walkability to transit stops can be improved.
	Maintain Pavement in Good Repair - *Pavements in good and excellent condition are a prerequisite for safe and desirable places to ride bicycles and scooters.*					
	Continue investing in Pavement Condition Index (PCI) analysis that assesses the condition of road surfaces across the region. This allows communities to make wise decisions on how to maintain roadways.			AMATS members, AMATS		Support AMATS' continued investment in collecting this data and publishing reports/ *Pavement Management Dashboard.* https://roadinsights.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/d1f87f5a3ee74df38c8a9e11c8788485
	Apply to AMATS' Resurfacing Program and ODOT's Urban Paving Program to resurface key roadways, especially those conducive to safe bicycle transportation.			Municipal governments	ODOT, AMATS	Utilize the *Pavement Management Dashboard* to prioritize roadways for consideration.
	Improve Safety for Active Transportation - *Merely having bike and pedestrian amenities does not automatically make these users safe. Designing a system for safe travel for all users--not just vehicles--is important and necessary.*					
	Continue to support and work toward an areawide Vision Zero goal, which aims to significantly reduce and eventually eliminate roadway fatalities and serious injuries for all users.			AMATS members, AMATS	FHWA	Chapter 2 of AMATS' SS4A Action Plan decribes the *Vision Zero* commitment. Continuing the focus on FSI crashes via the SS4A Process and funding policy solidifies commitment.
	Consider FHWA's Proven Safety Countermeasures (PSCs) related to active transportation and implement as appropriate. PSCs can be incorporated systemically, as part of large projects, or as standalone improvements.			Project Applicants, AMATS	ODOT, FHWA	PSCs related to active transportation are listed and described earlier in this chapter. Also refer to Chapter 7 of AMATS' SS4A Action Plan.
	Focus on improving areas of known safety issues based on AMATS' Annual Crash Report (ACR) and the SS4A Action Plan. Apply for ODOT Safety funding or AMATS funding sources as appropriate.			Project Applicants, AMATS	ODOT, FHWA	Utilize SS4A Webapp and the ACR to understand where and why crashes are occurring. Identify any hotspots or patterns (AMATS staff can assist).
	Create Environments Conducive to Active Transportation - *Although often an afterthought, it is imperative to consider the comfort and feel of an area in order for active transportation usage to realize its potential.*					
	Ensure that quality landscaping is incorporated into project designs. This may include shade trees for pedestrians' benefit and/or other aesthetically pleasing greenery to make the project area more attractive.			Municipal governments, landscape-related professionals	ODOT	Consult with landscape architects, certified arborists and other professionals to ensure that the appropriate species of plants are incorporated into a project's design.
	Focus on quality design elements within and adjacent to the public sphere, e.g., powerlines, distance between bikes/people and vehicles, crossing distances, what buildings look like and how they are situated.			Municipal governments	ODOT, utility companies, consulting engineers	Conduct planning activities. Ensure that subdivision/land dev. ordinances require quality development. Be mindful of how these elements affect overall design prior to construction.

