

AMATS TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROSPECTUS



December 2020

**Modified January 2021 to Reflect Updated Agreements*

AKRON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
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This report is the product of a study financed (in part) by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and the Ohio Department of Transportation.

The contents of this report reflect the views of the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study which is responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation. This report does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation.

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.

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Introduction

About the MPO

The Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) is the federally designated transportation planning agency for the Greater Akron area. Specifically, AMATS covers Summit and Portage counties and the Chippewa and Milton Township areas of Wayne County. Since the 1960's, the federal government has required that metropolitan areas undertake a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process. Legislation requires that all modes of surface transportation be considered during the planning process including vehicles, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel, and freight movement for people and goods.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) exist throughout the United States in all urbanized areas of more than 50,000 people and have the authority to prioritize, plan, and program transportation projects in urban/metropolitan areas for federal funding. In Ohio, seventeen MPOs work in partnership with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) in their respective planning areas. AMATS role in transportation is to:

- Monitor the conditions of the existing transportation network.
- Identify existing capacity or safety problems through detailed planning studies to develop transportation improvements.
- Forecast future population and employment growth for the region.
- Develop alternative growth scenarios to evaluate the affects that land use and transportation choices made today will have on the region's future.
- Help plan road and bridge repairs, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and public transportation investments that will move goods and people safely and efficiently throughout the region.
- Estimate the impact that an expanding transportation system will have on air quality.
- Develop a financial plan that identifies the costs and revenues associated with the continued operation, maintenance, and future expansion of the region's transportation system.
- Work with the public and stakeholders to determine the region's priorities for improving the transportation system with the anticipated revenue.

AMATS leads the development of the region's Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Each fiscal year, AMATS publishes its anticipated planning activities and funding sources for the coming year in its Transportation Planning Work Program and Budget (WP). The agency also contributes to ongoing conversations about issues such as land use, economic development, safety and security, the environment, and public health. AMATS serves as a regional forum for discussion and cooperation between elected officials, the public, planners and engineers in working together to set transportation policies and implement transportation improvements that meet the needs and challenges of the region.

AMATS is governed by the Policy Committee, whom is responsible for directing the transportation planning process, policy and funding decisions. It is comprised of elected representatives from municipalities, counties, villages, townships, regional transit authorities, and ODOT. AMATS partners also include some non-governmental members represented from colleges, businesses, special districts and other groups who share in our goal to maintain and promote our region's strong assets.

The AMATS staff serves all the committees, is responsible for carrying out the technical work of the agency, and compiles and analyzes information that local elected officials need to set priorities and make plans. The staff is made up of individuals primarily from engineering and planning disciplines.

About the Transportation Planning Prospectus

AMATS Transportation Planning Prospectus presents an overview of the Akron area MPO, its organizational structure and responsibilities for conducting the transportation planning process, the procedures used to carry out the federally-mandated transportation planning process in the Greater Akron area, and transportation-related air quality planning. The prospectus also provides a summary of other agencies involved in regional planning activities, documents interagency agreements, and includes the Organizational Bylaws of the AMATS governing body known as the Transportation Policy Committee. AMATS serves to concentrate transportation planning activities on critical issues and problems that affect quality of life for everyone in our region.

The Prospectus may be updated at any time following the formal adoption of or revisions to MPO plans and programs by the Policy Committee. Amendments to the bylaws of the AMATS Policy Committee, contained in this Prospectus, must be adopted by the Policy Committee according to the procedures outlined in said Bylaws. The AMATS Policy Committee bylaws were updated and approved by the Policy Committee in December 2019.

The 3-C Transportation Planning Process

AMATS is one of 17 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in Ohio. These organizations, along with their counterparts throughout the United States, were established as a result of the 1962 Federal Aid Highway Act. One of the provisions of this piece of legislation is to require MPOs to establish a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive (or “3-C”) transportation planning process in order to receive federal funds for transportation improvements.

Definition of the 3-C's

- *Continuous* – Planning must be maintained as an ongoing activity and should address both short-term needs and the long-term vision for the region.
- *Cooperative* – The process must involve a wide variety of interested parties through a public participation process.
- *Comprehensive* – The process must cover all transportation modes and be consistent with regional and local land use and economic development plans.

The 3-C transportation planning process also provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, consistent with the region's overall economic, social and environmental goals. AMATS places special emphasis on providing equal access to a variety of transportation choices and effective public involvement in the transportation planning process.

The Metropolitan Planning Area

The Akron metropolitan area is located in Northeast Ohio and encompasses Summit County, Portage County, and the Chippewa and Milton Township areas of Wayne County. It is comprised of 18 cities, 17 villages, and 29 townships. The area is home to a large number of manufacturing facilities, trucking terminals, two major universities, a regional airport, and a wide variety of historic, cultural, and recreational attractions. A map of the AMATS Planning Area is shown in **Appendix A**.

Mission, Guiding Principles, Regional Goals and Objectives

Mission Statement

AMATS' role in the Greater Akron area is to provide quality transportation planning for an effective and efficient transportation system to improve quality of life in the region. To achieve a sustainable intermodal transportation system, AMATS makes sure that federal funds spent in the Greater Akron area are used strategically with the region's best interests in mind. AMATS promotes all forms of transportation including the automobile, transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel. AMATS is committed to ensuring public input received is considered in all transportation planning decisions.

Regional Goals and Objectives

AMATS goals and objectives promote the transparency of public data and decision making and seeks to improve the accountability of public spending by better linking investments to outcomes. The goals and objectives address key desired outcomes that shape planning priorities.

- Maintain the existing transportation system
- Maintain a safe, secure, efficient and integrated transportation system
- Integrate all modes of the transportation system where appropriate
- Increase mobility for all persons
- The transportation system should support the economic vitality of the region
- Encourage smart regional land use strategies and development patterns

Performance-Based Planning and Transportation Goals

Recent federal legislation (MAP-21 and the FAST Act) features a new federal emphasis on performance measurement. Performance measures are central to implementing a Performance-Based Planning Process (PBPP) that guides decision making. How performance is defined and measured can significantly affect the types of projects and strategies that are advanced by decision makers. Performance measures aim to answer questions about whether the performance of the transportation system is getting better or worse over time.

Performance measures also aim to demonstrate whether transportation investments are correlated or linked to stated goals and whether they produce desired outcomes.

Currently, US DOT has established performance measures. MPOs must incorporate these performance measures and targets into their TIPs and Long Range Regional Transportation Plans (LRPs).

The US DOT has established seven areas for national performance goals:

- Safety
- Infrastructure Condition
- Congestion Reduction
- System Reliability
- Freight Movement and Economic Vitality
- Environmental Sustainability
- Reduced Project Delivery Delays

To implement performance measure goals, US DOT has developed measures and minimum standards for states to follow for the various core programs established in federal legislation. US DOT has issued performance measure goals for each of the above areas individually.

In addition to federal-aid highway goals, federal-aid public transportation goals must also be considered in performance-based planning. The federal-aid transportation goals include:

1. Provide funding to support public transportation.
2. Improve the development and delivery of capital projects.
3. Establish standards for the state of good repair of public transportation infrastructure and vehicles.
4. Promote continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning (3-Cs) that improves the performance of the transportation network.
5. Establish a technical assistance program to assist recipients under this chapter to more effectively and efficiently provide public transportation service.
6. Continue Federal support for public transportation providers to deliver high quality service to all users, including individuals with disabilities, seniors, and individuals who depend on public transportation.
7. Support research, development, demonstration, and deployment projects dedicated to assisting in the delivery of efficient and effective public transportation service.
8. Promote the development of the public transportation workforce.

Transportation Issues

Providing a comprehensive, well-maintained transportation network is one of the most important functions of government. Essentially all economic activity is facilitated in some manner, by the existing transportation infrastructure network. AMATS examines the current and future needs of Greater Akron's transportation system and develops policy and project recommendations through maintaining its long range regional transportation plan.

In order for transportation projects to receive federal funding they must be consistent with AMATS LRP, the most recent being *Transportation Outlook 2040 (TO2040)*. Federal funds may only be invested on roadways that are contained in the Federal Functional Classification of Highways. Local roadways are not eligible for funding. The plan includes long term highway, transit, bike and pedestrian project recommendations. These transportation issues specific to AMATS are described below.

Highway System

Highways are the most critical element of the region's transportation system. The goal of AMATS is to maintain and preserve the existing highway system as well as improve its safety and efficiency. Highway improvements are funded through federal transportation dollars and these funds can be used for many types of projects including resurfacing, turn lanes and traffic signals, and major widening projects.

Highway considerations include the following:

- Preservation
- Operational and Safety Projects

- Asset Management Planning
- Reduce Congestion by Promoting Alternative Modes of Transportation
- Complete Streets
- Future Technology
- Highway Transportation Infrastructure Investments

Transit System

The availability of a comprehensive, reliable transit network is vital to helping those who lack or are unable to use reliable transportation to get to work, have access to shopping and services, and complete other important daily tasks. A convenient transit network can also draw riders who have access to automobiles, but choose to use transit for reasons of ease, affordability and convenience.

AMATS is working with transit providers to preserve the existing transit system, provide enhanced service in key high-volume corridors and allow for strategic expansion into new communities that contain high densities of jobs, retail and other attractions.

Transit considerations include the following:

- Fix-It-First
- Service Enhancement
- Cross County Service
- Coordination
- Rail Portfolio Preservation
- Public Transit Investment

Bicycle and Pedestrian Alternatives

Biking and walking are integral parts of daily life, as well as vital components of a first-class, multi-modal transportation system. Many Greater Akron area communities recognize the growing role of biking and walking as transportation options and are incorporating bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure into their future plans. Through various public outreach initiatives, AMATS has determined that many residents consider biking and walking to be desirable and vibrant modes of travel, but not convenient or – in some cases – safe modes.

The *Active Transportation Plan (ATP)* presents the various strategies and recommendations that the agency will pursue to improve the Greater Akron area's bicycle and pedestrian networks. A basic principle of the ATP is to ensure that there will be transportation choices for people of all ages and abilities within the Greater Akron area.

Existing Biking Network

The Greater Akron area's bike network currently encompasses over 122 miles of shared-use paths and 50 miles of bike lanes, as well as 12 miles of mountain bike trails. Significant elements of this regional network include The Ohio & Erie Towpath Trail, the Summit Metro Parks Bike and Hike Trail, The Portage Hike and Bike Trail, and the Headwaters Trail. The region's network will likely continue to grow in the future as these shared-use paths present many opportunities for nearby communities to link to the current bike network.

Existing Pedestrian Network

Despite the Greater Akron area's overall walkability, the presence, quality, and connectivity of its pedestrian networks vary greatly throughout the region from community to community. The AMATS region boasts 2,860 miles of sidewalks. A number of the region's older established communities have extensive sidewalk networks that also provide access to available transit service. Unfortunately, many of these older networks also lack newer amenities and facilities that would encourage additional pedestrian travel such as crosswalks, mid-block crossings, plazas, signs, signals, illumination, benches and connections to shared-use paths.

AMATS has made considerable progress in promoting pedestrian accessibility in both its older, established and newer, suburban communities through its Connecting Communities Program. The program was launched in 2011, which helps communities strike a balance between their land use decisions and transportation investments. The Program provides financial grants for the development of plans and studies that promote vibrant, livable communities.

Transportation Planning and Programming

One of the goals in carrying out the regional transportation planning process for the Greater Akron area is to encourage the development of a balanced and integrated transportation system that will increase mobility for all persons and support the economic vitality of the region. The primary purpose of AMATS is to provide coordinated long and short-term transportation planning within the Greater

Akron area. AMATS completes a number of transportation planning and programming activities for the region that are aimed at these goals.

Transportation Planning Work Program and Budget

Each year, AMATS adopts a Transportation Planning Work Program and Budget (WP) that identifies all federally-funded regional transportation planning activities or studies that will be carried out by the MPO staff, consultants, or partnering agencies during the upcoming federal fiscal year. The WP also serves as the MPO's annual operating budget and provides the schedule for membership dues. It supports the maintenance of effective and ongoing long-range and short-range elements of the transportation planning process. This process will ensure that project sponsors in the AMATS area will be eligible to receive federal financial assistance to implement projects.

The AMATS WP identifies specific planning activities and receivables that are reviewed and approved by ODOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The WP reflects the planning requirements and goals of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, signed into law on December 4, 2015, and contains many of the same provisions of the previous law, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21).

The AMATS Transportation Planning Work Program and Budget is available online at:

<http://amatsplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/FY-2021-Work-Program-Final.pdf>

Transportation Improvement Program

AMATS prepares the TIP on a biennially basis. The TIP is a comprehensive and financially-constrained listing of regional transportation projects that are scheduled to receive federal funds within the next four years. The program includes projects from all modes of transportation including highways, public transportation or transit, bicycles and pedestrians.

