

@AMATS

THE GREATER AKRON AREA'S TRANSPORTATION JOURNAL

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COVER:

Above, one of METRO of Summit County's two new electric buses charges up. The transit authority launched its new electric fleet during a public event in late March at the Robert K. Pfaff Transit Center. For more turn to **page 7**.

At right, the new 2021 *Annual Report on Roadway Traffic Congestion in the AMATS Region* shows that things aren't that bad even when they're at their worst in terms of traffic congestion on Greater Akron area roadways.

For more, turn to **page 2**.



Area Congestion: How Bad Is It?

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Severe congestion exists, but is limited in AMATS area

A new, first-of-its kind report compiled by AMATS shows that things aren't that bad even when they're at their worst in terms of traffic congestion on Greater Akron area roadways. Approved by AMATS in May, the new *2021 Annual Report on Roadway Traffic Congestion in the AMATS Region* shows that the area's roadway network functions at a "tolerable" level of congestion even during peak drive-times.

The report assesses traffic congestion on road segments located on interstates, freeways, interchanges, ramps, arterials, and various intersections within the Greater Akron area of Portage and Summit counties and Chippewa and Milton townships in Wayne County. Out of 7,100 segments analyzed, the report finds that only 23 segments experience severe congestion at various times during the day. Nineteen of the 23 segments experiencing severe congestion are in Summit County while two are in Portage County and two are in Wayne County.

AMATS Transportation Designer Farhad Ahmadzai says that the agency calculated area congestion based on a mix of performance measures that included the average travel speed of vehicles on segments, the average free flow speed of vehicles travelling unhindered on segments, and vehicle hours of delay.

For its analysis, AMATS defined the peak morning drive-time as between 6 and 10 a.m., the mid-day drive time as 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., and the peak evening drive-time as 3 and 7 p.m. In the agency's listing of congested segments, the Interstate 271 southbound off-ramp to state Route 8 located in Macedonia experiences the area's most severe congestion during the peak evening drive-time. The East Bartges Street eastbound lane through the South Main Street Interchange in Akron and the West Avenue eastbound link to Tallmadge Circle in Tallmadge are listed as second and third in the agency's listing of segments experiencing severe congestion. These segments experience severe congestion during the peak evening drive-time.

The highest listed Portage County segment is Tallmadge Road between Cascades Boulevard to just west of the Interstate 76 Interchange in Brimfield Township. This segment experiences severe congestion during the mid-day drive time. The state Route 14 western leg of the state Route 43 intersection in Streetsboro becomes severely congested during the peak evening drive-time. These

segments appear as the seventeenth and eighteenth most severe congested segments in the agency's listing.

Two Wayne County locations - the state Route 21 northbound and southbound left-turn links to Edwards Road in Chippewa Township - are listed among the area's most severely congested segments. Interestingly, the northbound portion experiences severe congestion during the peak evening drive-time while the southbound portion of this segment experiences severe congestion during the peak morning drive-time.

By community, the cities of Akron and Tallmadge each have five locations identified as experiencing severe congestion at various times during the day. Other communities with multiple listings are Macedonia with three locations and Hudson with two locations.

AMATS used *StreetLight InSight* to compile the report. *StreetLight InSight* is a Cloud-based software analytics platform that tracks vehicle movements. Congestion estimates for segments were calculated over a five-month period spanning March through August 2021.

Ahmadzai says that the report is the first of its kind to be compiled by the agency and will be updated on an annual basis. He notes that congestion is not only an inconvenience to motorists, but also raises safety concerns for commuters on their trips to work, school, and other daily activities. Traffic delays also have negative impacts on air quality, the economy, and the timely delivery of goods and services.

The agency will use this report and its future editions to identify long-term regional congestion trends as part of its oversight of the area's Congestion Management Process (CMP). The report will help AMATS to identify and plan congestion-improvement projects throughout the region.

"We want to maximize the service life of our existing transportation system through congestion management. Maintaining the existing level of service and reducing severe congestion is one of the main goals of this report and the CMP," Ahmadzai adds.

