



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The Yearly Chronicle of the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study



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Thinking About the Future

The Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) spent a significant amount of time during 2025 contemplating the future of transportation in the Greater Akron area of Portage and Summit counties and northeastern Wayne County. Such contemplation should not be surprising to many of our members. Indeed, preparing for the future is our responsibility as the area's federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO).

AMATS is planning a future of pragmatic investments to improve connectivity, safety, and quality of life in our region. In May, the AMATS Policy Committee approved a new multi-million-dollar, four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and a new 25-year regional transportation plan, *Transportation Outlook 2050 (TO2050)*. Both items are key elements of the regional transportation planning process.

The TIP and *TO2050* continue the agency's emphasis on system preservation rather than costly and potentially unnecessary expansion. Preservation is a necessary and fiscally prudent course for the region in the face of diminishing resources. AMATS believes that infrastructure investments should improve safety and expand non-vehicular options for travel throughout the Greater Akron area.

The latest TIP invests nearly \$1.07 billion in the regional transportation network. The program schedules nearly \$416.7 million for area highway improvements and \$526 million in regional public transit service over a four-year span. The TIP also provides \$8.4 million for the area's growing active transportation network of pedestrian and cycling facilities.

The long-term *TO2050* presents broad planning goals for the Greater Akron area such as maintaining a safe, efficient transportation system; increasing mobility for all people; supporting regional economic vitality; and encouraging smart regional land use strategies and development patterns. Perhaps most significantly for the region, *TO2050* recommends that nearly \$9.4 billion be invested in area highway, public transit, and active transportation networks over the next 25 years.

Another accomplishment that AMATS is particularly proud of also occurred in May. A certification team comprised of Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration officials announced their preliminary decision to recertify the agency as the area's MPO. We were pleased with the opportunity to meet with the federal review team and to discuss the agency's practices and new planning

approaches, particularly the area's Congestion Management Process.

Other notable agency accomplishments during 2025 include the programming of funding for several significant regional improvement projects. The Akron Beltway and pedestrian bridge, East Exchange Street in Akron, Darrow Road in Stow, and the Freedom/Portage Trail Connector, various resurfacings, and a new bus garage for METRO RTA in Summit County are among the major investments that benefited from AMATS funding.

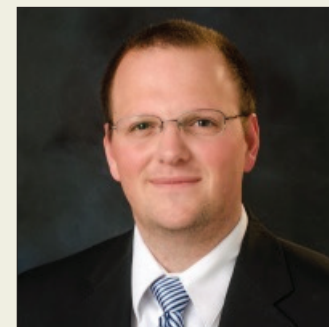
In October, the agency announced a new connectivity initiative: the Pop-Up Shop Program. The Pop-Up Shop Program provides materials so that communities may test street designs on a temporary basis while collecting public input. The program is available to any previous recipient that has received a grant from the agency's successful Connecting Communities Planning Grant Program.

New features made their debut on the agency website — amatsplanning.org — during the year. In May, an interactive TIP Project Map went live on our site. Visitors may access greater layers of detail regarding projects and surrounding areas than ever before. In September, an updated interactive High Injury Network (HIN) Map also went live. The HIN Map presents a host of previously unavailable data for fatal and serious injury crashes spanning the years 2019 and 2023.

The agency also participated in events in May and October to promote active transportation and bicycle safety. The area's active transportation network of walking and biking trails continued to grow during the year. In July, Summit MetroParks opened its Middlebury Trailhead Connector linking trails in Portage and Summit counties thanks in part to previously programmed AMATS funds. Phase 3 of Akron's Rubber City Heritage Trail and Chippewa Township's Heartland Trail were among the projects to secure funding in the new TIP.

As 2025 recedes into history, I feel a sense of satisfaction in AMATS' accomplishments. I think that you will too as you read the *AMATS 2025 Annual Report*.