The TIP is important because it provides a schedule by which to coordinate projects among jurisdictions and transportation agencies; is used as a guide for implementation of short and long range transportation planning; is an aid to financial programming and administration; and is a source of information for the public. No project can be implemented with federal transportation funds unless it is included in the TIP. Because of this provision, the AMATS Policy Committee has considerable control on the use of federal transportation funds in the AMATS study area.

The TIP is developed in a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive manner with ODOT and area transit operators. The project listings are regularly monitored and updated to reflect implementation of programmed projects, additions of new projects, major changes in projects and deletions of canceled projects. Once the TIP is adopted by the AMATS Policy Committee, it is then included in ODOT's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and subsequently approved by the Governor of Ohio.

AMATS is the program manager for several federal funding programs in which sponsors apply for project funding. In order to provide a systematic method for developing and modifying the TIP for projects that utilize AMATS sub allocated federal funds, the Policy Committee has adopted the *AMATS Funding Policy Guidelines*, which provides the criteria to evaluate submitted projects.

Long Range Regional Transportation Plan

The LRP examines the current and future needs of greater Akron's transportation system and develops policy and project recommendations to ensure our system remains an asset to the region from now and into the future. The Plan is prepared by AMATS every four years. In order for transportation projects to receive federal funding they must be consistent with the LRP.

The plan includes long term highway, transit, bike and pedestrian project recommendations, as well as performance measures for the transportation system. Project recommendations from the plan must be fiscally constrained, meaning that the cost of the recommendations cannot exceed the estimated funding that the region anticipates receiving over the life of the plan.

Congestion Management Process

The objective of the Congestion Management Process (CMP) is to minimize congestion and delay on the transportation system. Minimizing congestion and delay will improve the efficiency of the movement of people and goods. The CMP identifies existing and projected future congestion on our region's freeways, arterials and intersections. It examines public transit levels of service availability and freight needs. It also isolates and examines congestion related to traffic incidents; demand and supply-side strategies to manage regional congestion; and it includes specific recommendations to address congested areas.

Data Collection and Analysis

Traffic data must be collected in order to measure the performance of the transportation system. Traffic counts are taken on a regular basis within the roadway network. This data is then used as an input to model traffic congestion for the existing and future roadway network. From the modeling output, the roadway network is analyzed to determine areas of high traffic congestion. Public transit

information is received from both transit agencies (METRO RTA and PARTA) within the AMATS area.

Assess Congestion Management Recommendations

To effectively understand how past congestion management projects have impacted roadway congestion, an assessment program has been developed that is applied to future CMP reports. This program analyzes the level of service of the roadway before the project was completed against the level of service of the roadway after project completion. The analysis determines if the recommended project was effective in alleviating congestion. The assessment program helps to identify types of projects that are particularly successful in reducing traffic congestion.

Traffic Crash Studies

AMATS is committed to following a planning process that recognizes the importance of safety. This is accomplished by incorporating the results of safety studies into the development of transportation recommendations for the Regional Transportation Plan and used as evaluation criteria for selecting projects for funding. Additionally, AMATS also prepares a crash report every few years by reviewing crash records obtained from ODOT. It includes crash data for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

Air Quality Coordination

The AMATS region is required to participate in air quality conformity to attain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for various criteria pollutants. Summit and Portage counties are part of the eight-county Cleveland-Akron-Lorain Combined Statistical Area (CSA). This area includes: Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage and Summit counties.

The MPOs and ODOT must reestablish conformity for the ozone standards and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) standards as a result of adopting a new TIP and LRP amendments. The conformity analysis demonstrates that emissions from vehicles traveling on the planned transportation system are less than the area's emissions budget (or other emissions target in the absence of an approved budget). AMATS updates its travel demand model to conduct this analysis taking into account the latest planning assumptions.

As the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) continues to tighten the current ozone and PM_{2.5} standards, the region may be required to implement more control measures on ozone and PM_{2.5}. While more controls may be necessary, much of the area's pollution originates outside the area and is carried by wind patterns into the region. AMATS provides the work necessary to support the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and to satisfy any changes resulting from the newly proposed air quality standards.

The Federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 require all areas to meet certain air quality standards. Based on air quality readings, the USEPA designated Cleveland-Akron-Lorain CSA as a maintenance area for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard and as a nonattainment area for the 2015 8-Hour Ozone Standard. USEPA also designated several of the counties in this area as a maintenance area for the 2006 Annual PM_{2.5} Standard. This area includes Cuyahoga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, and Summit counties, and a portion of Ashtabula County. USEPA designated Cuyahoga and Lorain Counties as a maintenance area under the 2012 Annual PM_{2.5} Standard. Portage and Summit Counties were designated in attainment of the 2012 PM_{2.5} Standard by USEPA.

Performance Measures

The former and current federal legislation (MAP-21 and the FAST Act) features a new federal emphasis on performance measurement. This focus is consistent with AMATS' goals and objectives, which promote the transparency of public data and decision-making and seeks to improve the accountability of public spending by better linking investments to outcomes. Performance measures are applied at the programmatic, rather than project level and does not generally link performance measures and targets to funding decisions by way of performance based funding.

ODOT develops performance targets in consultation with MPOs like AMATS, and others. How performance is defined and measured can significantly affect the types of projects and strategies that are advanced by decision makers. Introducing a performance management approach to planning is intended to improve project and program delivery, inform investment decision making, focus staff efforts on priorities, and provide greater transparency and accountability to the public. Presently, federal guidance imposes no financial penalty for states and MPOs that fail to make progress toward these performance goals, and funding decisions for any given project are not explicitly tied to performance criteria.

Like all planning, the performance-based planning process is cyclical. As planning cycles evolve, goals and objectives may be adjusted and performance measures and targets may be refined.

Transportation System Update

AMATS maintains various data files in order to monitor the characteristics of the transportation system. The data includes: roadway characteristics such as intersection geometrics; traffic volumes; speed and delay information; traffic crash data; signalization; road and bridge condition ratings; Federal Functional Classification; land use and zoning; population; employment; dwelling unit; Census data;

motor vehicle registrations; transit characteristics such as ridership, grants, fares and related information; and other data necessary to provide input to short and long-range planning. In addition to maintaining data files, transportation system update requires AMATS to report performance measures consistent with the FAST Act.

Gohio Commute

Gohio Commute is a unique ride-sharing program primarily designed for commuters and was launched in May 2017. It is a free, web-based program sponsored by AMATS and several other MPOs across the state.

It is the premier ride planning, matching, and logging tool available for free to anyone who lives, works, or attends school in Ohio. Users can log trips on [Gohio Commute's website](#) to find transportation matches for cars, biking, transit or walking. This interactive platform gives one the information needed to make smart choices – and save money, improve your health, and improve air quality.

Transit Planning

To have an efficient transportation network it is necessary to have a strong transit system. AMATS provides planning assistance to METRO RTA and PARTA, the two primary providers of public transportation in the greater Akron region. Recommendations in the LRP outline ways to preserve the existing transit system, provide enhanced service in key high-volume corridors, and allow for strategic expansion into new communities that contain high densities of jobs, retail and other attractions.

To achieve the most efficient use of the existing public transportation system, additional ridership needs to be developed. In addition to enhancing the existing service, decreasing the waiting time between buses, expanding the hours and days of service, and providing safe, attractive and comfortable waiting environments are all potential strategies to attract additional transit users. AMATS will work with METRO and PARTA to explore and implement these and other strategies, whenever practical.

AMATS is dedicated to ensuring that all of the region's transportation assets are working together, achieving maximum operational and financial efficiency. Coordination between multiple transit agencies, social service agencies and other non-profit providers of transportation is the key to realizing this goal. One example of this is NEORide, the software platform that provides passengers access to EZFare, a service that allows passengers to purchase mobile bus passes from different transit systems through one app.

Freight Planning

The movement of freight is an important part of a fully functioning transportation system and is critically important to its economy. Metropolitan areas with their higher density of development served by air cargo airports, intermodal freight yards, large trucking terminals, and shipyards, are especially affected by freight movement issues. According to FHWA, the total amount of freight tonnage that moves through the nation's transportation network is expected to double by 2040.

AMATS and ODOT are responsible for making sure that freight movement is considered in the transportation planning process. Federal legislation calls for the statewide and metropolitan planning processes to include reasonable opportunity for the public and interested parties, including freight shippers and providers of freight transportation services, to participate in the development of transportation plans and programs.

AMATS Freight Plan focuses on the region's most pressing freight needs. Transportation projects like bridge replacements, road widenings, port and rail access improvements, and grade separations help AMATS to evaluate how to improve the freight transportation network. The Freight Plan considers the following:

- Define those elements of the area's transportation system that are critical for the efficient movement of freight.
- Identify ways to measure system performance in terms of freight movement.
- Develop freight-oriented data collection and modeling in order to identify problems and potential solutions.
- Discuss critical issues and identify important bottlenecks in the freight network.

Trucking

Truck traffic originates and terminates primarily in metropolitan areas. As a result, increases in freight-truck traffic have the greatest impact in metropolitan areas in terms of congestion, deteriorating pavement and emissions. In the Greater Akron area, the highest truck volumes are on the interstates and State Route 8. Interstate 76 in Summit County has the highest volume of truck traffic in the region. Some of the region's major arterials and collector roadways also have a high volume of truck traffic due to industry on or near those roadways.

Rail

The Greater Akron area is strategically positioned along heavily utilized rail routes connecting Chicago, IL to U.S. East Coast ports. This area has both CSX and Norfolk Southern rail lines as well as the regional Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway. METRO RTA also owns

three rail lines which were purchased to be preserved for future use. METRO is currently exploring to reactivate these lines for local freight purposes. Railroad-highway intersections are a source of both congestion and safety concerns. There are approximately 393 grade crossings in the Greater Akron area. AMATS compiled a list of high volume at-grade crossings in the area. While grade separations are always desired, these projects can be expensive and difficult to construct.

Review Title VI Civil Rights and Environmental Justice

The transportation system should reflect and support the values and planning objectives of area communities and neighborhoods by ensuring that the planning process is conducted in conformance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the environmental justice requirements of Presidential Executive Order #12898 of 1994.

According to Presidential Executive Order #12898, programs or activities that use federal funds must make a meaningful effort to involve low-income and minority populations in the transportation decision making process to participate in activities that may affect their environment or health. Therefore, agencies using federal funds must attempt to identify and address any disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on minority and low income groups, which may result from the implementation of their plans and programs. The Title VI process is further described in *AMATS Title VI Plan*, June 2019.

Developing, improving and maintaining the regional transportation system is not only about moving the most vehicles as efficiently as possible. Transportation planning must also consider issues such as poverty, equal opportunity and equal access in assessing the impact of transportation plans, programs, and policies on low-income and minority populations. This is to ensure that the costs and benefits of transportation infrastructure and services are fairly distributed.

The public involvement activities conducted by AMATS ensure that low-income, minority individuals, and community groups have the opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process. Community groups and social service agencies representing minority and low income populations are included on the AMATS public notifications list. Draft planning documents and meeting notices are provided directly to AMATS members and social service agencies, and are made available on the AMATS website, amatsplanning.org. In addition, the AMATS website can be viewed in a number of different languages. AMATS has enhanced its presence on several social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, where public meetings are advertised and comments may be submitted.

Newsletter

AMATS prepares a newsletter on a semi-annual basis as well as an annual report. The first publication newsletter was compiled in 1993. The purpose of the newsletter is to describe the accomplishments and requirements of the transportation planning process and to document the status of the LRP and TIP.

Monthly updates on the AMATS website provide the public with more current reports on staff accomplishments and activities, which lower printing costs and lessen the lead time on publication. The annual report of AMATS describes the accomplishments and activities of the agency during the previous calendar year.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Activities

AMATS has developed a number of different bike and pedestrian activities that are used to help educate the public and AMATS members about transportation alternatives. As mentioned in the earlier section of this Prospectus under Transportation Issues - the agency has outlined various goals and strategies as well as recommendations in its *Active Transportation Plan (ATP)*. These strategies will lead toward improvements and expansion of the Greater Akron area's bicycle and pedestrian networks.

Bicycle Activities

The League of American Bicyclists has identified 5Es of Bicycling. These are principles that are fundamental to the establishment and maintenance of a safe, bicycle-friendly community. These principles are also tied to promoting a number of bike and pedestrian activities. The principles are described in detail in the ATP and include:

- Engineering
- Education
- Enforcement
- Encouragement
- Evaluation & Planning

Switching-Gears.org

AMATS provides a number of education and outreach activities through its Switching-Gears Program, the agency's regional initiative to promote cycling. *Switching-Gears.org* is a website dedicated to advocating and promoting regional cycling. The website is a clearinghouse of information about bike-related events, cycle shops, regional trails, and maintenance and safety tips.