To view the report, please click [here](#).



AHMADZAI

Greater Akron area traffic fatalities surged during pandemic

The latest three-year analysis released by AMATS shows that fatal motor vehicle crashes surged in the Greater Akron area during 2020 when compared to 2018. The new report is based on AMATS' analysis of more than 51,000 motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian-related crash records for the area's roadway sections and intersections obtained from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). For the *2018-2020 Crash Report*, the agency identified 160 high-crash roadway sections and 202 high-crash intersections in the region.

In 2018, the Greater Akron area recorded 35 motor vehicle crash fatalities. (This total represents the nadir for fatalities over a 13-year span beginning in 2008.) After posting an increase to 44 fatalities in 2019, fatalities surged by 97 percent to 69 fatalities when compared to 2018.

AMATS Transportation Improvement Program Coordinator David Pulay says that the agency can't offer clearcut explanations for this troubling increase, only speculation as to its cause. "It is possible that less traffic during the lockdown led to higher speeds and more fatal crashes. Some drivers mistakenly believed – and many may still believe - that they can drive faster or more recklessly with no consequences," Pulay observes.



Photo courtesy of the Akron Police Department.

Surprisingly, the agency found that this recent increase in fatalities occurred during a period of significant declines in regional daily traffic, vehicle crashes, and crash-related injuries. Pulay notes that these declines may seem contradictory initially when compared to the data regarding fatalities. However, these declines may be attributable to a combination of COVID-19 restrictions, various area safety improvement projects, and vehicle safety advancements by manufacturers.

Between 2018 and 2020, the number of thousands of daily vehicle miles traveled on Greater Akron area roadways fell from 20,087 to 17,463, a decrease of 2,624 miles travelled or 13 percent. Much of this decrease – 12.9 percent - occurred between 2019 and 2020 most likely due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Coinciding with this drop in daily traffic, the number of crashes in the region also decreased, from 18,739 in 2018 to 14,965 in 2020, a decline of 20.1 percent. Like the decrease in miles traveled, most of the decline in crashes occurred between 2019 and 2020, with 17,774 crashes in 2019 and 14,965 crashes in 2020, a drop of nearly 15.8 percent. Crashes resulting in injuries also decreased significantly, from 4,262 in 2018 to 3,503 in 2020, with the sharpest decline – 13.9 percent - occurring between 2019 and 2020.

As part of its mission as the Greater Akron area's metropolitan planning organization, AMATS also tracks bicycle and pedestrian-related crashes. The agency found that, out of the 218 bicycle-related crashes that occurred between 2018 and 2020, 159 or 73 percent resulted in an injury and eight in a fatality. The numbers of bicycle-related crashes and bicycle crashes with injuries posted declines between 2018 and 2020. Bicycle-related crashes fell from 82 in 2018 to 57 in 2020, a drop-off of about 30.5 percent. Bicycle crashes with injuries dropped from 61 in 2018 to 43 in 2020, a decline of 29.5 percent. In contrast to the totals for motor vehicles, bicycle-related crashes with fatalities posted a sharp decrease from six in 2019 to one in 2020.

There were 413 pedestrian-related crashes between 2018 and 2020 with 340 or 82 percent resulting in an injury and 23 in a fatality. Pedestrians accounted for over 16 percent of all area crash-related fatalities that occurred between 2018 and 2020.

High-crash locations identified in the report may be used by communities as a starting point when seeking federal Highway Safety Program funds through ODOT for safety projects. The *2018-2020 Crash Report* is available by clicking [here](#).



WALKS AROUND AKRON:

After a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Jane's Walk returned to the Greater Akron area. The Downtown Akron Partnership organized this year's walking tours, which occurred on May 6-7 in various locales in Akron. Jane's Walk events are part of a global walking initiative that was launched by friends of urban planning pioneer, Jane Jacobs.