Curtis Baker
Director



Planning

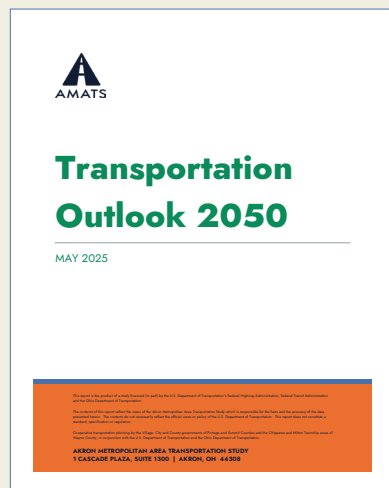
The Greater Akron area made tremendous progress in transportation planning during 2025 under AMATS' leadership.

In the spring, the agency approved *Transportation Outlook 2050 (TO2050)*. As the area's long-range plan, *TO2050* identifies regional transportation goals and presents recommendations for projects to meet identified needs over the next 25 years. The agency was also recertified as the area's metropolitan planning organization (MPO) by the federal government.

Two studies funded by the AMATS Connecting Communities Planning Grant Program made significant progress throughout the year.

In the fall, the agency unveiled an online High Injury Network (HIN) Map. AMATS also announced its Pop-Up Shop Program, a new initiative by AMATS designed to help communities test new ideas through temporary demonstration projects in their pursuit of community connectivity.

Transportation Outlook 2050



Following an extensive public participation campaign, the AMATS Policy Committee approved the long-term *TO2050* during its May meeting. *TO2050* presents broad planning goals for the Greater Akron area such as maintaining a safe, efficient transportation system; increasing mobility for all people; supporting regional economic vitality; and encouraging smart regional land use strategies and development patterns.

TO2050 recommends that nearly \$9.4 billion be invested in area highway, public transit, and active transportation networks over the next 25 years with nearly \$6.9 billion for the region's highways and slightly less than \$2.5

billion for public transit systems. The plan urges another \$35 million in active transportation investments over the same period.

The plan presents 47 specific highway project recommendations that include various roundabouts, intersection improvements, and corridor rehabilitations. *TO2050* presents 24 active transportation project recommendations such as new sections of the Rubber City Heritage, Lake Rockwell, and Veterans trails and

additional pedestrian-related facilities across the area.

The plan's public transit recommendations urge that service be considered an integral land use planning component and that future investments preserve the existing transit network, assets, and supporting facilities.

TO2050 emphasizes system preservation rather than costly and potentially unnecessary expansions. AMATS encourages project sponsors to focus on resurfacing, pavement replacement, and bridge maintenance activities under the new plan.

Recertification

AMATS was recertified as the federally designated MPO serving the Greater Akron area of Portage and Summit counties and northeastern Wayne County in 2025. A federal certification team comprised of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) officials announced their decision to recertify the agency as the area's MPO in May.

The team concluded that the regional transportation planning process led by AMATS complies with the spirit and intent of federal metropolitan transportation planning laws and regulations. The team described AMATS' approach to regional planning as "a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive process that reflects a significant professional commitment to deliver quality in transportation planning."

Federal certifications of transportation management areas typically span several years with the agency's last certification occurring in 2021. Agency officials were pleased with the opportunity to meet with the federal review team and to discuss the agency's practices and new planning approaches.

FHWA Ohio Division Community Transportation Planner Sam Wallace informed the AMATS Policy Committee of the team's decision during the committee's May meeting. Wallace recounted to the committee that he recently attended an annual national training course for FHWA planners. During the course, AMATS was praised by meeting facilitators for its work in



PROUD OF THE PROCESS:

The FHWA's Sam Wallace, at podium, informs the AMATS Policy Committee that the agency was recertified as the Greater Akron area's MPO.

compiling the Greater Akron area's Congestion Management Process, which evaluates regional congestion and recommends improvements for problem areas.

High Injury Network Map

In September, AMATS unveiled its updated interactive HIN map on the AMATS web site – amatsplanning.org. Fatal and serious injury crash data spanning the years from 2019 to 2023 are included in the latest version of the agency's online map.