Goal	Strategy	Benefit		Implementation		How To Do It
		Direct/Primary	Potential/Secondary	Lead	Support	
Outreach and Encouragement Goals	**Spread Awareness/Education -** *Educating the public on how, why and where people can ride or walk can yield great health benefits and even reduce private vehicle trips. Having public buy-in can empower citizens and lead to strong partnerships.*					
	Conduct Bike-N-Brainstorm events that engage participants by giving them a voice in the planning process for potential improvements to the bicycle network.			Municipal governments, AMATS	Health agencies, CDCs, community institutions	Communities that want to improve bicycle infrastructure or obtain public input on current or future conditions should contact AMATS to plan an event.
	Promote Bike to Work Month.			AMATS, The League of American Bicyclists, Municipal governments	Employers	May is National Bike to Work Month. Organize and encourage bike events to further promote the benefits of cycling.
	Continue to help fund and participate with other Ohio Large MPOs in the Gohio Commute program, which helps commuters across the region explore their commute options.			AMATS, Ohio Association of Regional Councils (OARC)		Visit Gohio Commute website or watch for future e-blasts or social media posts from AMATS. https://gohiocommute.com/#/
	Help organize and/or participate in public events that help to promote active transportation as safe and healthy travel options.			Municipal governments, AMATS	Public health agencies	Communities interested in organizing an event can contact AMATS to help plan or participate. AMATS staff may attend and provide free giveaway items.
	Plan for Future Active Transportation Improvements - *Continued planning is necessary as the active transportation network expands and improves.*					
	Apply for Connecting Communities Planning Grants through AMATS to prioritize alternative transportation improvements that connect people and places and promote livable communities.			Municipal governments, transit agencies	AMATS	Watch for AMATS to release *Notice of Funding Availability* and apply for funding. Applicants can meet with AMATS staff at any time to discuss issues and goals.
	Prioritize active transportation by conducting community-led planning efforts such as comprehensive plans, corridor studies, or municipal-level Active Transportation Plans.			Municipal governments, agencies related to transit, health, and planning	AMATS	Advocate to make sure active transportation planning is a component of local planning studies and work to make sure recommendations are well thought-out and realistic.
	Promote Safe Routes to School (SRTS) - *All schoolchildren living reasonably close to schools should have the ability to get to school safely by walking or riding whether they do so by choice or out of necessity.*					
	Encourage communities and respective school districts to participate in the Ohio SRTS program and draft SRTS *School Travel Plans* that outline projects and programs to encourage walking and cycling.			School districts, Municipal Governments, ODOT	AMATS, FHWA	Visit ODOT's SRTS website to learn more: https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/programs/safe-routes-srts
	Encourage Transit Ridership Through Active Transportation Options - *A well-designed active transportation network can encourage transit ridership.*					
	Increase Awareness of Bike Racks on Buses.			METRO, PARTA	AMATS	Continue to promote to the bicyle community that METRO and PARTA have bike racks on all fixed route buses.
	Encourage the development and education surrounding the benefits of implementing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route(s) throughout the region.			Transit agencies, municipal governments, FTA Small Starts program	AMATS	Discuss with local municipalities the social, economic and financial benefits of TOD and BRT investments.. Gain an understanding of funding options for multiple scenarios.


Recommended Shared Use Paths
Funded Shared Use Paths
Existing Shared Use Paths
Existing Bike Lanes
N
Miles
0 1 2 3 4
42
Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS, AMATS, METRO, PARTA, U.S. Census