Bike-N-Brainstorm Events

These are public meetings that were developed in 2012 to serve as an innovative tool for public outreach. This event includes a bike ride and brainstorming session among AMATS staff and participants. Cyclists share 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.

Bike User Map

This is 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 it at events, to bicycle shops, libraries, community centers, and other venues throughout the region.

Pedestrian Activities

Safe Routes to School

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program, administered through ODOT, is another pedestrian related activity that officially kicked off in Akron on November 8, 2013. The SRTS Program was a new effort to create a District-Wide School Travel Plan for the Akron Public Schools (APS). The Akron Public School Travel Plan was completed in 2014 and became one of the first district-wide School Travel Plans (STP) for a large school district in Ohio as well as one of the first nationwide. It sets precedence for other communities in the AMATS area to apply to the SRTS Program.

The STP is a written document that outlines ways to make travel to and from school safer and to encourage and enable students in grades K-8 to walk or ride their bicycle to school. Projects can be either engineering (i.e. improved crossings, sidewalks, etc.) or non-engineering (education and encouragement programs).

Safe Routes to School works to raise awareness, promote pedestrian safety, create safer routes for walking and bicycling, and emphasize the importance of increasing physical activity among children to combat a growing obesity epidemic.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accessibility

The ATP urges Greater Akron area communities to pursue complete street principles in the coming years. Changing built environments to make physical activity such as cycling and walking more appealing and accessible through sound land use practices and roadway design with all users in mind is at the core of AMATS' efforts with the plan.

People who cannot or prefer not to drive should have safe and efficient transportation choices. The more accessible a system is, the more likely that people will opt to choose active transportation for their trips to school, stores, medical care and recreational opportunities. The region's bicycle and pedestrian facilities should meet accessibility requirements and provide safe, convenient, and interconnected transportation networks.

AMATS Organizational Structure

AMATS is comprised of three committees that decide how the area's federal transportation funds should be spent. The committees include the Policy Committee, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Citizens Involvement Committee (CIC) and are described below. The committee members consist of mayors, county officials, transit agencies, and ODOT.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee guides the development and implementation of a Coordinated, Comprehensive, and Continuing (3-Cs) Urban Transportation Plan and a TIP for all of Summit and Portage Counties and Chippewa and Milton Township areas of Wayne County.

There are 44 voting members of the Policy Committee representing every community in the Greater Akron area. This Committee decides how the area's federal transportation dollars should be spent. Its basic objective is to guide the staged development of a balanced transportation system in concert with existing and future development to efficiently serve the existing and future transportation needs of the area.

The committee is composed of elected officials, county engineers, transit agencies and representatives from ODOT. Its members meet regularly six times a year to make funding decisions, discuss priorities and policies, and collaborate on regional transportation issues. The committee provides opportunities for the public to address the committee with comments.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC provides technical assistance to the Policy Committee throughout the planning process. The TAC also offers general technical guidance and reviews the technical progress of AMATS, and advises and assists the Director in obtaining data for transportation projects in the region.

The TAC is made up of planners and engineers representing communities, counties and transit agencies across the Greater Akron area. The expertise of these members provides the Policy Committee with the needed “nuts-and-bolts” insights regarding the area’s transportation projects.

Citizens Involvement Committee (TAC)

The CIC is the forum through which the public may weigh in directly on transportation-related matters. Through its open-meeting format, CIC members may freely discuss issues with AMATS staff members and other players in the region’s planning process. This process takes into consideration all modes of transportation including both motorized and un-motorized and the needs of all citizens in an effort to create true comprehensive transportation planning. The AMATS staff works closely with the CIC members to identify potential discussion topics as well as the preparation of necessary meeting materials and the scheduling of guest speakers.

The committee meets six times a year and its membership is open to all who wish to participate. AMATS promotes CIC meetings through regularly scheduled advertisements with the *Akron Beacon Journal*. The agency also promotes CIC meetings through email and social media campaigns to committee members, interested agencies and groups, and area media.

Staff Support

The AMATS staff serves the three committees and is responsible for carrying out the technical and administrative work of the agency. They are responsible for developing the area’s LRP, the four-year TIP and various other reports and recommendations for the consideration of the Policy Committee. The staff also serves as a liaison between the public and the committees of AMATS and ensures that public comment is considered throughout the region’s planning process. The staff is made up of engineers, planners, and other professional disciplines.

As part of its duties to maintain the programs of AMATS, the staff is granted the discretion by the AMATS Policy Committee to implement minor revisions or administrative modifications to the LRP and the TIP, and various plan and TIP amendments, reports and studies as may be warranted. The AMATS staff is illustrated in the chart in **Appendix B**.

Sources of Funding

AMATS transportation activities are largely financed by federal and state transportation dollars, local membership dues, and local transportation assessments.

Federal and State Transportation Funds

Federal and state funds are received from the FHWA and ODOT to fund highway improvements. These funds can be used for many types of projects including: resurfacing, turn lanes and traffic signals, and major widening projects.

AMATS receives around \$15 million annually for highway improvements. Other sources of funding include ODOT funds from federal and state gasoline taxes. Counties and municipalities also receive federal and state funding. Discretionary funding, also known as earmarks, can be made available for highway projects when written into federal legislation.

Any highway project using federal funding must be consistent with AMATS LRP, regardless of whether AMATS provides the funding. The Plan is important because it gives the authority to local officials to determine how federal funds are spent collectively.

The agency’s annual allocations of federal funds are received through two major sources - the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) and the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TASA), formerly known as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). AMATS also receives Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds that are chosen through a statewide committee and can only be used on projects which improve air quality and relieve congestion. The STBG Program is the most versatile type of funding and can be used on any type of project. The TASA Program provides approximately \$1 million each year that can be used for bicycle and pedestrian improvements. All TASA projects must relate to surface transportation and address a transportation need, use or benefit. Preliminary engineering, right-of-way and construction are eligible project costs. Planning is an eligible project phase only for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) District Travel Plans provided that the sponsor has first pursued and secured funding from the Ohio Department of Transportation SRTS Program.

AMATS Local Share

AMATS member communities receive approximately \$20 million annually in several funding categories to be used for highway, transit and enhancement improvements. AMATS operates under the state fiscal year which is on a July 1-June 30 budget year. Annually in June, the fiscal year budget is approved and the annual dues and assessment schedules for the membership are approved by the AMATS Policy Committee.

Dues and assessments are used both for local matching share required by most state and federal grants, and for funding the staff's budget. AMATS invoices members a general membership fee in accordance with the budget approved by the AMATS Policy Committee to meet the local matching requirements of the budget. Total annual dues for FY 2021 are \$169,080. Local share dues are used to match Federal Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) funding as well as cover delayed expenses and reimbursements not immediately paid by ODOT. Local share amounts for individual members are based on the U.S. Census 2010 population figures, charged per capita, by previous agreement of the Policy Committee. CPG funds must be matched by state and local funds at a percentage rate of 80/10/10, yielding an initial budget of \$1.5 million. Any remaining funds from the fiscal year (FY 2020) would be carried over on July 1, and may be used through December 31, 2020.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program funds for staff air quality planning activities must now be matched with appropriate funding where applicable. Per ODOT's instructions, Toll Revenue Credit (TRC) is applied to portions of the staff CMAQ air quality planning activities. As a result, the amount of local share dues for AMATS members was less than anticipated.

Financial Plan

AMATS prepares a Financial Resources Forecast as part of the Financial Plan that estimates future transportation revenues for the current LRP. The Financial Plan ensures that the LRP is in fiscal constraint where future projects in the plan do not exceed expected revenues.

Both costs and revenues must be projected in year of expenditure dollars. This means that both costs and revenues need to be assigned inflation rates. Highway projects are assigned inflation rates based on ODOT's Construction Cost Outlook and Forecast.

Bicycle and Pedestrian improvements are funded through the estimated highway revenues. Bicycle and pedestrian project costs are inflated to year of expenditure based on the highway methodology. Only \$700,000 may be used on bicycle or pedestrian projects per round of funding. Therefore, AMATS assumes that bicycle and pedestrian projects will either receive funds in multiple rounds or local or state funds will cover the remaining construction cost.

Public Participation Process

The public involvement process is designed to provide early, frequent, and ongoing opportunities for public input. Public participation provides citizens a way to voice ideas and needs, access to the decision making process, and information on the transportation planning process. It also gives the opportunity to those who are traditionally unheard, such as minority and low-income populations, a voice in the planning process.

AMATS provides many opportunities throughout the planning process for the public to participate and influence transportation policies, most notably through AMATS Citizens Involvement Committee (CIC). The CIC reviews AMATS products and provides a place to discuss transportation in a less formal, more inclusive meeting format with more engaging topics and opportunities to see local planning efforts. The agency is continually trying new outreach strategies that reach new audiences and to get the community actively involved.

The AMATS and Switching-Gears websites and use of social media are constantly evolving to try and provide the best information and ways to get feedback. One of the main goals of AMATS website has been to make it easier to inform the public about events and provide a way for the public to become more engaged and involved in the planning process.

Social media has fast become one of AMATS' most utilized tools for public outreach. The agency can interact with the public regarding transportation-related topics instantaneously. Facebook and Twitter are two of the most used social media tools with the ability to reach out easily and keep the public up to date. Bike-N-Brainstorm, Better Block, and Jane's Walk are also innovative approaches to public involvement. These strategies actively urge the public to tackle transportation issues directly through participation in unique events.

New technologies involving visualization have changed the communication process and the tools that are available to transportation professionals. AMATS uses visual representations of its work to make it easier for the public to understand complex issues. Some of these techniques include: maps, charts and graphs, photos and renderings, website graphics, GIS story maps, and YouTube videos.

AMATS maintains a *Public Participation Plan (3P)* that was completed in December 2018, to guide public involvement and is included in **Appendix E**. The 3P seeks to encourage an open planning process that supports early and sustained public involvement, timely public notice, and full public access to information regarding key transportation decisions within the Greater Akron area. Through the 3P, AMATS strives to engage the public at the earliest stages of transportation planning, especially those populations who are traditionally underserved or economically depressed such as limited-English proficiency, minority and low-income populations.

Applicable Agreements

In order to provide an effective transportation planning process, AMATS secures working agreements with a number of agencies and the communities it serves. The purpose of the agreements includes administration of the agency and to describe a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative multimodal planning process with member communities.

The following section describes the major agreements of AMATS. **Appendix D** includes a table that identifies AMATS regional planning agreements with the communities and agencies.

Agreements with Other MPOs / NEFCO

AMATS shares common boundaries with three other MPOs. These MPOs are Eastgate Regional Council of Governments in Youngstown, Stark County Area Transportation Study in Canton (SCATS), and the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) in Cleveland. AMATS and Eastgate have an agreement to work together to improve the economy, environment, transportation systems and quality of life for the citizens within their respective planning areas. An agreement of coordination efforts with NOACA ensures that a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process is conducted.

AMATS also has an agreement of cooperation with the Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization (NEFCO). NEFCO is an area wide water quality management planning agency for Portage, Stark, Summit and Wayne Counties. AMATS and NEFCO coordinate respective planning and programming activities.

Agreements with Local Communities

Since AMATS creation in 1962, it has secured agreements of cooperation and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) with most of the incorporated municipalities within its planning area for regional transportation planning and programming. The MOU's date back to 1970 and are renewed periodically. The MOU is in place to manage joint and sometimes overlapping planning responsibilities within the respective municipalities. It describes the continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative multimodal planning process that supports metropolitan community development and transportation programs. These plans and programs will lead to the development and operation of an integrated, intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient, economic movement of people and goods.

Agreements that are not secured at this time are with Doylestown in Wayne County, as well as with Macedonia and New Franklin in Summit County.

Two-Party Agreements

AMATS is housed within the City of Akron's Planning department and the City of Akron is the monetary agent for AMATS. The City of Akron and the State of Ohio have executed an agreement for urban transportation planning and transportation programs. This agreement specifies the cooperative efforts of AMATS/City of Akron and ODOT to conduct a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative multimodal planning process (3-C) within the defined area.

AMATS has an agreement with ODOT which designates AMATS as the MPO for the Akron urbanized area. It describes the planning area and required work products and services. The agreement with ODOT also designates the Policy Board to delegate the authority and responsibility for coordination of the transportation planning process. As part of its agreement with ODOT, AMATS commits to maintaining a Prospectus document that encloses all bylaws, member agreements, and policy documents. This agreement is current and renewed every two years, consistent with Ohio's biennial budget cycle beginning July 1.