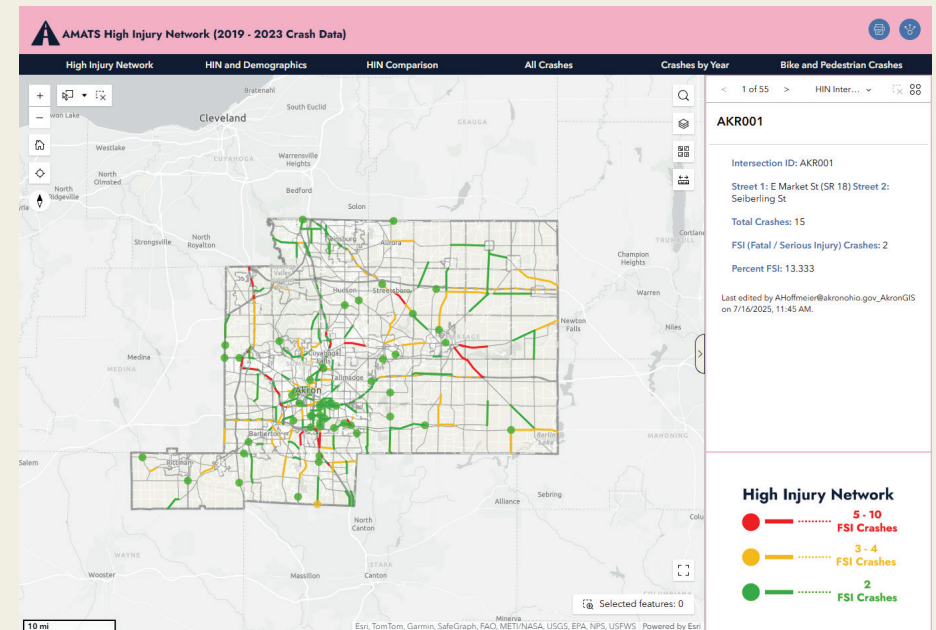
The updated map has a host of new features including:

- HIN locations for intersections, sections, and Interstate/freeway sections, color coded by the number of fatal and serious injury crashes at each location.
- Visual comparison between the new and previous high injury network maps.
- Demographic overlays of various population groups, classified by Census Tract Block Groups, such as elderly and low-income populations.
- The ability to view all crashes between 2019 and 2023.
- Crash data between 2019 and 2023 can be sorted by level of severity and year while bike and pedestrian crashes can be accessed separately.

In 2023, AMATS completed its first Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Action Plan as a complement to its longstanding annual crash reports. The SS4A Action Plan was created specifically to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes in the Greater Akron area. A key stipulation of the plan was to create a high injury network that details the locations of such crashes and that the network be updated regularly.

The HIN highlights roadway intersections and segments that have experienced two or more fatal and serious injury crashes. The agency based the HIN on crash data over five-year periods, and it is updated every two years.

The updated AMATS High Injury Network (2019-2023 Crash Data) map is available by clicking the accompanying image.



Connecting Communities Planning Grant Program

2025 was another successful year for the AMATS Connecting Communities Planning Grant Program and its efforts to promote regional connectivity in the Greater Akron area. The program helps communities strike a balance between their land use decisions and transportation investments by providing financial grants for the development of plans and studies that promote vibrant, livable communities.

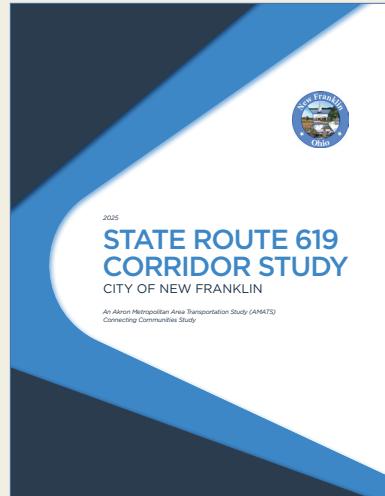
Two of the program's previously funded studies – New Franklin's *SR 619 Corridor Development Planning Study* and Akron's *Summit Lake Pedestrian Safety Master Plan* – marked significant milestones during the year. Below are summaries regarding these items.

SR 619 Corridor Development Planning Study

The study identifies potential solutions to accommodate all modes of transportation within the state Route 619 corridor between South Main and State streets in New Franklin. The city selected OHM Advisors as its study consultant and the *SR 619 Corridor Development Planning Study* officially commenced in March.