Shared Use Path Recommendations

Map #	Name	From	To	Length	County	Community
1	3 Creeks - Pigeon Creek / Wolf Creek Trail	Copley High School	Hopocan Ave	10.22	SUM	Barberton, Norton, Copley Twp., Fairlawn
2	3 Creeks - Silver Creek Trail	Silvercreek Rd (Wadsworth)	Magic Mile	5.55	SUM, MED	Wadsworth Twp., Norton, Barberton
3	619 Trail	Green West City Limits	S Main St	0.49	SUM	Green
4	Akron Peninsula Trail (Phase 2)	Portage Trail Ext	Timberland Village Apartments	1.12	SUM	Akron, Cuyahoga Falls
5	Arsenal South Trail	Conrail Freedom Secondary	Trumbull Co line	13.47	POR	Charlestown, Paris Twps.
6	Berlin Lake Trail North	Berlin Lake Trail (Northern End) / US 224	South of Hott West Rd	8.97	POR	Deerfield, Palmyra, Paris Twps.
7	Berlin Lake Trail South	Southern Portage County / Mahoning County Line	Berlin Lake Trail (Southern End)	0.58	POR	Deerfield Twp.
8	Bike & Hike - Portage Connector	Bike & Hike Trail	The Portage at Middlebury Rd	0.59	SUM, POR	Stow, Kent
9	Bike & Hike Trail extension	Ravenna Rd	Conrail Freedom Secondary	0.83	POR	Franklin Twp.
10	Cascade-Towpath Connector	Towpath Trail	Cascade Valley Metro Park Trail	0.03	SUM	Akron
11	City of Green Buckeye Trail (Part 1)	Green Middle School	Green East City Limits	3.21	SUM	Green
12	City of Green Buckeye Trail (Part 2)	Mt. Pleasant / Christman	Steese / Greenwood	6.25	SUM	Green
13	Conrail Freedom Secondary Trail	Peck Rd	Portage County - East County Line	11.88	POR	Charlestown, Freedom, Windham Twps.
14	Copley Community Park Connector	Copley Circle	Copley Community Park	0.88	SUM	Copley
15	County Line Trail North	County Line Trail	Interurban Trail (Wadsworth)	4.63	WAY, MED	Rittman, Chippewa and Wadsworth Twps.
16	Darrow Rd Shared Use Path	Miktarian Pkwy	Post Rd	0.52	SUM	Twinsburg
17	E Main St (SR 59) Bikeway	S Willow St	SR 261	1.65	POR	Kent, Franklin Twp.
18	Franklin Connector	Hudson Rd	Ravenna Rd	2.10	POR	Franklin Twp.
19	Freedom Trail (Phase IV)	Towpath Trail	Akron Secondary / CVS RR Junction	1.02	SUM	Akron
20	Freeway Trail	Middlebury Trailhead	Esplanade	4.13	POR	Kent, Franklin Twp.
21	Front St Shared Use Path	E Cuyahoga Falls Ave	Front Street Connector Trail	0.17	SUM	Akron
22	Front Street Connector Trail	Veterans Trail (Easton Dr)	Veterans Trail (Front St / Hudson Dr)	2.32	SUM	Cuyahoga Falls
23	Glenwillow Connector	Moraine Dr	Glenwillow South Corp Limit	0.64	SUM	Twinsburg
24	Graham Rd Shared Use Path	Darrow Rd (SR 91)	Stow-Munroe Falls High School	2.07	SUM	Stow
25	Headwaters Bikeway East	Windham St (SR 82)	Horn Rd	4.26	POR	Garrettsville, Nelson and Windham Twps.
26	Headwaters Bikeway West	Portage County / Geauga County Line	Chamberlain Rd	2.66	POR	Aurora
27	Heartland Trail	Coal Bank Rd	Towpath Trail (Clinton)	5.11	WAY, SUM	Chippewa Twp., Clinton
28	Heights to Hudson Trail	Bike and Hike Trail	Steepleview Dr	4.37	SUM	Boston Heights, Hudson
28	Heights to Hudson Trail	E of Clayton Ct	Veterans Trail North	1.25	SUM	Hudson
29	Hiram Trail	SR 305	Headwaters Trail	2.81	POR	Garrettsville, Hiram Twp., Hiram
30	Horning Rd Connection	E Main St	Horning Rd Shared Use Path	0.13	POR	Kent
31	Kenmore Carnegie Ave Towpath Connector	Lake Nesmith Park	Towpath Trail	0.45	SUM	Akron
32	Kenmore Towpath Footbridge A	Hancock Ave / Cory Ave	Towpath Trail	0.04	SUM	Akron
33	Kenmore Towpath Footbridge B	Nesmith Lake Blvd / Stanford St	Towpath Trail	0.05	SUM	Akron
34	Lake Rockwell Trail	Freedom Trail	Franklin Connector	4.21	POR	Kent, Franklin Twp.
35	Liberty Park Connector	Liberty Park	Liberty Trail	1.05	SUM	Twinsburg
36	Magic Mile (West)	W Hopocan Ave	4th St & W Wooster Rd	0.71	SUM	Barberton
37	Merriman Valley Cuyahoga River Bridge Connector	Akron Peninsula Rd	Towpath Trail	0.41	SUM	Akron
38	Metro Park River Crossing Connector	Munroe Falls Metro Park	Bike & Hike Trail	0.26	SUM	Munroe Falls
39	Mogadore Lake (W&LE)	Mogadore Reservoir	Cuyahoga River	4.93	POR	Brimfield, Kent