Establishing AMATS Agreements

Regional Transit Authority

AMATS has executed agreements with METRO RTA and PARTA, the two transit agencies in the Greater Akron area. METRO provides service in Summit County while PARTA provides service in Portage County. The agreements are MOU's that outline cooperative procedures for carrying out regional transportation planning.

Air Quality

The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) established national ambient air quality standards for transportation conformity in several categories of air pollutants and toxins. Areas that are designated by the USEPA as nonattainment or maintenance for mobile source pollutants under the Clean Air Act are required to meet the conformity rule requirement of using the latest planning assumptions.

Portage and Summit counties are part of the U.S. Census-designated eight-county Cleveland-Akron-Lorain Combined Statistical Area (CSA) for air quality. This area includes: Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, and Summit counties.

Two MPOs serve seven of these counties. NOACA serves Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties. AMATS serves Summit and Portage counties. The Erie Regional Planning Commission (ERPC) serves the City of Vermilion in Lorain County. Ashtabula County is not part of a Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Appendices

[Appendix A - Map of AMATS Planning Area](#)

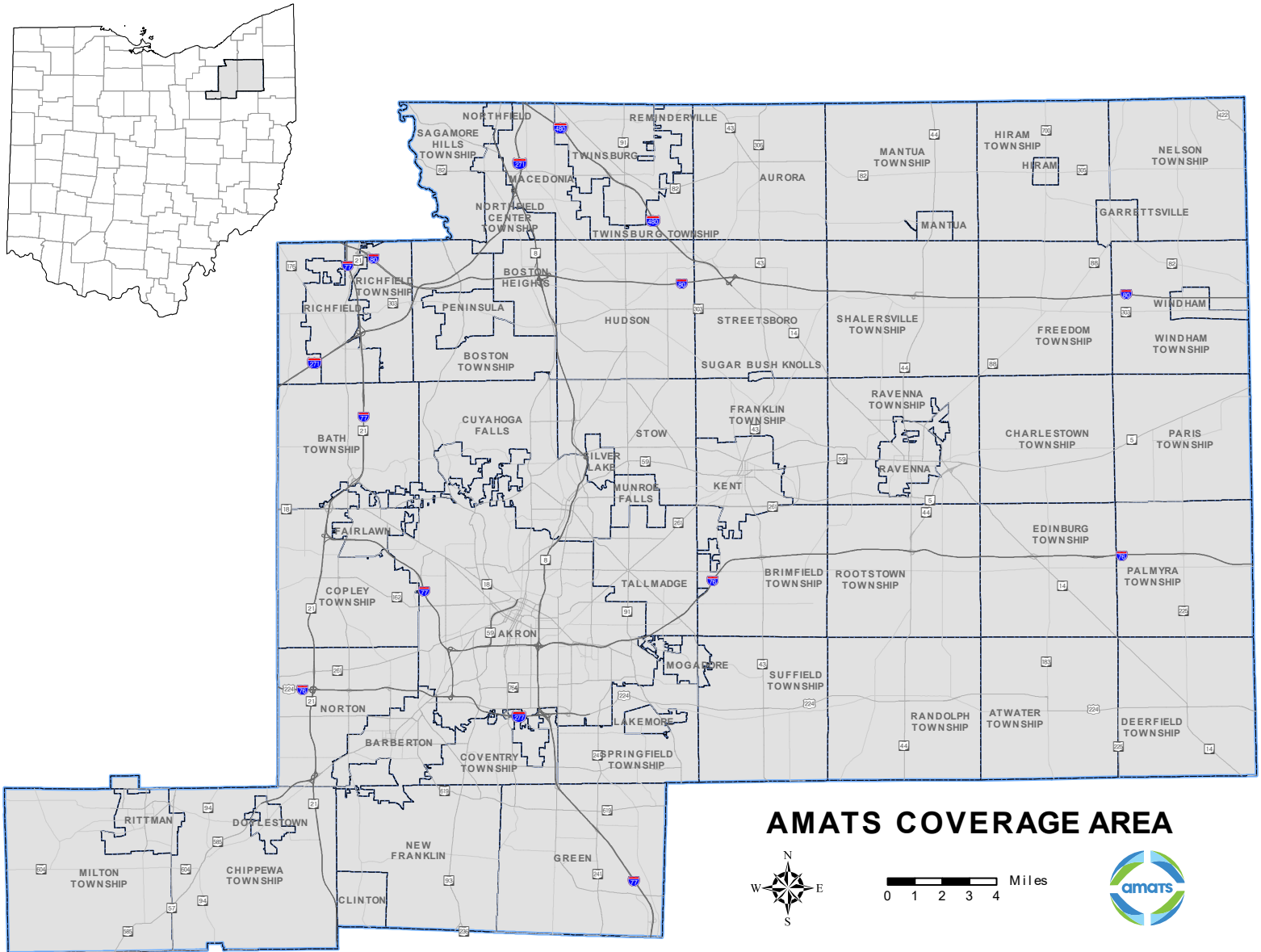
[Appendix B - AMATS Staff Chart](#)

[Appendix C - Bylaws of the AMATS Policy Committee](#)

[Appendix D - AMATS Regional Planning Agreements](#)

[Appendix E - AMATS Public Participation Plan](#)

Appendix A - Map of AMATS Planning Area



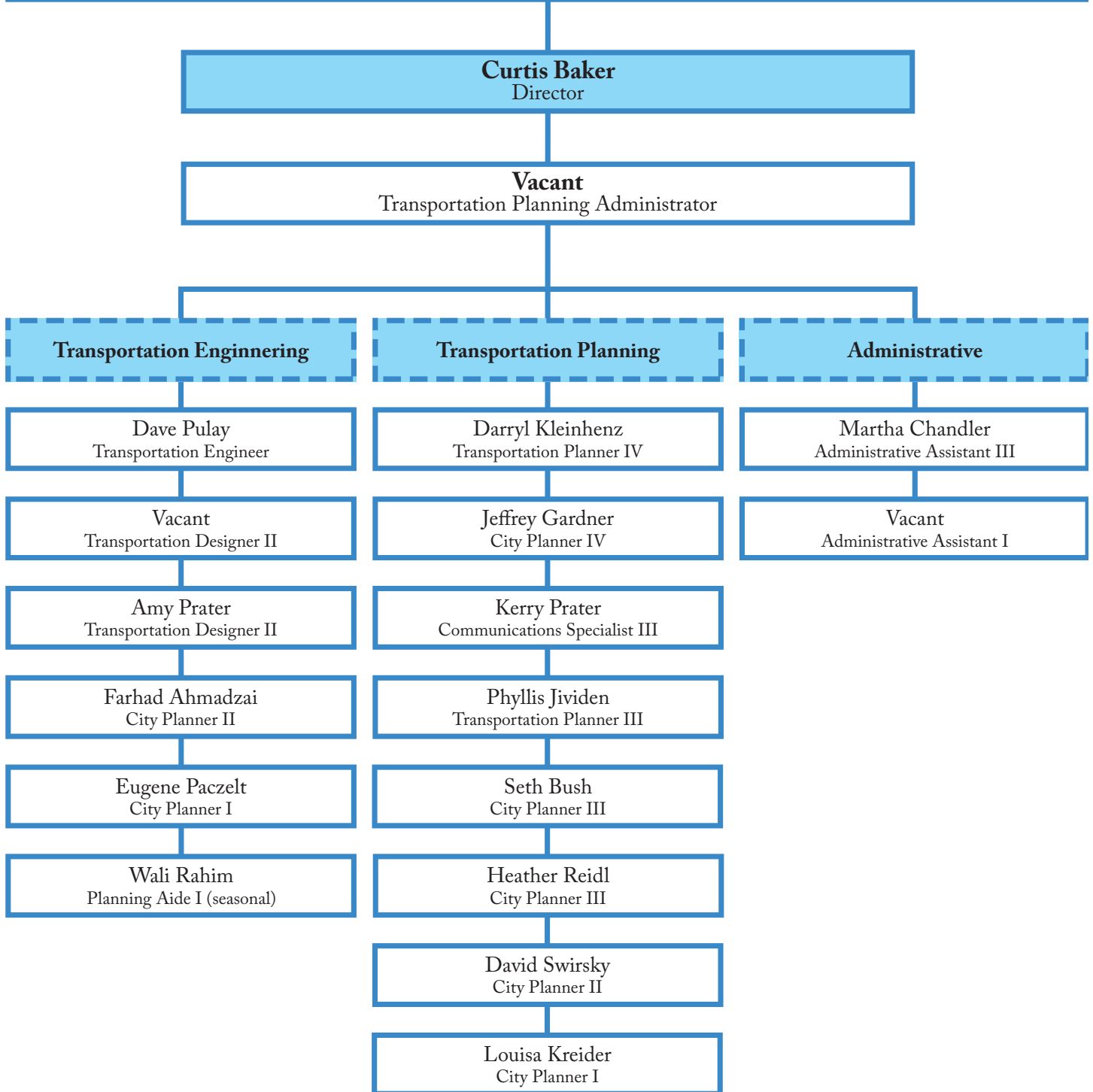
AMATS COVERAGE AREA



0 1 2 3 4 Miles



Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) Staff Chart (FY 2021)



Appendix C - Bylaws of the AMATS Policy Committee

BY-LAWS
of the
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE
of the
AKRON METROPLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

ARTICLE I
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE

Section 1 – NAME

The name of this committee shall be the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee of the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS).

Section 2 – ORIGIN

The Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee was established on December 10, 1962, in cooperation with the United States Bureau of Public Roads and the Ohio Department of Highways as a requirement of Section 134 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962.

Section 3 – PURPOSE

The purpose of this committee shall be to guide the development and implementation of a Coordinated, Comprehensive, and Continuing Urban Transportation Plan and a Transportation Improvement Program for all of Summit and Portage Counties and the Chippewa and Milton Township areas of Wayne County, Ohio, in cooperation with the Counties and Political Sub-Divisions therein, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Section 4 – GENERAL FUNCTION

This committee shall initiate, guide, and sanction the necessary activities required for the development of a Coordinated, Comprehensive, Continuing Urban Transportation Planning Process and a Transportation Improvement Program for the area. Its basic objective is to guide the staged development of a balanced transportation system in concert with existing and future development to efficiently serve the existing and future transportation needs of the area.

Section 5 – MEMBERSHIP

- A. Voting membership shall consist of the following or their designated alternates with one vote each: The Summit County Executive and two additional members appointed by the County Executive; Summit County Engineer; the Portage County Commissioners; Portage County Engineer; the Mayors of the Municipalities of Akron, Aurora, Barberton, Boston Heights, Clinton, Cuyahoga Falls, Doylestown, Fairlawn, Garrettsville, Green, Hiram, Hudson, Lakemore, Macedonia, Mantua, Mogadore, Munroe Falls, New Franklin, Northfield, Norton, Peninsula, Ravenna, Reminderville, Richfield, Rittman, Silver Lake, Stow, Streetsboro, Sugar Bush Knolls, Tallmadge, Twinsburg and Windham and any subsequently created municipalities in the Study area; the City Manager of the City of Kent; the District Four Deputy Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation, the President of the Board of Trustees of the METRO Regional Transit Authority; and the President of the Board of Trustees of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority; the Wayne County

Engineer and one member appointed by the Board of Wayne County Commissioners

- B. Non-voting membership shall include the Director or his designated representative as the Executive Secretary of the Metropolitan Policy Committee.

Section 6 – OFFICIAL ALTERNATES

A member of the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee may designate two official alternates to represent the member in his absence. A letter of official designation shall be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Committee so that the alternate may be officially accorded all the voting rights of the member.

Section 7 – AUTHORITY

The Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee, as stated in the **State of Ohio Department of Transportation Agreement for Urban Transportation Planning and Transportation Programming (updated each biennium)** for the continuation of the Urban Transportation Planning Process, is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the AMATS area designated by the State of Ohio acting on behalf of the Governor in cooperation with local officials of the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study, and is delegated the authority and responsibility for the direction, coordination and administration of the Urban Transportation Planning Process in accordance with the terms of the AMATS Prospectus and Work Program.

Section 8 – DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Exercise general management of the Study Activities in accordance with all Agreements of Cooperation, State and Federal Regulations and the AMATS Prospectus and Work Program and Budget as amended by further committee action.
- B. Appoint Technical Advisory Committee members to represent municipalities. The Technical Advisory Committee is provided for in the AMATS Prospectus and **State of Ohio Department of Transportation Agreement for Urban Transportation Planning and Transportation Programming** and advises the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee on all technical and financial matters. The Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee as a whole shall appoint a representative of private provider interests to serve as a non-voting member of the Technical Advisory Committee.
- C. Direct the Agenda for each meeting to be distributed one week prior to the scheduled meetings. Items may be added to the published agenda, but must be approved by unanimous vote of those members in attendance.
- D. Direct the Technical Advisory Committee to meet at least one day preceding the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee meeting to consider study progress and technical matters and to recommend action on such items to the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee at regular meetings.