The process began with a Steering Committee meeting and Stakeholder Interviews, which included residents and business owners along the SR 619 Corridor. A successful community survey yielded 275 responses over the summer.

OHM Advisors presented a draft study to the public at New Franklin's Music by the Lake event in June, which facilitated resident feedback regarding potential study recommendations. A plan was presented to New Franklin City Council for consideration in October.



CORRIDOR AREA:

The study area of the SR 619 Corridor Development Planning Study, shown at right, is bounded by the New Franklin/Green Corporation limit to the East, New Franklin/corporation limit to the north, State Street to the west, and Turkeyfoot Lake to the south. The main emphasis of the study is the state Route 619 corridor and the state Route 619/South Turkeyfoot Road/Point Comfort Drive intersection.



Summit Lake Pedestrian Safety Master Plan

This plan seeks to improve pedestrian safety for people of all ages and abilities in Akron's Summit Lake neighborhood. In January, the city of Akron and its Planning Team presented comments regarding the Draft *Summit Lake Pedestrian Safety Master Plan* to City Architecture, the study consultant. While City Architecture worked to update plan recommendations and finalize the report, the study's Planning Team met in February and April to lead the plan's development.

City Architecture created a *Traffic Calming Toolkit* as a key element of the plan presented to Akron. The toolkit will help the city identify appropriate traffic calming strategies to pursue based on a location's traffic volume, speed, and installation costs, among other factors.

Plan recommendations were presented to the public for consideration at a Summit Lake Farmer's Market in July. A final plan was presented to Akron for consideration in August.



Additional details about these studies can be found by clicking [here](#).



SUMMIT LAKE AREA:

The study area of the Summit Lake Pedestrian Safety Master Plan, shown at left, is identified by the following boundaries:

- W Thornton St to the north
- Manchester Rd to the west
- Railroad to the south
- S Main St to the east

Pop-Up Shop Program

AMATS launched its Pop-Up Shop Program in November. The program is a new initiative by the agency designed to help communities test new ideas through temporary demonstration projects in their pursuit of community connectivity.

The Pop-Up Shop Program is available to any previous recipient that has received a grant from the agency's successful Connecting Communities Planning Grant Program, which provides resources to area communities to study active transportation solutions such as walking and cycling in their land use planning.

Through its Pop-Up Shop Program, AMATS provides materials so that communities may test street designs on a temporary basis while collecting public input. Available materials include traffic cones, temporary paint, barriers, and planters to demonstrate such complete street strategies as bike lanes, roundabouts, crosswalks, and more. Eligible projects must be a recommendation from a previous Connecting Communities Program planning grant.

Since its launch in 2009, the Connecting Communities Program has funded studies in communities such as Akron, Barberton, Bath, Boston Heights, Copley, Franklin Township, Green, Hudson, Kent, Lakemore and Springfield, New Franklin, Ravenna, Richfield, Stow, and Twinsburg. Other grant recipients include the Greater Akron area's transit authorities, the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority and METRO of Summit County.

Please visit the AMATS website — amatsplanning.org — and its Pop-Up Shop page for additional information by clicking [here](#). Past grant recipients are invited to submit a request form to borrow AMATS supplies for a Pop-Up Shop demonstration project.

An Active Year!

AMATS participated in a variety of community events during the year to promote active transportation in the Greater Akron area.

RIGHT: Agency representatives were among the participants of the Bicycle Fun Day hosted by the Cuyahoga Falls Parks and Recreation Department in May. The day was part of the department's Summer of Safety Program. AMATS joined the event as part of its promotion of cycling as an active transportation mode throughout the region.



LEFT: AMATS joined Copley Township's annual Halloween in the Park in October at the Copley Community Park. The event featured a day of fun with candy, costumes and cycling. Agency reps participated in the autumnal fun to promote cycling and walking as healthy active transportation modes. From left, AMATS Director Curtis Baker, Planning Administrator Matt Stewart, and GIS Technician Amelia Hoffmeier distribute treats from the agency's display.