Map #	Name	From	To	Length	County	Community
40	Mud Brook - Mill Pond (Phase II)	E Bath Rd	State Rd	0.66	SUM	Cuyahoga Falls
41	Munroe Falls Metro Park Connector	Tallmadge Meadows Area Metro Park	Bike & Hike Trail	0.85	SUM	Munroe Falls
42	N Portage Path Existing Sidewalk	Towpath Trail	Portage Trail Extension	0.11	SUM	Akron
43	Nimisila Bikeway West	Nimisila Bikeway W	Caston Rd	0.92	SUM	Green
44	Northampton Rd Shared Use Path	Cascade Valley Metro Park - Schumacher	Portage Trail Extension West Shared Use Path	0.22	SUM	Akron
45	Park Loop Trail	Center Valley Bikeway	Center Valley Parkway	0.92	SUM	Twinsburg
46	Portage Lakes Trail	Towpath Trail	Railroad Corridor Trail	11.77	SUM	New Franklin, Green
47	Portage Trail Extension West Shared Use Path	780 Portage Trl Ext W	440 Portage Trl Ext W	0.68	SUM	Akron, Cuyahoga Falls
48	Railroad Corridor Trail	Northside Connector	Green South City Limits	15.46	SUM	Green, Springfield Twp., Akron
49	Ridgewood Rd Trail	Medina Line Rd	S Cleveland Massillon Rd	2.31	SUM	Copley Twp.
50	Rubber City Heritage Trail (Phases 4-8)	Brown / Johnston	Towpath Trail	3.32	SUM	Akron
50	Rubber City Heritage Trail (Phase 9)	Seiberling St	Massillon Rd	0.56	SUM	Akron
51	S River Rd Trail	S Main St	Freedom Trail	1.75	SUM	Munroe Falls
52	Sagamore Hills Bike & Hike Connector	Towpath Trail	Bike & Hike Trail	1.73	SUM, CUY	Sagamore Hills Twp., Valley View
53	Sourek Corridor Trail	Ghent Rd METRO RTA Park & Ride	Towpath Trail	3.32	SUM	Bath, Akron, Cuyahoga Falls
54	Southgate Connector Trail	Koons Rd	Willadale Trail Split	1.66	SUM	Green
54	Southgate Connector Trail	Willadale Trail Split (from Greensburg)	Shriver Rd	0.26	SUM	Green
55	Southgate Trail	PLCC North Driveway	Central Park	0.37	SUM	Green
56	Spartan Trail East	Spartan Trail (East End)	Kenny Ray Jr Memorial Pkwy	0.85	SUM	Lakemore, Springfield Twp.
56	Spartan Trail East	Sanitarium Rd	Canton Rd	1.10	SUM	Springfield Twp.
57	Spartan Trail West	Massillon Rd / Englewood Ave	Spartan Trail (West End)	3.13	SUM	Springfield Twp., Akron
58	SR 261 Trail	Esplanade	E Main St (SR 59) Bikeway	1.02	POR	Kent, Franklin Twp.
59	Stonewater Connection	Stonewater Dr Shared Use Path (South End)	Stonewater Dr Shared Use Path (North End)	0.07	POR	Kent
60	The Portage	Stow St	W Main St	0.29	POR	Kent
61	The Portage Bike & Hike Connection	Summit St / Franklin St	The Portage Bike & Hike	0.07	POR	Kent
62	Veterans Trail North	Barlow Rd Shared Use Path	Darrow Rd (SR 91)	1.50	SUM	Hudson
63	Veterans Trail North Connector A	Veterans Trail (West side of Cascade Park)	Veterans Trail North	0.15	SUM	Stow, Hudson
64	Veterans Trail North Connector B	Veterans Trail (South of Veterans Way Bridge)	Veterans Way / Milford Dr	0.12	SUM	Hudson
65	Veterans Trail South	Freedom Trail	Springdale Rd	5.91	SUM	Akron, Cuyahoga Falls, Silver Lake, Stow
66	W Barlow Rd Shared Use Path	Barlow Farm Park	Wood Hollow Metropark	0.62	SUM	Hudson
67	W Main St Connection	Lake Rockwell Trail	Stonewater Dr Shared Use Path	0.05	POR	Kent

Chapter 11 — Conclusion

The first principle for AMATS Connecting Communities initiative is to "Provide more transportation choices." With a connected system that allows alternative modes of travel, more people can take advantage of transportation choices. The result is a vibrant community, fewer cars on the roads, less congestion and better air quality. People can lead active, healthy lifestyles, and local economies can benefit from a population that has easier access to business.

This Plan has taken an in-depth look at the types of travel that take place in the region and the areas where improvements can be made. The AMATS region has benefitted from investment in the trail system since the 1970s and continues to see growth through trail connections and on-road facilities. The region boasts miles of bike lanes and shared use paths, providing pedestrians and cyclists alike another option for safe travel. In this ATP, transit and micromobility have been studied for their effect on the active transportation system for the first time.

The ATP defines the goals and strategies to be utilized by AMATS to incorporate active transportation into the current system. AMATS' Connecting Communities Planning Grant Program, Bike-N-Brainstorm events, and *Funding Policy Guidelines* have contributed to the area's progress in advancing these goals.

The ATP envisions a future where all transportation networks are intertwined to create a cohesive, efficient, and sustainable system. This Plan is a key component to AMATS' next long-range transportation plan, *Transportation Outlook 2050*, and is therefore an integral part in planning for the region's future.