- E. Direct the AMATS Director, as Executive Secretary of the Technical Advisory Committee, to report technical progress and financial status monthly, to the Technical Advisory Committee, so that a committee representative can report such matters to the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee.
- F. Provide direction for the regional transportation planning process to ensure that the transportation plan is developed in a Continuous, Comprehensive and Coordinated manner.

- G. Provide direction for the annual development and approval of the Transportation Improvement Program to ensure that transportation projects using Federal funds are implemented in a systematic manner.
- H. Each member of the Committee is expected to exercise the previous mentioned duties and responsibilities in accordance with the policies of the agency or organization he or she represents but remain cognizant of the needs of the total area.

**ARTICLE II
ORGANIZATION**

Section 1 – OFFICERS

The officers shall consist of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and an Executive Secretary.

Section 2 - ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee shall be elected at a meeting during the last quarter of the year. The term of office shall start at the first meeting of the new year and shall be for one year or until a successor shall be elected and shall assume the office. The Executive Secretary of the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee, as a non-voting member, shall be the Director of the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study

Section 3 – DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

- A. Chairman-shall preside at all meeting of the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee and call special meetings as required; appoint all subcommittees; and obtain committee adherence to the duties and responsibilities as delineated in Article I Section 8 of the By-laws.
- B. Vice-Chairman-shall perform the duties of the Chairman in his absence.
- C. Executive Secretary-shall attend meetings of the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee and record all proceedings of the committee action, and carry out all work necessary and incidental to the objectives of AMATS and the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee.

**ARTICLE III
SUBCOMMITTEES**

Section 1 – SUBCOMMITTEE FORMATION

Subcommittees shall be formed when necessary to carry out the various phases of the work of the Study. Members of subcommittees shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee (see Article II-Section 3). Subcommittee members need not be members of the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee.

Section 2 – STANDING SUBCOMMITTEE

The Technical Advisory Committee Transportation Improvement Program Subcommittee (TAC TIP) shall monitor TIP funding and project activity. The TAC Chairman will direct this Subcommittee and

its membership shall include: the Policy Committee Chairperson, one representative from each city with a population of over 20,000, a representative from a city with a population between 10,000 and 20,000 appointed by the Policy Committee Chairperson, a representative from a city with a population between 5,000 and 10,000 appointed by the Policy Committee Chairperson, a village representative appointed by the Policy Committee Chairperson, the Summit and Portage County Engineers, and one representative from the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority and METRO Regional Transit Authority. Each member of the Subcommittee has one vote. The chairperson can only vote if his or her community is not otherwise represented. Policy Committee Chairperson appointments will be made before a round of AMATS funding begins. The appointees will serve for two years until the next round of funding.

**ARTICLE IV
MEETINGS**

Section 1 – METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE

The Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee shall schedule at least six (6) regular meetings annually. An annual schedule of Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee meetings shall be adopted for the next year no later than the last regularly scheduled meeting of each calendar year. The Chairman may cancel regularly scheduled meetings of the Committee or establish special meetings as required.

Section 2 – QUORUM

A quorum shall consist of ten (10) members of the voting membership of the Committee. There shall be a roll call of the membership at the beginning of each meeting to determine if a quorum exists so that business can be conducted. A majority vote of the voting membership present shall be required for Committee action.

**ARTICLE V
AMENDMENT OF ARTICLES**

Section 1 – HOW AMENDED

These articles may be amended by a majority vote of a quorum of the Metropolitan Transportation Policy Committee at a regularly

scheduled meeting or special meeting provided such amendments have been distributed to all members a minimum of one week in advance of the meetings.

AMENDED: December 19, 2019

Appendix D - AMATS Regional Planning Agreements

COMMUNITY / AGENCY	1963	1964	1969	1970	1975	1979	1993	1997	2003	2007	2012	2016	2018	2019	2020	2021
Akron		X														
Ashtabula - Part of AQ Conformity Process							X									
Aurora				X												
Barberton			X													
Boston Heights				X												
Brady Lake (now unincorporated)				X												
Clinton				X												
Cuyahoga Falls				X												
Doylestown																
Eastgate*													X			
Fairlawn		X														
Garrettsville				X								X				
Green																
Hiram				X												
Hudson				X												
Kent				X												
Lakemore				X												
Macedonia																
Mantua				X												
MCPT - METRO - PARTA*											X					
METRO													X			
Mogadore				X												
Munroe Falls				X												
NEFCO*						X										
New Franklin																
NOACA*															X	
Northfield				X												
Norton			X													
Ohio Department of Highways		X														
ODOT*														X		
ODOT & City of Akron - Biannual*														X		
Ohio EPA, NEFCO, & local air agencies*									X							
PARTA													X			
Peninsula				X												
Portage County			X													
Ravenna				X												
Reminderville				X												
Richfield				X												
Rittman														X		
SCATS*									X							X
Silver Lake			X													
Stow				X												
Streetsboro				X												
Sugar Bush Knolls				X												
Summit County	X															
Tallmadge			X													
Twinsburg				X												
University of Akron	X															
Wayne County Engineer's Office															X	
Windham				X												
	Communities without a secured agreement										*Agreements updated periodically					

AMATS

"3P"

Public Participation Plan



December 2018

AMATS "3P" PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

December 2018

Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study
161 S. High St. / Suite 201 / Akron, Ohio 44308
Phone: (330) 375-2436
FAX: (330) 375-2275

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

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Introduction

This *Public Participation Plan* or "3P" seeks to encourage an open planning process that supports early and sustained public involvement, timely public notice, and full public access to information regarding key transportation decisions within the Greater Akron area.

The 3P ensures a continuing, comprehensive, and coordinated process among all area stakeholders while encouraging and providing opportunities for broad-based participation in the development and review of regional transportation plans, programs and policies. Through the 3P, AMATS strives to engage the public at the earliest stages of transportation planning, especially those populations who are traditionally underserved or economically depressed such as limited-English proficiency, minority and low-income populations.

The 3P reflects the realities of a changing society. AMATS seeks to foster an environment where the public feels that its insights not only matter, but are encouraged and welcomed. The 3P is updated periodically to: reflect changes in local, state or federal legislation; adjust the plan to include new technologies; and to meet the needs of the community. The agency relies on the following guiding principles when updating the 3P:

- AMATS recognizes that every major public policy decision or implemented transportation project significantly affects someone.
- If the agency's decision-making process is open, objective and considers all viewpoints, then policies, programs and projects are usually much more willingly accepted and embraced by affected communities.
- By utilizing a variety of public outreach techniques in multiple formats to provide planning information, the agency will gain a wide audience and solicit input from a greater number of people.
- Coordination and collaboration among as many as transportation stakeholders as possible during the planning process produces the most effective and balanced transportation solutions.

Because the agency relies on these principles, the 3P allows the Greater Akron area to meet unforeseen changes creatively and forcefully.

Throughout the change occurring around us, there is an old transportation adage that still holds true: *The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.* Our agency actively pursues strategies to encourage the public to take their first steps in getting involved in their region's transportation planning process. AMATS provides many opportunities throughout this process for the public to participate and influence transportation policies.

There are several different ways to get involved with AMATS which are presented in 3P, most notably our Citizens Involvement Committee. Please note that the public is by no means limited to the strategies detailed in these pages. The agency actively seeks new opportunities to exchange ideas with the public and welcomes ideas and suggestions on how to do so.

What is AMATS?

"AMATS" stands for the **Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study**. We are responsible for transportation planning within the Greater Akron area comprised of Portage and Summit counties and a portion of Wayne County. From highways to bikeways, from buses to trails, our agency plays a role in the planning of the major transportation projects within the area and the funding that makes them possible.

A Policy Committee, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), a Citizens Involvement Committee (CIC) and a staff are the official players that comprise AMATS with each suited to a particular role in the planning process. To learn more about each, read on.

AMATS Committees and Staff Each Player Has a Role - Even You!

Transportation planning in the Greater Akron area is accomplished through a cast of players. Like any ensemble cast, each player performs a unique role, but their roles are intertwined. The Policy Committee, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Citizens Involvement Committee (CIC) and agency staff are featured players in this cast, but - like any cast - they need feedback. The feedback that they need comes from you - the public - through your participation in the planning process.

As a member of the public, you are encouraged to participate in the planning process. AMATS strives to make the Greater Akron area's transportation planning process as transparent and accessible as possible. The agency regularly:

- Posts timely notices about meeting dates and locations and meeting materials in advance on our website - amatsplanning.org.
- Provides podcasts of past meetings on our agency website and through our podcast subscription service.
- Schedules committee meetings in locations that are accessible for all citizens, including the disabled and transit dependent.

You are welcome to attend any of our committee meetings, all of which are open to the public. Below are descriptions regarding our committees and staff and how you may participate in the regional planning process.

Policy Committee

Currently, there are 44 voting members of the Policy Committee representing every community in the Greater Akron area. It is this body that decides how the area's federal transportation dollars should be spent. The committee is composed of elected officials, county engineers, transit agencies and representatives from the Ohio Department of Transportation. Its members



meet regularly six times a year to make funding decisions, discuss priorities and policies, and collaborate on regional issues.

The Policy Committee provides opportunities for the public to address the committee with the following guidelines:

- Anyone interested in making comments before the Policy Committee may do so during the public comment period at the beginning of the agenda.
- Public comments are limited to three minutes per person, but may be allowed more time by the Policy Committee chairperson.
- Organizations wishing to address the Policy Committee should select one representative to speak during the public comment period.
- Speakers will be asked to fill out an *Audience Participation Form* before addressing the Policy Committee (p. 20).
- Citizens may contact the AMATS staff at **330-375-2436** or by email at **amats@akronohio.gov** in advance to request time to speak, or may do so in person before the meeting with any AMATS staff member.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC provides technical assistance to the Policy Committee throughout the planning process. The TAC is made up of planners and engineers representing communities, counties and transit providers across the Greater Akron area. The expertise of these members provides the Policy Committee with needed "nuts-and-bolts" insights regarding the area's projects.

Citizens Involvement Committee (CIC)

The CIC is the forum through which the public may weigh in directly on transportation-related matters. Through its open-meeting format, CIC members may freely discuss issues with AMATS staff members and other players in the region's planning process. The AMATS staff works closely with the CIC members to identify potential discussion topics and in the preparation of necessary meeting materials and the scheduling of guest speakers.

The committee meets six times a year and its membership is open to all who wish to participate. Regular meetings commence at **6:30 p.m.** and are usually held in the **Akron-Summit County Public Library** located at **60 South High Street** in downtown, which is centrally located and transit accessible in the Greater Akron area. Additional committee meetings may be scheduled by the CIC members if they so desire.

AMATS promotes CIC meetings through regularly scheduled advertisements with the *Beacon Journal*. Additional newspaper advertisements are occasionally purchased if deemed necessary by the staff given the regional significance of and public interest in particular agenda items and topics. The agency also promotes CIC meetings through email and social media campaigns to committee members, interested agencies and groups, and area media.

Staff

The AMATS staff assists all three committees and carries out the "day-to-day" administrative and technical work of the agency. The staff develops the area's long-range *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) (p. 14-p. 15) and the four-year *Transportation Improvement Program* (TIP) (p. 16-p. 17). The staff is a mix of engineers, planners and other professional disciplines.

While serving as a liaison between the public and the committees of AMATS, the staff ensures that public comment is considered throughout the region's planning process. The staff welcomes verbal and written comments and strives to respond to concerns in a timely manner. You may contact the staff at **330-375-2436** or by email at amats@akronohio.gov. You may contact individual staff members directly by referencing the *Staff Directory* on the AMATS web site at amatsplanning.org. Written correspondence should be addressed to:

AMATS
161 S. High Street / Suite 201
Akron, Ohio 44308

As part of its duties to maintain the programs of AMATS, the staff is granted the discretion by the AMATS Policy Committee to implement minor revisions or administrative modifications to the *Regional Transportation Plan* and the TIP, and various plan and TIP amendments, reports, and studies as may be warranted. Such administrative modifications are largely grammatical and typographical corrections or revisions that do not require demonstration of fiscal constraint or an air quality conformity determination. For the sake of transparency, the staff will present all changes to the *Regional Transportation Plan* and TIP to the AMATS Policy Committee regardless as to whether they are minor revisions, administrative changes or amendments. (The criteria used by the staff in making such determinations are presented in *Appendix A - Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) (p. 14-p. 15) and *Appendix B - Transportation Improvement Program* (TIP) (p. 16-p. 17) of the 3P.)