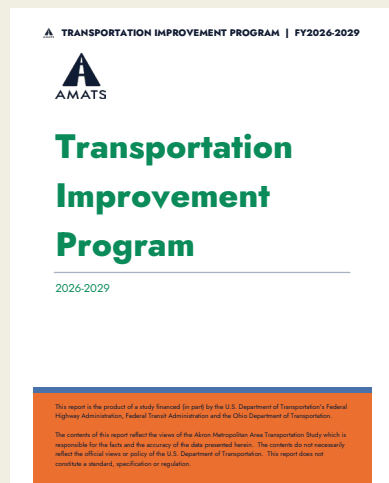
Engineering

2025 was a year of extraordinary engineering accomplishments by AMATS. As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) serving the Greater Akron area of Portage and Summit counties and northeastern Wayne County, the agency is responsible for developing and maintaining the region's four-year, multimillion-dollar Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) of highway, public transit, and active transportation projects.

The spring saw AMATS complete a new four-year TIP. Throughout the year, the program was updated and modified based on changing project needs and the availability of new funding. AMATS also unveiled a new online TIP Project Map, a valuable resource regarding area projects.

Along with developing and maintaining the TIP, the agency continued to collect data through its Traffic Counting Program. This information is used by the agency to program and schedule safety improvement projects throughout the region.

Transportation Improvement Program



Spanning Fiscal Years 2026 through 2029, the new TIP was approved by the AMATS Policy Committee during its May meeting.

The TIP provides slightly less than \$1.07 billion with nearly \$416.7 million to be invested in area highway improvements and \$526 million in regional public transit service over the program's four-year span. The TIP also provides \$8.4 million for the area's growing active transportation network of pedestrian and cycling facilities.

One of the most significant highway projects in the TIP is the \$85.8 million capacity improvement project of the Kenmore Leg on Interstate 76 in Akron, which is scheduled to begin in 2027. Other notable projects include the \$21.9 million widening to four lanes of South Arlington Road in Green in 2026 and a \$6 million improvement project on state Route 43 in Kent in 2029.

The area's public transit agencies — the Portage Area Regional Transportation



COMING SOON:

The \$85.8 million capacity improvement project of the Kenmore Leg on Interstate 76 in Akron, shown above, is scheduled to begin in 2027. The project is one of the many highway improvements programmed in the new TIP.

Authority of Portage County and METRO of Summit County — are scheduled to receive a total of more than \$3.8 million to modernize their fleets in 2026.

Active transportation investments include \$2 million for the construction of Phase 3 of the Rubber City Heritage Trail in Akron in 2029 and \$820,000 for the construction of Phase 4A of the Heartland Trail in Chippewa Township in 2026.



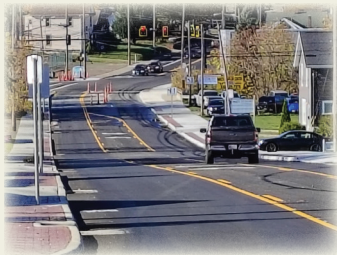
Other TIP-related accomplishments during 2025 include the development of three significant previously funded projects. Akron's North Main Street (a) and Kent's East Main Street (b) began construction during the summer. Barberton's Wooster Road West (c) was completed in the fall of 2025.



The Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), and Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) programs are the prime federal funding sources supporting these projects. State

sources include the Highway Safety Improvement (HSIP) and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs. The projects incorporate various Complete Street principles in transportation planning.

Akron began work on its nearly \$16 million, two-year North Main Street improvement in July. The project will add sidewalks and narrow the roadway to three lanes between the All-American Bridge and the Akron North Corporate Limit. AMATS programmed \$6 million in STBG and \$900,000 in CMAQ funds for the project's construction in 2019.



Barberton's nearly \$11 million Wooster Road West resurfacing and reconstruction project, which began construction in 2024, is largely complete. Spanning an area between Hudson Run and Second Street NW, the project added new sidewalks and crosswalks while narrowing the roadway from four to three lanes. AMATS programmed \$6 million in STBG funds for the project's construction in 2018.

Construction of Kent's nearly \$22 million, three-year East Main Street improvement project also began in July. Kent State University and the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority are the city's partners in this extensive reimagining of East Main Street between Willow Street and Horning Road. The project utilizes various Complete Street principles such as mid-block crossings, a raised median, two roundabouts, new bus pull offs and shelters, and new sidewalks. AMATS committed more than \$4.1 million in CRP funds (originally STBG) and \$6 million in CMAQ funds to the project in 2019.