Ohio & Erie Canalway Towpath Trail, Cascade Locks in Akron

Appendix A - Public Outreach Process

At the onset of the development of this Plan, AMATS staff desired to include input from its committee members and the public. The purpose of this ATP is to summarize and present the progress that has been made in the Greater Akron area since the last version of the plan was adopted in 2019. Initially, staff coordinated with member communities to determine existing conditions and planned projects. This information was then shared publicly to ensure that the plans would meet the needs of active transportation users in the region. The result of this engagement is a comprehensive review of the region's approach to active transportation. AMATS thanks those that assisted in the development of this Plan.

Below is a summary of the activity that took place to include as many voices as possible in this process.

November 1-30, 2023

AMATS staff contacted member communities for updates to the *Current Bicycle Network*. An interactive map was emailed to AMATS members. Staff wanted to include new bike lanes and trails since the map was created in 2019. Staff received several responses from communities.

January 31, 2024 to February 16, 2024

AMATS staff contacted member communities and partners in the region to prepare a list of recommendations for future trails. Staff provided a map of what projects were initially known and asked that any additional future projects be added to the map. In addition to AMATS members, contacts were made with Cuyahoga Valley National Park, several townships in the AMATS region, and Wayne County Rails to Trails advocates.

March 1-22, 2024

An interactive map was made available to the public. Staff put together the current bike network and future shared use path projects and asked for input from the public. This map was placed on the AMATS website and emailed to AMATS Citizens Involvement Committee (CIC) members. Additionally, this map was discussed at the March 21, 2024 CIC meeting. The comments staff received were shared with the AMATS Policy Committee at its meeting on March 28, 2024. These comments are listed in Appendix B – Public Comments.

March 28, 2024

Staff shared the Goals and Strategies of the Active Transportation Plan and the Shared Use Path Recommendations with the Policy Committee. These recommendations received AMATS Policy Committee approval on March 28, 2024.

Appendix B – Public Comments on Shared-Use Path Recommendations Map

Comment	Subject Type	Comment Type	AMATS Response/Follow-Up Action
Add path connect Nieman St and/or Jewett St to Freedom trail via unparceled land (according to summit GIS). It would grant the neighborhood access to the trail without needing to leave quite streets.	Path	Addition	Private property; comment was shared with City of Akron.
Should the shared use path on the East side of Cleveland Mas. Rd be shown on this map? Also there doesn't appear to be a submit button on this form. So I'm not sure these commetns are being submitted	Path	Missing Link	Added existing link to Shared-Use Path map
Either this or the suggested path on Carnegie Ave would be great as this neighborhood is very close to the towpath but biking down 91 is not reasonable even for that short bit.	Path	Affirmation	
Either this or the suggested path on Carnegie Ave would be great as this neighborhood is very close to the towpath but biking down 91 is not reasonable even for that short bit.	Path	Affirmation	
There is a strip of land owned by Durst, that connects the intersection of Brady Lake Rd and 2nd Ave to the Portage H&B Trail near the bridge over Breakneck Creek. Add a trail here	Path	Addition	AMATS followed up with Portage Parks District who indicated that they have tried to negotiate this in the past, but could not reach a resolution. A major obstacle is crossing the CSX rail line, even though historic crossing rights are in the deed.
This is an endpoint for a strip of land suitable for a connecting bike trail from the intersection of Brady Lake Ave and 2nd Ave. An adjacent parcel of city land could acommodate a switchback to access the Portage H&B Trail.	Path	Addition	See comment above.
Clear visually obstructing foliage from this corner, which is owned by Portage Co.	Other		
clear visually obstructing vegetation from this corner, owned by Portage County	Other		
I really like the idea of a path running along the railroad here. It's quite nice through the woods there, and the length of the proposed trail is very impressive. Having an inter urban trail that runs through green would be amazing.	Path	Affirmation	
A trail running along the train line like proposed here would be a well deserved start of an interurban trail for green, especially off of the corridor of Massillon Road, where it seems like all the pedestrian infrastructure is going. The problem I've	Path	Affirmation	
Connection from the Lakemore part of the Spartan Trail to the Lakefront would be a nice addition connecting Springfield and Lakemore together.	Path	Affirmation	
I like the idea of connecting to Boettler park	Path	Affirmation	
why not put a roundabout here?	Other		
Add Veterans Trail from Front St to Freedom Trail	Path	Missing Link	Connecting line added to Plan.
Tunnel under Route 8 connecting Veterans Trail to Highbridge Glens Trail at the existing observation bridge over the Cuyahoga River.	Path	Addition	Neat idea, but AMATS felt this would be cost-prohibitive. Summit Metro Parks (SMP) and Cuyahoga Falls (C. Falls) confirmed this to be the case and noted they do not have plans to make this connection. C. Falls acknowledges this is a major barrier and has discussed alternative ideas.
Connect paths along West Portage Trail between Northampton Rd and Akron Peninsula Rd with a shared-up path or a sidewalk.	Path	Addition	Unfeasible due to slope, but sidewalks are planned.
Mud Brook Trail connection from Graham Rd/State Rd to Akron Peninsula Rd	Path	Addition	AMATS discussed this with Akron, C. Falls, and SMP; Although this connection is proposed in both the county trail plan and the Merriman/Shumacher Valley plan, the consensus is that there are property/easement difficulties and topographical issues that would make this a difficult trail to build. No plans are in place at this time to pursue.
Bike lanes along Bath Rd connecting State Rd bike lanes to Mud Brook Trail	Lanes		

