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.

“Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.”
- Alan Lakein, author
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

Policy Committee

Currently, there are 45 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. 22).

• 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 (p. 16 - p. 17) and the four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (p. 18 - p. 19). 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 (p. 16 - p. 17) and Appendix B - Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (p. 18 - p. 19) 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.
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.

**AMATSPLANNING.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. 22) 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 website - **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 website - **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 website 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 - AMATSPlanning - the agency presents many special video features highlighting transportation topics. Topics range from meeting summaries to informative features.

"Social media is the ultimate equalizer. It gives a voice and a platform to anyone willing to engage."

- Amy Jo Martin, author, speaker, entrepreneur, and founder and CEO of Digital Royalty
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,

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 website. 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 website. 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. 13 and p. 14) 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. 8) 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.

“Where you see wrong or inequality or injustice, speak out, because this is your country. This is your democracy. Make it. Protect it. Pass it on.”
- Thurgood Marshall, U.S. Supreme Court Justice
**Executive Order 13166 - Improving Access to Services for Patrons 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. 23 - p. 27)* 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 website - [amatsplanning.org](http://www.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.
Minority Population

Minorities as Percent of Total Population by Block Group

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 comes 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.

“Plans are nothing; planning is everything.”
- Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th President of the United States
APPENDIX A
Regional Transportation Plan

A primary responsibility of AMATS is to prepare and maintain a long-term *Regional Transportation Plan* that meets the travel needs of the region. The *Regional Transportation Plan* 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 *Regional Transportation Plan*. This is your chance for your voice to be heard! Comments received during the review of the Draft *Regional Transportation Plan* will be presented to the Policy Committee and other stakeholder planning agencies for consideration before final adoption of the *Regional Transportation Plan* by the Policy Committee.

Once a Draft *Regional Transportation Plan* has been created, AMATS will:

- Make copies of the draft available to the public at:
  - AMATS website - amatsplanning.org
  - AMATS office
- Tweet on @amatsplanning
- Post on 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 *Regional Transportation Plan* and will actively pursue additional opportunities to do so.

Amending the Plan

Periodically, local or state officials request that the approved *Regional Transportation Plan* 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 *Regional Transportation Plan*. 
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 Regional Transportation Plan and will be posted on the website.
APPENDIX B

Transportation Improvement Program

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. 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
- Post on 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 Regional Transportation Plan and will actively pursue additional opportunities to do so.

Amending the TIP

Periodically, local or state 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, 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.
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 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 Regional Transportation Plan 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 Regional Transportation Plan 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.org - and is presented as part of Appendix D (p. 21) 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) on 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
Comment Form - 2018
Draft Public Participation Plan - “3P”

Name: __________________________________________

Email Address: __________________________________

Comments: ______________________________________

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To learn more about transportation planning in the Greater Akron area, please visit us online at amatsplanning.org.
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.

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Audience Participation Form

Name: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

Representing (optional): ____________________________

Topic: ____________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________

Telephone #: ____________________________ Email: ____________________________

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Spoken At Home</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only English</td>
<td>646,025</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>7,343</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Indo-European</td>
<td>15,395</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Island Language</td>
<td>9,612</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5,061</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>683,436</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* - 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 website - 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](http://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 website - [amatsplanning.org](http://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 website at [amatsplanning.org](http://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:

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

Telephone - 330-375-2436  
Fax - 330-375-2275  
E-Mail - amats@akronohio.gov