Kent's project also received a nearly \$4 million federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity grant in 2023. State funding totaled \$2.7 million in HSIP funds in 2022 and \$1.8 million in SRTS funds in 2025.

TIP Project Map

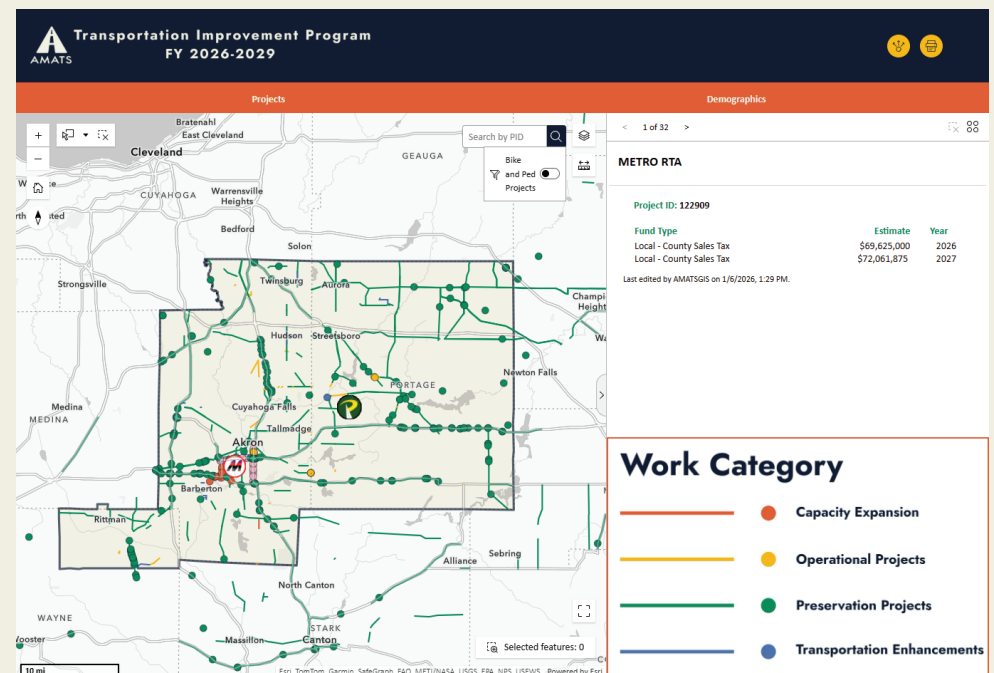
In May, AMATS announced a new feature for the TIP spanning Fiscal Years 2026 through 2029: An interactive project map.

AMATS describes the map as a "public-facing" version of the TIP. The map is available on the agency web site at amatsplanning.org and visitors may zoom in to project areas. Projects are depicted through lines and points and are color coded by their designated work category on a map of the Greater Akron area.

Once a project is selected, a popup menu presents information regarding phases, limits, funding, and scheduling that visitors to the AMATS web site have come to expect. However, there are also new features that may be unexpected.

The map was designed for members of the Greater Akron area who are interested in learning much more about projects. For the first time, visitors may select layers that detail demographic information in project areas such as carless households, elderly, disabled, low-income, and minority populations. Visitors to the map may zoom to a project and find various details. Visitors also have the option to search for information using project information numbers.

The map is available for viewing by clicking its image below.



Traffic Counting Program

Traffic count data is a key component of transportation planning. AMATS collects data regarding traffic volumes on Greater Akron area roadways and intersections for use in various regional analyses and evaluations of new projects. This data is collected using a tandem of radar and video camera counting devices.

The agency conducted 496 traffic counts at various area roadway segments during 2025.



Planning Aide Wali Rahim, setting up one of AMATS' Houston Radar Armadillo Tracker units to collect two-way traffic data.



One of AMATS' miovision Scout Plus units deployed in the field to collect two-way traffic data.



Outreach

The exchange of ideas and information between AMATS and the public which it serves is an integral component of regional transportation planning in the Greater Akron area. The public's insights and opinions aid agency personnel in identifying the needs of various communities and populations. 2025 was a year of solid achievement by AMATS with regards to its public outreach endeavors.