Comment	Subject Type	Comment Type	AMATS Response/Follow-Up Action
Highbridge Trail connection from Front St to Towpath Trail through Gorge Metro Park and Valley View area of Cascade Valley Metro Park with new bridge over Cuyahoga River.	Path	Addition	Path feasibility ruled out by SMP.
Bridge over Cuyahoga River connecting Towpath Trail to Valley View area of Cascade Valley Metro Park with connection to Highbridge Trail in Gorge Metro Park.	Path	Addition Connect	Added. AMATS discussed with SMP. SMP indicated that they have conceptual plans to make this connection. They intend to ask for design proposals this year and look for additional funds to construct the bridge after 2026.
Trail on rail spur owned by Norfolk Southern connecting Veterans Trail to Mud Brook Trail.	Path	Addition	AMATS discussed this with C. Falls and SMP; SMP was in negotiations with NS Railroad to purchase corridor, which they believed was sole owner. Late in process, it was discovered that it was not all owned by NS and would be difficult/impossible to obtain, so SMP had to pull out of deal.
Shared use path along Wyoga Lake Rd from Steels Corners Rd to State Rd. I think this path is part of an existing project that is already funded.	Path	Missing Link	Added. AMATS confirmed with Cuyahoga Falls that the shared-use path will be on the east side of Wyoga Lake Rd. and run from Steels Corners to Seasons Rd.
Multipurpose trail on this narrow piece of Cuyahoga Valley National Park, connecting planned shared use path on Wyoga Lake Rd. Extending the connection to Quick Rd would make a nice connection into the National Park.	Path	Addition	Great idea, will continue to monitor in future conversations with CVNP
Shared use path along Akron Peninsula Rd from Main St to Brandywine Golf Course. This connection was identified in the National Park's Brandywine Golf Course plan.	Path	Missing Link	Planning study is still underway as of this ATP's writing. Because some of the conceptual ideas proposed involve re-routing of Akron-Peninsula Road, we will wait to show this proposed shared-use path until the final alignments are determined.
Connection from Veterans Trail to Front St Connector Trail/shared-use path/Highbridge Trail via Belden Ave/Easton Dr.	Path	Addition	This would be a great connection, Contact with Akron would be needed.
This is a Connection: Towpath to Cuyahoga falls. Safe Connection off the busy and hilly roads in the area. Needs connection to Front St.	Path	Addition	Will follow up with SMP
New Trail in this area should route along 2nd then balley. Hudson and 59 is very busy and can be avoided.	Path	Realignment	This idea was shared with the TASCforce. They indicated that the current proposed alignment varies from what AMATS has mapped, so AMATS map was adjusted. TASCforce is open to considering other alignments as design for the trail progresses.
sidewalk is unsafe to bike on and road in unsafe to bike on. This is a dead end for family friendly biking. I would use state or Home ave to go south. Or fix going south on sidewalks that are clear of obstacles	Sidewalk	General	
These parks could have a bike path connecting them. Would be very useful option crossing north hill	Path	Addition	AMATS shared this idea with the City of Akron. No plans are in place to have a connecting bike path constructed.
261 already has an adequate shoulder for bikes. However the shoulders are NOT maintained at this location, which is the border between Kent, Franklin Township and Brimfield Township. Responsibility should be negotiated. Riders are currently forced ont	General	Maintenance	Future Shared Use Path planned.
Severe heaving is an issue along this segment of Kent's section of the Portage. Temporary repairs were appreciated, but the damage is accelerating.	Path	Maintenance	Will pass along to PCPD.
There is an existing paved path between Ruth St. and the roads in Waterworks Park. This link up to the spur off the Summit Bike and Hike Trail along the Cuyahoga River. While rideable, this connection can be improved. It is a great connector to busine	Path	Addition	This will have to remain as a sidewalk because ROW isn't large enough for anything more.
This quiet neighborhood is the logical connector route from Waterworks park to the Veterans Trail near Edison St.	Path	Addition	This would be a good connection, however the low volume roads are adequate to make the connection.
see pdf submitted to Matt for bike trail from Gabe's lot to 6th St	Path	Addition	Major project along 59 is funded that will include improvements that would accomplish this connection.
Can Peck Rd be designated as a county bike route between the Portage H&B Trail and the Headwaters Trail? This is the safest route, but could benefit from markings and a wider shoulder.	Lanes	Addition	
Main St in Windham will eventually serve as a connecting route between any extension of the Portage along the CSX line, and any future extension of the Headwaters Trail. It will also serve as a connector to a mapped road route to the Western Reserve Gre	Lanes	Addition	
Hudson Rd is in need of resurfacing, especially in Kent. This is the defacto connector between the main Portage H&B trail and the Franklin Connector/Summit B&H Trail. A narrow should should be added during repaving. The condition of the road makes pas	Other	Maintenance	
There is an existing path here that crosses route 8 and connects to Millboro Rd. By connecting the endpoint of this overpass ramp to the existing bike route through Silver Lake, it will be possible to avoid riding through the neighborhood north of Graha	Path	Missing Link	Bridge added.