Jane's Walk tours offer participants chances to explore local neighborhoods and encourage dialogue between neighbors and community planners. AMATS promotes active transportation and connectivity principles in transportation planning. The agency frequently utilizes such events as one of its planning tools.

This year's events included tours of the historic buildings along Main Street in Akron's downtown, shown in top and middle pictures at right. This year's tours even got walkers' canine friends involved during a Downtown Dog Walk, shown at bottom right.



Photo courtesy of the Downtown Akron Partnership.



Photo courtesy of The University of Akron.



Photo courtesy of the Downtown Akron Partnership.

Project Updates

The following table lists significant projects that were awarded between July 10, 2021 and June 1, 2022.

PROJECT	ESTIMATED COMPLETION	AMOUNT
Barber Road - Resurfacing of Barber Road, from South Corporate Limit to Wadsworth Road, in Norton.	6/27/2022	\$1,021,130
Chestnut Street - Resurfacing of Chestnut Street, from Lake Avenue to Main Street, and Riddle Street, from Meridian Street to Liberty Street, in Ravenna.	6/30/2022	\$545,405
New Milford Road - Resurfacing of New Milford Road, from Tallmadge Road to state Route 5/44 bypass, and Tallmadge Road, from state Route 44 to Alliance Road, in Portage County.	6/30/2022	\$2,428,175
Munroe Falls Avenue - Resurfacing of Munroe Falls Avenue, from Munroe Falls West Corporate Limit to Main Street (state Route 91), in Munroe Falls.	6/30/2022	\$344,258
Johnson Road - Resurfacing of Johnson Road, from Hametown Road to East Corporate Limit, in Norton.	7/1/2022	\$393,364
East Mennonite Road - Resurfacing of East Mennonite Road, from Chillicothe Road to East Corporate Limit, in Aurora.	7/31/2022	\$511,765
Ravenna Road - Resurfacing of Ravenna Road, from Glenwood Drive to East Idlewood Drive, in Twinsburg.	7/31/2022	\$468,761
Frost Road - Resurfacing of Frost Road, from Philipp Parkway to Sunny Lane, in Streetsboro.	8/1/2022	\$689,527
State Route 93 - Resurfacing of state Route 93, from Wilbeth Road to state Route 261, and state Route 162, from east of Mercer Avenue to Maple Street, in Akron.	8/15/2022	\$2,478,548
State Route 82 - Resurfacing of state Route 82, from Aurora Corporate Limit to west of Chamberlain Road, and roundabout construction in Mantua Township.	8/30/2022	\$1,954,059
Brecksville Road - Resurfacing of Brecksville Road, from state Route 303 to state Route 21, in the Village of Richfield.	8/31/2022	\$940,057
South Main Street - Resurfacing of South Main Street, from the Southern Corporate Limit to Front Street, in Rittman.	8/31/2022	\$324,397
East Ohio Avenue - Resurfacing of East Ohio Avenue, between Main Street and East Sunset Drive, in Rittman.	8/31/2022	\$457,519
Eastern Road - Resurfacing of Eastern Road, from Rufener Street to Gish Road, in Rittman.	9/1/2022	\$372,338
Eastern Road - Resurfacing of Eastern Road, from state Route 94 to Portage Street, and Gates Street, from Eastern Road to Doylestown Corporate Limit.	9/1/2022	\$657,761
State Routes 44, 88 and 303 - Resurfacing of state Routes 44, 88 and 303. Project includes repairs to seven bridges in Portage County.	9/30/2022	\$5,286,804
Interstate 480 - Resurfacing of Interstate 480 through Macedonia, Twinsburg, and Hudson, and state Route 91, from south of I-480 to north of I-480, in Twinsburg.	9/30/2022	\$7,349,801
West Steels Corners Road - Resurfacing of West Steels Corners Road, from Akron-Peninsula Road to Northampton Road, in Cuyahoga Falls.	10/31/2022	\$1,282,944
Broad Boulevard - Resurfacing of Broad Boulevard, from State Street to 2nd Street, in Cuyahoga Falls.	12/1/2022	\$821,896
Wooster Road - Intersection safety improvement will eliminate the westbound outside travel lane and improve signal coordination. Project includes construction of a shared-use path on portions of Wooster Road in Barberton.	6/30/2023	\$1,411,494

A greater voice for Greater Akron: the new 3P

The Greater Akron area's voice in regional transportation planning got a little louder in the spring. The AMATS Policy Committee unanimously approved a new *Public Participation Plan* or "3P" in March following an update process that began last year.