In addition to its regularly scheduled virtual meetings of the AMATS Citizens Involvement Committee (CIC), the agency hosted a successful annual meeting in the fall.

Annual Meeting

Active transportation and community connectivity were the hallmarks of the 2025 AMATS Annual Meeting. The October meeting included a recap of AMATS' accomplishments in the preceding year, an update of where the Greater Akron area is in its pursuit of connectivity, and a preview of the area's future.

Connectivity in transportation planning refers to how well a transportation network accommodates and integrates motor vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. AMATS promotes regional connectivity, most notably through its Connecting Communities Planning Grant Program. The meeting spotlighted the program, its successes, and future.

The meeting commenced with an AMATS Year in Review presentation by the agency's director, Curtis Baker. The director touted the agency's accomplishments during 2025 including the completion of TO2050, the area's long-range regional transportation plan.

Other notable accomplishments included the programming of funding for various significant improvement projects in a new four-year TIP. Such projects include the Akron Beltway and pedestrian bridge, East Exchange Street in Akron, Darrow Road in Stow, and the Freedom/Portage Trail Connector, various resurfacings, and a new bus garage for METRO in Summit County.

The day's featured speaker was Caitlin Harley, the active transportation manager for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). In her presentation, Harley said that the department increasingly views active transportation such as walking and biking as essential transportation options while safety is the highest priority for the department in its pursuit of connectivity. Harley urged communities to prioritize safety in planning new improvements, especially those that protect vulnerable road users.

A panel discussion entitled AMATS Planning Grants: Past, Present and Future was also part of the day's agenda. The panel focused on the challenges and successes of the AMATS Connecting Communities Planning Grant Program and included a mix of officials involved with present and past program-funded studies. Moderated by AMATS Planning Administrator Matt Stewart, the panel included Alex Pesta of City Architecture, Akron City Planner Dylan Garritano, Josh Slaga of OHM Advisors, and New Franklin Mayor Paul Adamson.

AMATS Planner Matt Mullen announced that the agency would launch its Pop-Up Shop Program in November for sponsors awarded Connecting Communities planning grants. The program is a new initiative by AMATS designed to help communities test new ideas through temporary demonstration projects in their pursuit of community connectivity.

To view 2025 AMATS Annual Meeting presentations, please click [here](#).