If the staff determines that formal amendments to the *Regional Transportation Plan* or TIP are warranted, the staff will determine whether such changes constitute Minor or Major Amendments. Once such determinations are made by the staff, then the agency will pursue the appropriate public participation procedures specified in Appendices A and B of the 3P.

On the Web

Emerging technologies present AMATS with new opportunities to connect with the public. The Internet has created boundless opportunities for you and your friends to engage with our agency without the need to leave the comfort of your home.

Along with its two web sites - amatsplanning.org and Switching-Gears.org - AMATS uses web posting and social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to provide citizens with up-to-the-minute information. The agency also has expanded its practice of posting announcements, meeting information and news on community-oriented sites such as the Summit County Community Calendar, Zvents and other appropriate venues.



Below are some of the ways that AMATS harnesses the power of the Internet.

AMATSPANNING.ORG

AMATS routinely updates its website to make the site even more user-friendly. The agency is working to show you how your tax dollars are being spent in a clear, easy-to-understand format. Our web site includes an easy-to-use interactive *Transportation Improvement Program* (TIP), which provides details about AMATS-funded projects and includes map images of TIP project locations.

Among the agency's goals for its site have been to make it easier to inform the public about events while providing opportunities for them to become more engaged and involved in the planning process. From the *Home* and *Meetings* pages, a visitor can check out dates and times for our next Policy Committee, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and Citizens Involvement Committee (CIC) meetings. A visitor can also view the most recent committee meeting packet, listen to an MP3 meeting podcast, or complete an *Audience Participation Form* (p. 20) to speak to the Policy Committee. Visitors will also find access to timely features under *What's New*, check out our Twitter feed, or search the entire site for a specific topic.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that AMATS shall not, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or sex, exclude anyone from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. In the event that a member of the public believes that they are the victim of an alleged discriminatory practice by AMATS during the Greater Akron area's transportation planning process, our agency provides a *Nondiscrimination Complaint Form* on our agency web site - amatsplanning.org. Using this form, citizens may describe in detail why they believe that their concerns or needs are not being addressed by the agency.

Additionally, our agency web site - amatsplanning.org - includes a link to language interpretation software to assist those for whom English is not the first language. Using this link, visitors to our web site can translate pages into other languages including Chinese, French and Spanish. The [AMATS Title VI - Program Procedures and Documentation](#) Plan outlines other steps to include limited-English proficient persons in the planning process.

SWITCHING-GEARS.ORG

This web site provides information to people on ways to take advantage of the Greater Akron area's trails and inform them on ways to utilize cycling as a means of transportation. Switching-Gears.org also has a calendar announcing organized bike rides and events in our region and an easy-to-use Bike User Map.

Social Media

Social media has fast become one of AMATS' most utilized tools for public outreach. The agency can interact with the public regarding transportation-related topics instantaneously. Below are some of the most popular media that AMATS uses on a regular basis.

- **Twitter** is a great online tool that lets you send messages to your followers in 280 characters or less. Stay up to date with the most relevant news in transportation and

land use planning. Follow **@amatsplanning** on Twitter to receive tweets about the latest transportation news.

- **Facebook** is a popular social media tool that is increasingly being used by agencies to reach new audiences and AMATS is no exception. The agency's Facebook page is updated frequently with our latest tweets and pictures of the region. It is also linked to the AMATS website where the public can get more information.
- **YouTube** is a social media site that allows users to post videos and share them with friends. Through its channel - **AMATSPanning** - the agency presents many special video features highlighting transportation topics. Topics range from meeting summaries to informative features.

New Approaches

AMATS continually seeks new approaches to engage the public throughout the transportation planning process. Below are descriptions of some of the newer strategies that our agency has embraced in recent years.

Public Empowerment

AMATS pursues innovative public *empowerment* strategies that present opportunities to challenge the public beyond mere dialogue. These strategies actively urge the public to tackle transportation issues directly through participation in unique events. Generally, these events entail a topic-specific activity geared to spur dialogue between participants and area policy makers. Following participation in a group endeavor, participants share their ideas and insights gained through firsthand experiences as to what can be done to improve accessibility and livability in a particular locale. Below are several examples used by the agency:



- **Active Transportation Conferences** - AMATS hosts conferences dedicated to transportation-related topics designed to provoke discussions between policy makers and the public. The intent of the conferences are to help communities address and identify needs that policymakers may have overlooked. These conferences are daylong events with featured speakers and breakout sessions.
- **Better Block** - Better Block encourages the public to take one neighborhood block at a time, start small, and actually *do* something. It could be setting up new temporary bike lanes; it could be makeshift street art or furniture; it could be a coffee shop, art gallery or beer garden for a brief period of time. These events help the public experience something new in their neighborhoods by letting them see it, live it and - perhaps most importantly - participate in actually *creating* it.

- **Bike-N-Brainstorms** - These events embark on a group bike ride along key corridors as an alternative way to get feedback about on-road biking. At the end of their ride, group members participate in a brainstorming session with agency personnel and local officials to share their ideas as to what can be done to improve bike travel within the area.
- **Jane's Walk** - Inspired by pioneering author and urban activist, Jane Jacobs, these events provide opportunities for people to engage in city planning by meeting and exploring cities through short walking tours. During these tours, participants discuss what can be done to make areas more pedestrian friendly.

The agency also welcomes invitations and suggestions from the public to participate and support community-oriented events benefitting the area's transportation systems.

Community Outreach

As part of its efforts to fashion a vibrant, livable Greater Akron area, AMATS frequently partners with various civic groups on a host of projects. Among the agency's past partners have been the Barberton Community Foundation, The Knight Foundation, Leadership Akron, Neighborhood Development Services and Torchbearers.

AMATS welcomes opportunities to work with new partners in appropriate community-oriented endeavors. Those interested in seeking the agency's involvement should contact AMATS at amats@akronohio.gov or at **330-375-2436**.

Speakers' Bureau

AMATS staff members are available by appointment to discuss technical and policy information with citizens and other interested parties during and outside of the agency's normal business hours. Staffers are also available by appointment to present technical and policy information to the public and to participate in a variety of forums such as panel discussions.

Individuals and groups can request a speaker by contacting AMATS at amats@akronohio.gov or at **330-375-2436**. Requests should be transmitted via the agency's public information coordinator.

Public Information

As part of our efforts to provide the region with a transparent planning process, AMATS goes beyond merely accommodating requests for public information - which we will gladly do! The agency disseminates all meeting materials one week prior to scheduled committee meeting dates via email and through postings on its web site - amatsplanning.org. The public is welcome to subscribe to these electronic mailings. All that's needed for a subscription to AMATS is a subscriber's name and their email address. Postal delivery of materials may be arranged by special request at no charge to recipients.

Many materials, such as our current and past reports, plans and studies are available for review and download on the agency web site. Please note that selected draft and interim materials may be available for viewing and downloading only for specified times, such as public comment periods.

Records of committee meetings are available in the form of minutes and MP3 podcasts on the agency web site. AMATS will gladly forward pdf or printed versions of committee minutes to the public via email or postal delivery upon request. The agency also offers a podcast subscriber service in which committee recordings can be automatically downloaded to your computer as soon as they become available.

In addition, AMATS regularly distributes press releases and other information to Greater Akron area media regarding transportation-related events and developments. The agency also provides a free annual report and a semi-annual newsletter to committee members, the media, and subscribers. Other information and services such as traffic data, project status information, accident data and more are readily available on the agency web site. The staff is available to answer questions regarding information that is not readily available on the site.

Unique Populations

AMATS strives to involve low-income and minority groups in the public participation process for the Greater Akron area. The agency relies on the definitions of these populations provided by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Order 5610.2(a) on Environmental Justice, contained in the *Federal Register* (May 2, 2012). "Low-Income" is defined as a person whose median household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.

A "Minority" is defined as a person who is:

- 1) Black (a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa);
- 2) Hispanic (a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race);
- 3) Asian (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent);
- 4) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands; or
- 5) American Indian and Alaskan Native (a person having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition)

Using 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data, the agency recognizes where these groups are located within the region (p. 11 and p. 12) and seeks their involvement throughout the planning process using a mix of outreach strategies involving advertisements, community groups, press releases, social media and other available means. The aforementioned *Public Empowerment* strategies, such as Better Block and Bike-N-Brainstorms, (p. 6-p. 7) present valuable opportunities for the agency and members of these populations to coordinate, network and organize activities with direct participation and firsthand experiences given the targeted neighborhood scale of many of these events.

The region is also witnessing growth in its Asian and Hispanic populations. These populations have unique interests and needs which will contribute to and influence the area's transportation policies and systems. AMATS recognizes this and strives to foster a dialogue with these and other diverse communities within the area. Recently, the agency has increased its outreach efforts to these populations by initiating a dialogue with various organizations including:

- the Akron Urban League
- Asian Services in Action, Inc.
- the International Institute of Akron
- the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission
- Torchbearers
- and other community and neighborhood groups.

The agency actively pursues opportunities to collaborate on the development of transportation-related programs and projects with representatives of these populations. Each public process confronts the challenge of getting traditionally underrepresented populations involved in the planning process. These potentially underrepresented populations may include youth of the community, persons with disabilities, senior persons and others who may be too busy or unable to attend public meetings.

Long an adherent to the spirit and wording of Title VI of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Orders 12898 and 13166, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the agency will broaden and continue its outreach to the region's many varied communities and populations. The passages below demonstrate that the agency recognizes the importance of these federal requirements throughout the regional planning process.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations (49 CFR), Part 21 states that "no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from the participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal Financial assistance." In May 2015, AMATS adopted a comprehensive [AMATS Title VI - Program Procedures and Documentation](#) Plan, which defines the agency's program, procedures and means of documentation. AMATS employees are responsible for ensuring that the agency's programs, policies, and services are developed, conducted and implemented without regard to a person's race, color, national origin (including Limited English Proficiency), sex, disability, ancestry, religion, military status or age. Employees must ensure that ethnic minorities and low-income populations are not adversely impacted, and aim to achieve full participation by these groups in the agency's programs, policies and activities.

AMATS' Public Information Coordinator/Title VI Coordinator is responsible for initiating and monitoring Title VI activities, preparing required reports, and other responsibilities as required by Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200, and Title 49 CFR Part 21.

Executive Order 12898 - Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations

Executive Order 12898 requires that disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations be identified and addressed to achieve environmental justice. Since the establishment of Title VI, Environmental Justice has been considered in local, state, and federal transportation projects. Additionally, Title 28 CFR Section 42.104 of Title VI and related statutes require federal agencies to ensure that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or religion.

Executive Order 13166 - Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Executive Order 13166 requires federal agencies to examine the services that they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services so that LEP persons can have meaningful access to them. This order also requires that recipients of federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to their LEP applicants and beneficiaries.

To assist federal agencies in carrying out their LEP responsibilities, the U.S. Department of Justice has issued a Policy Guidance Document, *2002 LEP Guidance*. This document sets the compliance standards that recipients of federal financial assistance must follow to ensure that their programs and activities normally provided in English are accessible to LEP persons and thus do not discriminate on the basis of national origin in violation of Title VI's prohibition against national origin discrimination.