Comment	Subject Type	Comment Type	AMATS Response/Follow-Up Action
Explore a spur connecting to Veterans way via a business in this area. This provides on grade access to businesses along the road and in the adjacent plaza. It avoids the steep climb over the rail corridor on Veterans Way.	Path	Addition	Idea was shared with Hudson, who is currently in the process of acquiring the rail line. Northern limits are just north of Veterans Way bridge, so a logical connection to Veterans Way would be just north of the bridge, along city-owned property. Alignment added to the map.
Add trail connection from the Hudson/Judson trailhead south on Hudson Rd to connect to the Lake Rockwell Trail	Lanes	Addition	
There is an existing shared-use path along Wyoga Lake Rd from E Steels Corners Rd to Hardman Dr	Path	Missing Link	Will add to map
A bike connection on V Odom to Hawkins should be looked at when this road is resurfaced	Lanes		
There is a bike lane WB here from Case to Exchange	Lanes		Will verify and update as needed
A road diet and bike lanes are planned here between Buchtel and Case with the upcoming resufacing.	Lanes		
Road diet and bike lanes planned here with resurfacing project	Lanes		
bike lanes and road diet planned on Market between Innovation Way and Rt 8	Lanes		
A road diet and bike lanes are planned between I76 and Canton Road in coordination with the resurfacing on Market St to the west.	Lanes		
A road diet and bike lanes are planned on N Main between All Americal Bridge and High Level Bridge	Lanes		
A road diet and bike lanes are planned between All America Bridge and High Level bridge	Lanes		
This section should be from Front St to Pedestrian Bridge over SR 8 - not Springdale.	Path	Correction	Extents have been updated.
This section should be from Pedestrian Bridge over SR 8 (not Front)	Path	Correction	Extents have been updated.
I believe this section is shown on the wrong track bed. This track bed is a live track. The one immediately to the West is the Akron Secondary Line..	Path	Correction	Reviewed and this is correct. Shared Use Path map's lines are meant to be generally accurate, but may be off by a few feet.
I am happy to see that this section connects the Veterans Trail to both the Freedom Trail and the Railroad Corridor Trail (leased by CVSR?). This connection will result in a loop trail around downtown Akron formed by the Veterans Trail, Freedom Trail, a	Path	Affirmation	
It would be nice if this end of downtown Cuyahoga Falls Trail could be linked to the Veterans Trail - forming another loop trail	Path	Addition	This would be a great connection, Contact with Akron would be needed.
This section already has a TASA $770K grant approved by AMATS. It should be a priority.	Path	Affirmation	