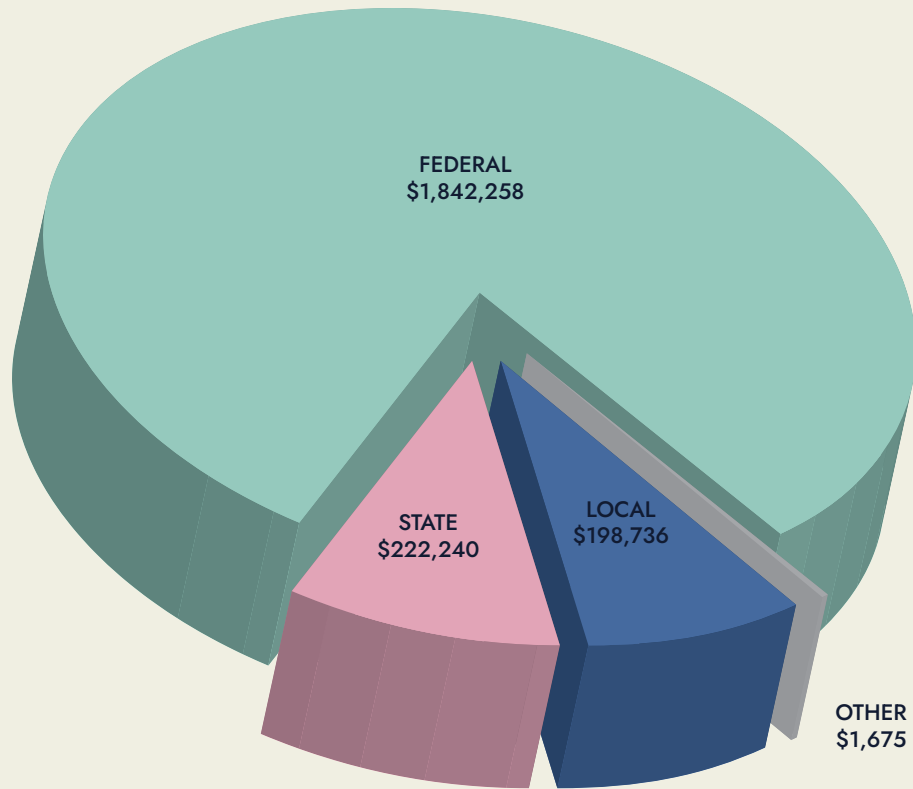


PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

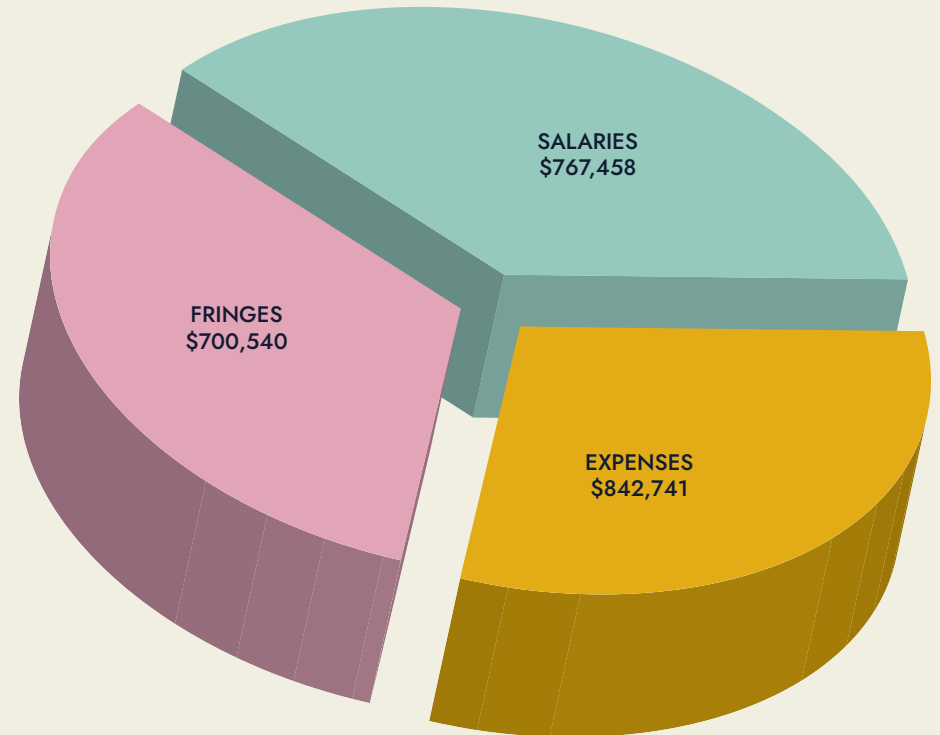
The 2025 AMATS Annual Meeting drew nearly 140 attendees to the main ballroom of the Akron Cuyahoga Falls Sheraton Suites in October. The meeting spotlighted the accomplishments and future of the AMATS Connecting Communities Program.

Financial Data for Fiscal Year 2025

Revenues by Type



Expenditures by Type



Policy Committee and Staff

2025 Policy Committee Members

Chairman Portage County Engineer Larry D. Jenkins		Vice Chairman Mayor William B. Judge, Jr.	
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FAIRLAWN Mayor Russell Sharnsky	MUNROE FALLS Mayor Allen Mavrides	REMINDERVILLE Mayor Sam Alonso	TWINSBURG Mayor Sam Scaffide
GARRETTSVILLE Mayor Rick Patrick	NEW FRANKLIN Mayor Paul Adamson	RICHFIELD Mayor Michael Wheeler	WAYNE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS Dominic Oliverio
GREEN Mayor Rocco Yeargin	NORTHFIELD Mayor Jenn Domzalski	RITTMAN City Manager Bobbie Beshara	WAYNE COUNTY ENGINEER Scott A. Miller
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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.