As the Greater Akron area's federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO), AMATS needs public participation as it selects which highway, public transit, bike, and pedestrian projects are worthy of receiving federal funds. The 3P identifies the strategies that the agency uses to engage and empower the public throughout the planning process.

In August 2021, AMATS began a comprehensive review of its 3P, which was last updated in 2018. Revisions resulting from this review are largely based on two recommendations given to the agency by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). These recommendations were issued to AMATS following the agency's federal certification review as an MPO in May 2021.

The FHWA and FTA recommended that AMATS review its Title VI complaint process to bring it into alignment with the latest guidance available through the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 addresses discrimination issues based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, or income status. MPOs must have a complaint process in place in cases of alleged discrimination in the planning process.

The FHWA and FTA also recommended that AMATS amend its 3P to include a specific process that the agency will use to respond to individual comments and input received as part of the public engagement process.

Following these recommendations, AMATS drafted new language for its Title VI complaint process to comply with ODOT policies. The agency also added new 3P passages stating that AMATS will acknowledge receiving all electronic and written correspondence from members of the public regarding transportation issues and respond within a seven-day period.

The agency also identified other unique public outreach approaches used by its sister agencies for potential co-opting by AMATS. This research led to the new 3P including a *Measures of Effectiveness Report* in which the agency will document the effectiveness of its public outreach efforts over a three-year period.

The Draft 3P was available for review and comment during a 65-day comment period that ended March 18. The AMATS Citizens Involvement Committee listened to public feedback regarding the draft plan during its regular January and March meetings. To view the new 3P, please click [here](#).



IT'S ELECTRIC!

METRO officials, surrounded by Greater Akron area community leaders, launched the Summit County transit authority's first two electric buses during a March 29 ribbon cutting ceremony at the Robert K. Pfaff Transit Center.



In the top photo, from left are METRO Chief Executive Officer Dawn Distler, Cuyahoga Falls Mayor Don Walters, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro, METRO Board President Robert DeJournett, Summit County Councilwoman Veronica Sims, Stow Mayor John Pribonic, and Barberton Mayor William Judge.

In the middle photo, one of the two new electric vehicles or "EVs" stands at the ready for service. METRO has nicknamed the two vehicles "Jolt" and "Volt."



In the bottom photo, attendees take a bus tour to experience the quiet, smooth ride of the huge EVs. Shortly before the ceremony, the METRO Board of Trustees approved the purchase of two additional electric buses. METRO will have four electric buses in its fleet by the end of 2023.



Photos courtesy of METRO RTA of Summit County.

Dates to Remember

Date	Time	Committee/Event	Location
August 4	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
August 4	6:30 p.m.	CIC	Akron-Summit County Public Library - Main Library
August 11	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
September 5	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Labor Day
September 15	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
September 15	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
September 22	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
October 7	8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Annual Meeting	Sheraton Suites Akron Cuyahoga Falls
October 10	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Columbus Day
November 11	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Veterans Day
November 24-25	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Thanksgiving
December 8	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
December 8	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
December 15	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Hilton Garden Inn, Ballroom A
December 26	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Christmas
January 2	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - New Years

The City of Akron is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are able to fully participate in public programs, services, and activities. Anyone who is in need of an accommodation from any City department is invited to contact Yamini Adkins, Director of Human Resources, 166 South High Street, Room 103, Akron, Ohio 44308, (voice) 330-375-2780 as soon as possible. If you require TDD phone service call Ohio Relay at 800-750-0750 and they will assist in contacting the Department of Human Resources at (330) 375-2780.

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