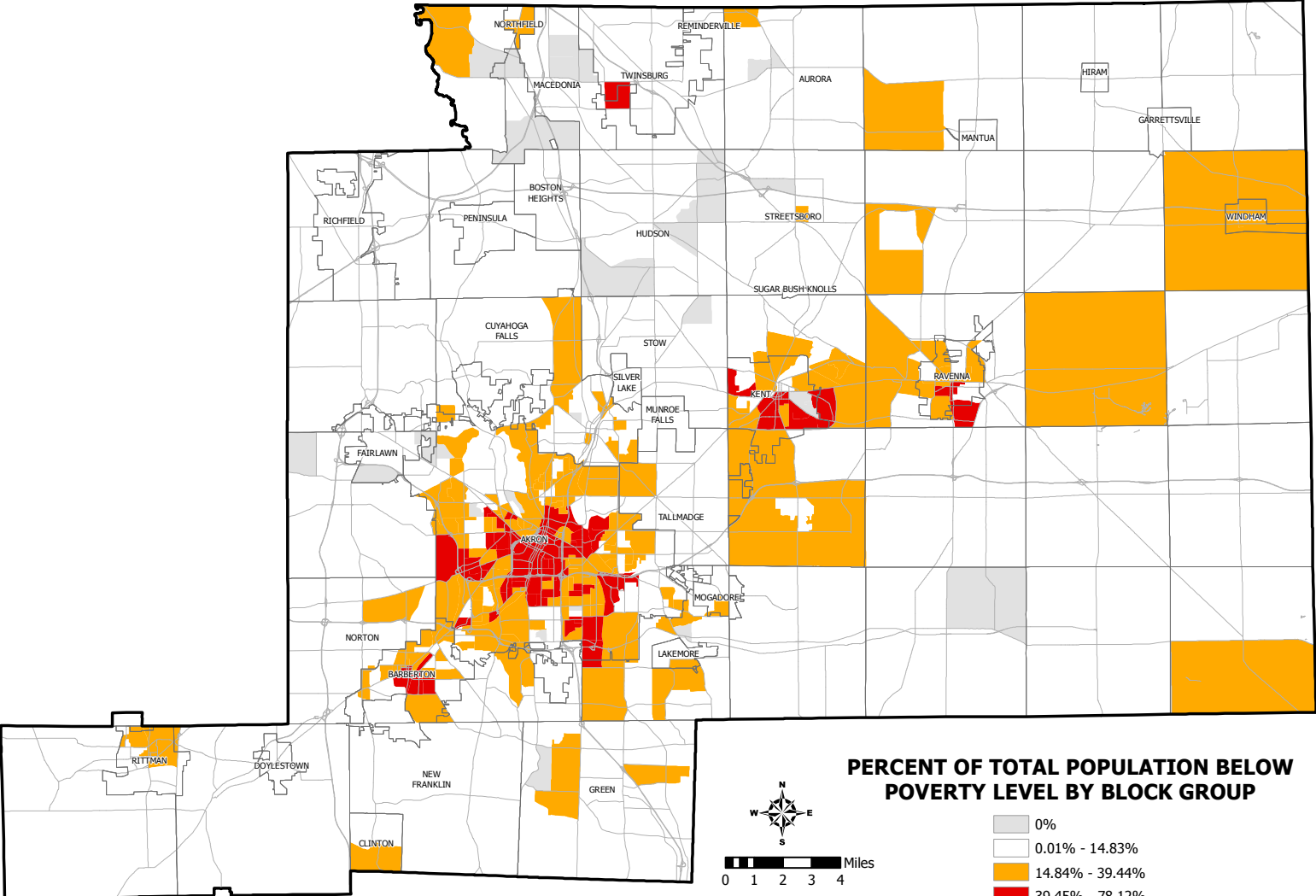
Appendix E - Language Assistance Plan for Limited English Proficient Populations (p. 21-p. 25) details how AMATS meets the needs of LEP populations within the Greater Akron area and evaluates the effectiveness of its efforts.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

The agency prides itself on its ongoing efforts to meet and exceed the standards outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. AMATS will make every effort to arrange for translation, sign language and other special assistance at meetings for individuals with special needs who request them in a timely manner of at least three business days beforehand.

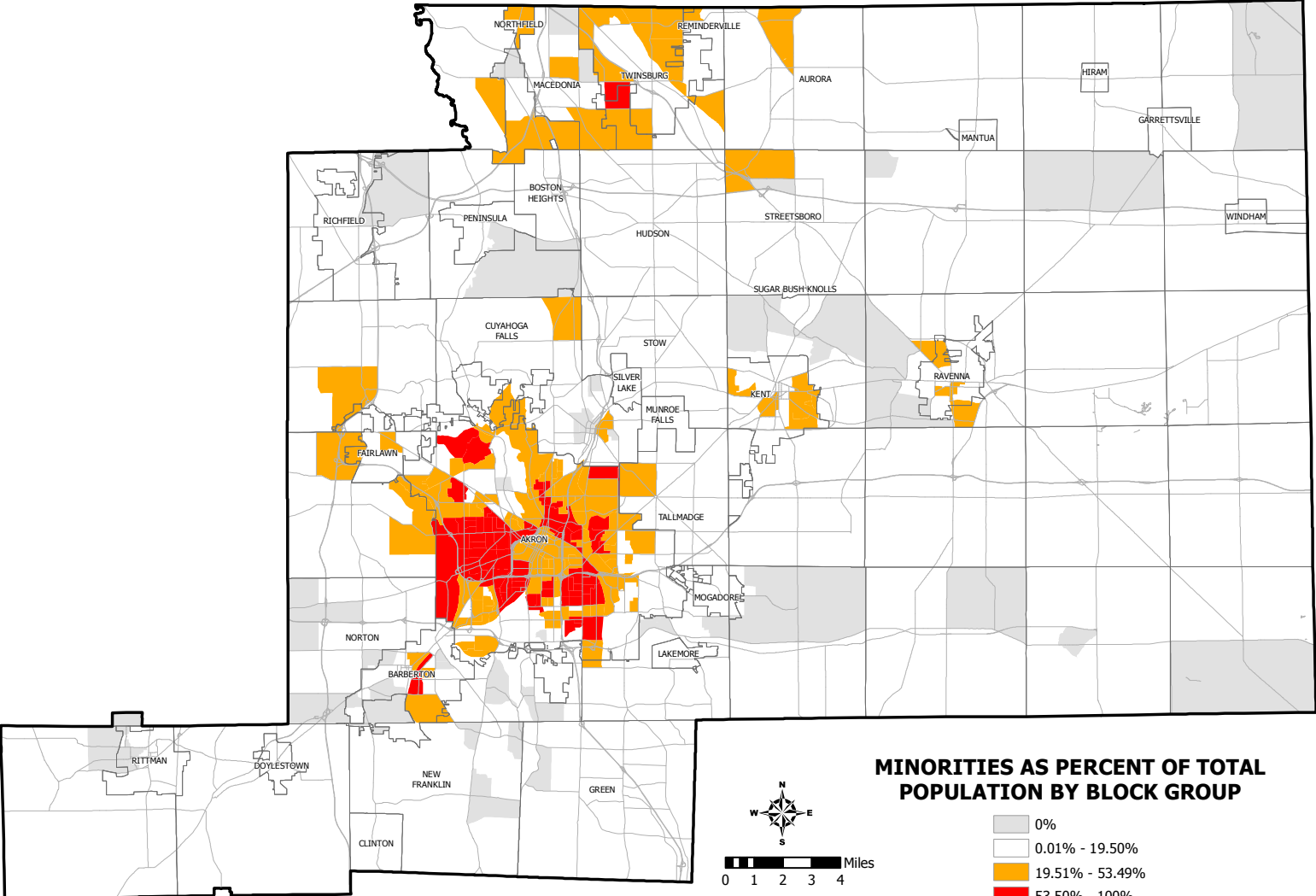
In addition, our agency web site - amatsplanning.org - includes a link to language interpretation software to assist those for whom English is not the first language. The [AMATS Title VI - Program Procedures and Documentation](#) Plan outlines other steps to include limited-English proficient persons in the planning process.

LOW INCOME POPULATION



DATE: October 2018
 SOURCE: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates, Table C17002

MINORITY POPULATION



DATE: October 2018
 SOURCE: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates, Table B02001

Conclusion

Our agency aims to be as open as possible when it come to sharing information and explaining why and how transportation decisions are made in the Greater Akron area.

Our *Public Participation Plan* or "3P" is intended to appeal to as many different interested people through a mix of opportunities and strategies both digital and personal.

AMATS will continue to explore new opportunities for public outreach as they become available. Outreach can be challenging and our agency is committed to receiving as much feedback as possible.

Appendix A - Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

A primary responsibility of AMATS is to prepare and maintain a long-term *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) that meets the travel needs of the region. The RTP creates a framework for the region's transportation system through the identification of needs and project recommendations. It also sets the direction for transportation decisions, policy and planning throughout the region.

Public participation is an integral part of preparing the RTP. This is your chance for your voice to be heard! Comments received during the review of the Draft RTP will be presented to the Policy Committee and other stakeholder planning agencies for consideration before final adoption of the RTP by the Policy Committee.

Once a Draft RTP has been created, AMATS will:

- Make copies of the draft available to the public at:
 - AMATS website – amatsplanning.org
 - AMATS office
- Tweet on [@amatsplanning](https://twitter.com/amatsplanning)
- Post on [facebook.com/amatsplanning](https://www.facebook.com/amatsplanning)
- Schedule at least one public meeting for review and comment
- Place advertisements in newspapers including the *Akron Beacon Journal*, the *Record-Courier* and *The Reporter* and other publications deemed as appropriate by the AMATS staff.
- Send news releases
- Regularly maintain and update its lists of those interested parties and transportation stakeholders that receive information pertaining to the area's transportation planning process.

Please note that AMATS will not limit itself to the activities identified above to promote awareness of the Draft RTP and will actively pursue additional opportunities to do so.

Amending the Plan

Periodically, local or state officials request that the approved RTP be modified, or that a project recommendation be added or dropped. Such requests will be identified as either a major or minor amendment. The individual amendment determines which public involvement procedures are appropriate. The procedures for Major and Minor amendments and Administrative Modifications are described below.

- **Major Amendments**

If the amendment involves a project recommendation that includes a new interchange; a new roadway or lane addition greater than one mile in length; a new major public transit project; commuter rail; or has a significant impact on air quality, then it will be considered a major amendment and public involvement for the amendment will follow the same procedures as the Draft RTP.

- **Minor Amendments**

If the amendment does not include a project such as one previously mentioned, it will be considered a minor amendment. Such amendments will be available for public consideration and comment through the appropriate *Meeting Packet* link and the *Get Involved* page of the agency website - amatsplanning.org - prior to Policy Committee action.

- **Administrative Modifications**

The staff is granted the discretion by the AMATS Policy Committee to implement minor revisions or administrative modifications to the *Regional Transportation Plan*, and various plan-related amendments, reports, and studies as may be warranted. Such administrative modifications are largely grammatical and typographical corrections or revisions that do not require demonstration of fiscal constraint or an air quality conformity determination.

For the sake of transparency, the staff will present all changes to the *Regional Transportation Plan* to the AMATS Policy Committee regardless as to whether they are amendments or minor administrative modifications.

If adopted by the Policy Committee, amendments and administrative modifications will be included in the RTP and will be posted on the website.

Appendix B - Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The *Transportation Improvement Program* (TIP) is the Greater Akron area's four-year program of highway, public transit, and bicycle and pedestrian projects. It must be consistent with the *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP). Through the TIP process, projects are scored and selected, providing funding for area transportation projects.

Public participation is necessary in the development of a sound TIP for the area. Comments generated during the review of the Draft TIP will be presented to the Policy Committee and other stakeholder planning agencies for consideration before adoption of the Final TIP document by the Policy Committee.

Once a Draft TIP has been created, AMATS will:

- Make copies of the draft available to the public at:
 - AMATS website – amatsplanning.org
 - AMATS office
- Tweet on [@amatsplanning](https://twitter.com/amatsplanning)
- Post on [facebook.com/amatsplanning](https://www.facebook.com/amatsplanning)
- Schedule at least one public meeting for review and comment
- Place advertisements in newspapers including the *Akron Beacon Journal*, the *Record-Courier* and *The Reporter* and other publications deemed as appropriate by the AMATS staff.
- Send news releases
- Regularly maintain and update its lists of those interested parties and transportation stakeholders that receive information pertaining to the area's transportation planning process.

Please note that AMATS will not limit itself to the activities identified above to promote awareness of the Draft TIP and will actively pursue additional opportunities to do so.

Amending the TIP

Periodically, state or local officials request that a project in the approved TIP be modified or cancelled or that a new project be added. Such requests will be identified as either a major or minor amendment. The individual amendment determines which public involvement procedures are appropriate. The procedures for Major and Minor amendments and Administrative Modifications are described below.

- **Major Amendments**

If the amendment involves a project that includes a new interchange; a new roadway or lane addition greater than one mile in length; a new major public transit project; commuter rail; or has a significant impact on air quality, then it will be considered a major amendment and public involvement for the amendment will follow the same procedures as the Draft TIP.

- **Minor Amendments**

If the amendment does not include a project such as one previously mentioned, it will be considered a minor amendment. Such amendments will be available for public consideration and comment through the appropriate *Meeting Packet* link and the *Get Involved* page of the agency website - amatsplanning.org - prior to Policy Committee action.

- **Administrative Modifications**

The staff is granted the discretion by the AMATS Policy Committee to implement minor revisions or administrative modifications to the *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*, and various TIP-related amendments, reports, and studies as may be warranted. Such administrative modifications are largely grammatical and typographical corrections or revisions that do not require demonstration of fiscal constraint or an air quality conformity determination.

For the sake of transparency, the staff will present all changes to the TIP to the AMATS Policy Committee regardless as to whether they are amendments or minor administrative modifications.

If adopted by the Policy Committee, amendments and administrative modifications will be included in the TIP and will be posted on the website.

Appendix C - Involvement of Interested Parties and Public Comment

The *2018 Public Participation Plan* or "3P" describes AMATS' ongoing efforts to engage and involve the public in the metropolitan transportation planning process for the Greater Akron area. 3P is an update to the *2015 Public Participation Plan* and will be an input into the upcoming *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) and *Transportation Improvement Program* (TIP).

In developing 3P, AMATS is actively seeking consultation with interested parties and communities. Our agency seeks to develop a policy document that engages the public and other private and public organizations by providing ample opportunities for input and involvement in the area's planning process. It is our goal to base 3P on the insights of the area's citizens, community groups, affected public agencies and representatives of public transportation, freight shipping and pedestrian and bicycle transportation.

The Draft 3P details how the agency will provide opportunities for public comment and involvement throughout the planning process and for its most significant products, the RTP and TIP. These opportunities include posting committee meeting packets and MP3 podcasts on the AMATS website and using social media tools and non-traditional meetings and strategies to reach out to new audiences and communities.

AMATS will continue to give special consideration to making all of its public meetings convenient and accessible. Meetings of the AMATS Citizens Involvement Committee are scheduled in the evenings and in central locations. Also, all materials, plans and information can be accessed 24 hours a day on the AMATS website - amatsplanning.org. Additional review and involvement opportunities are provided during the development of the RTP and the TIP.

The Draft 3P was available for public comment for 45 days beginning on **October 12, 2018 through November 26, 2018**. A Public Comment Form for the Draft 3P was available as a pdf for downloading through the agency web site - [amatsplanning](http://amatsplanning.org) - and was presented as part of *Appendix D* (p. 19) with this draft document. The Draft 3P was also presented to the public for review and comment during the **6:30 p.m.** meeting of the AMATS Citizens Involvement Committee (CIC) scheduled for **December 6, 2018** at the Akron-Summit County Public Library - Main Library located at 60 South Main Street in Akron. During this meeting, the Staff was informed by a CIC member that the Draft 3P incorrectly stated in the first sentence of the tenth paragraph on page 3 that the committee meets four times a year. The member noted that the CIC meets six times a year. The Staff has corrected this item.

AMATS is continually seeking new ways to engage and involve the public and other agencies. As new opportunities arise, they will be incorporated into the transportation planning process. The 3P will be updated accordingly. The public is encouraged to forward their opinions and suggestions regarding this document to **AMATS Public Information Coordinator Kerry Prater** via email at kprater@akronohio.gov or postal mail at the following address:

Mr. Kerry Prater
AMATS
161 S. High Street / Suite 201
Akron, Ohio 44308



Audience Participation Form

The Policy Committee welcomes your comments.
Please keep these guidelines in mind:

- Please register by completing the application below.
- Public comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per person at the beginning of the meeting.
- Groups wishing to address the Policy Committee should select a representative to present the group's position.

Please submit this form to a staff member prior to the meeting.
Forms may also be completed online, faxed, or mailed.

Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study

806 CitiCenter | 146 S High Street | Akron, Ohio 44308
Phone: 330-375-2436 | Fax: 330-375-2275
Web: amatsplanning.org/get-involved/



Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Representing (optional): _____

Topic: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____ **Email:** _____

Would you like to receive meeting material by email? Y N

Appendix E - Language Assistance Plan for Limited English Proficient Populations

It is the policy of AMATS to provide meaningful access to all of its programs and services to all individuals, including those who are limited in English proficiency. AMATS recognizes that there are many individuals for whom English is not their primary language. Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited-English proficient or "LEP." These individuals are entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type or service, benefit, or encounter. By definition, the term LEP refers to any person age 5 and older who reported speaking English less than "very well" as classified by the U.S. Census Bureau. The term "English proficient" refers to people who reported speaking English only or speaking English "very well" on their Census response form. If a respondent answered that they spoke English "well," then they would still be considered LEP.

According to the *2013 American Community Survey*, 0.18 percent of the AMATS area population is unable to speak English. The U.S. Census Bureau – *American Fact Finder (2008-2012)* reports there are several languages spoken in the AMATS area. Some of these languages include Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Hmong, and Nepalese. Language for LEP individuals can be a barrier to: accessing important benefits or services; understanding and exercising important rights; complying with applicable responsibilities; and understanding other information provided by federally funded programs and activities.

Many individual federal programs, states, and localities have provisions requiring language services for LEP individuals. Federal laws applicable to language access include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as Title VI regulations, prohibiting discrimination based on national origin, and Executive Order 13166 issued in 2000 by then-President Bill Clinton. Executive Order 13166 is an order to federal agencies stating that people who are LEP should have meaningful access to federally conducted and federally funded programs and activities. This order requires federal agencies to examine the services that they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited-English proficiency, and develop and implement a system to provide those services so that LEP persons can have meaningful access to them. It is expected that agency plans provide for such access consistent with the fundamental mission of the agency. Executive Order 13166 also requires that the federal agencies work to ensure that recipients of federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to their LEP applicants and beneficiaries.

To assist federal agencies in carrying out these responsibilities, the U.S. Department of Justice has issued a Policy Guidance Document entitled, *Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - National Origin Discrimination Against Persons With Limited English Proficiency (LEP Guidance)*. This guidance sets forth the compliance standards that recipients of federal financial assistance such as AMATS must follow to ensure that their programs and activities normally provided in English are accessible to LEP persons and thus do not discriminate on the basis of national origin.

AMATS is committed to taking measures to assure that individuals are not excluded from participating in programs simply because they face challenges communicating in English. The purpose of the LEP Plan contained in *Appendix E* is to outline the steps that AMATS follows to provide language assistance for LEP persons seeking meaningful access to AMATS programs and services. For further discussion of the

agency's LEP Plan, please consult the [AMATS Title VI - Program Procedures and Documentation](#) (May 2015). This document is available at amatsplanning.org.

Determining the Need

Recipients of federal funding and federal agencies are required to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by LEP persons. AMATS considers various factors in its pursuit to provide meaningful access to LEP communities and populations within the Greater Akron area. Following guidance from the U. S. Department of Transportation, four factors serve as the developmental foundation of this LEP Plan. These four factors and how the agency considers them are presented below:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible in the service area or likely to encounter an AMATS-funded program, activity or service.

This first factor is the basis of the agency's LEP Plan. It requires AMATS to review U.S. Census data to determine if a language meets the LEP "Safe Harbor" Threshold. The agency determines the Safe Harbor Threshold by initially analyzing LEP demographic data for two to three of the largest identified language groups other than English within the Greater Akron area. The threshold is then calculated by dividing the population estimate for a language group that "Speaks English not well, or not at all" by the total population of the county. The LEP Safe Harbor Threshold provision stipulates that for each LEP group that meets the LEP language threshold (5 percent or 1,000 individuals, whichever is less) AMATS must provide translation of vital documents in written format for the non-English users. Examples of written translation of vital documents include the [AMATS Title VI - Program Procedures and Documentation](#) Plan and/or public notices, Title VI Complaint Procedures and Title VI Complaint Forms.

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 5.5 percent of the population of the Greater Akron area speak a language other than English at home. AMATS recognizes that this percentage is likely to increase in the future given current demographic trends.

**Language Spoken At Home
(U.S. Census 2012-2016 American Community Survey)***

	Number	Percentage
Only English	646,025	94.5%
Spanish	7,343	1.1%
Other Indo-European	15,395	2.3%
Asian/Pacific Island Language	9,612	1.4%
Other	5,061	0.7%
Total	683,436	100.0%

* - Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey's 2016 five-year estimates (2012-2016) for "Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over." Table B16004

2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come into contact with an AMATS-funded program.

LEP persons are persons identified as speaking English less than very well, not well or not at all. Just because a person speaks a language other than English doesn't mean they don't speak English or are identified as LEP. AMATS and its contractors, if relevant, will be trained on what to do when they

encounter a person that speaks English less than well. AMATS or its contractor will track the number of encounters and consider making adjustments as needed to its outreach efforts to ensure meaningful access to all persons and specifically to LEP and minority populations of AMATS' programs and services.

AMATS maintains records of public meetings and phone inquiries in order to assess the frequency with which staff has possibly been in contact with LEP persons. AMATS staff has no record of receiving a request for an interpreter nor has there been any request for translated documents to the agency in its capacity as the Greater Akron area's federally designated metropolitan planning organization.

3. The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by AMATS to the LEP population.

AMATS understands that an LEP person with language barrier challenges also faces difficulties obtaining health care, education or access to employment. A transportation system is a key link to connecting LEP persons to these essential services. AMATS has identified activities and services which would have serious consequences to individuals if language barriers prevented access to information or the benefits of those programs. The activities and services include providing emergency evacuation instructions in our facilities and providing information to the public on security awareness or emergency preparedness.

AMATS' assessment of what programs, activities and services that are most critical include contact with community organizations that serve LEP persons, as well as contact with LEP persons themselves to obtain information on the importance of the modes or the types of services that are provided to the LEP populations.

It should be noted that AMATS does not provide any actual transportation services beyond its participation with statewide partners in the contract for Gohio Commute, a carpool matching web site. As the Greater Akron area's federally designated metropolitan planning organization, the agency is responsible for the federal transportation funding that reaches communities within its region and for ensuring that there is public participation in how that funding is spent.

4. The resources available to AMATS and overall costs to provide LEP assistance.

Translation of all AMATS plans and materials is limited due to cost restrictions. Further, the LEP population in the region is not necessarily of a significant proportion to warrant such expenses. The agency does provide translation services for information and items posted on its web site - **amatsplanning.org**. The agency will provide translation services at AMATS-hosted events in situations deemed appropriate and necessary by the staff or in those situations where a request for such assistance is relayed to the staff in a timely manner of at least three business days beforehand.

Although AMATS does not have a separate budget for LEP outreach, the agency will continue to work with the city of Akron and the Greater Akron area's transit providers - METRO RTA of Summit County and the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) - to implement low cost methods of reaching LEP persons. For example, the city of Akron has a Spanish speaking person on staff, as do METRO RTA and PARTA. These resources ensure that AMATS can provide assistance to LEP Spanish-speaking persons, if needed. In addition, AMATS and our transit providers work with local advocacy groups to reach LEP populations.

With due consideration of the aforementioned four factors, the AMATS LEP Plan for the 3P, is outlined below:

LEP Implementation Plan

AMATS will strive to accommodate those members of the public who are LEP. If an LEP individual or someone on their behalf should contact AMATS for assistance, the agency staff will take the name and contact information of the person in need of assistance. The staff will work with available interpreter/translator services to assist LEP individuals in their understanding of the transportation planning process. The staff shall promote the availability of LEP assistance upon timely request by LEP individuals through various available media prior to public meetings, comment periods and public empowerment events.

For those with limited-English proficiency, the AMATS website - amatsplanning.org - makes translations available of all of its pages. An automatic translation button allows the AMATS website to be made accessible in Chinese, French and Spanish with the potential for additional languages in the future.

Outreach programs, particularly in the area of bicycle and pedestrian safety education, include the distribution of educational material. The production of multilingual publications and documents and/or interpretation at meetings/events will be provided to the degree that funding permits and based on current laws and regulations. Educational material, e.g., safety brochures, provided free-of-charge from various entities, such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, will be ordered and distributed at AMATS public participation events. When available, copies of brochures, pamphlets, and similar documents, in other languages will be secured and distributed at events which are held throughout the Greater Akron area.

Citizen involvement with AMATS and/or its three committees is voluntary. AMATS provides ample opportunities for the public to comment on the use of federal funds throughout the regional planning process and specifically during development of the four-year *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* and the long-range *Regional Transportation Plan*.

With the recognition that transportation projects impact all residents, AMATS strives to encourage an understanding of the process and promote opportunities to comment.

Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan

The staff, in concert with the Citizens Involvement Committee (CIC), monitors the implementation of the agency's LEP Plan. The CIC meets regularly and invites anyone with an interest in regional planning to participate in their meetings and activities.

The AMATS LEP Plan is designed to be a living document that can be updated easily. Updates will examine all plan components, including:

- How to identify persons who may need language assistance.
- Examine past records from past meetings and events for requests for language assistance in order to anticipate possible need for assistance at upcoming meetings, i.e., a tracking system.

- Review to determine staff training needs.
- Address all completed *Nondiscrimination Complaint Forms* received by the staff. This form is available on the agency web site - amatsplanning.org. Using this form, citizens may describe in detail why they believe that their concerns or needs are not being addressed by the agency.

AMATS will post this LEP Plan and related materials on its web site at amatsplanning.org. Any person, including social service, non-profit, and law enforcement agencies and other community partners with internet access, will be able to access the plan. Printed copies will be made available upon request.

Any questions or comments regarding this LEP Plan should be directed to:

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