

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

**August
2026**



Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study
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AMATS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (3P)

August 2026

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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 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

Effective public engagement in transportation planning utilizes early, inclusive, and multi-channel strategies to ensure meaningful, transparent civic participation. This *Public Participation Plan* or "3P" encourages an open planning process that supports early and sustained public involvement, timely public notice, and full transparent 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 the elderly, individuals with disabilities, minority, low-income populations and carless households.



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 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.

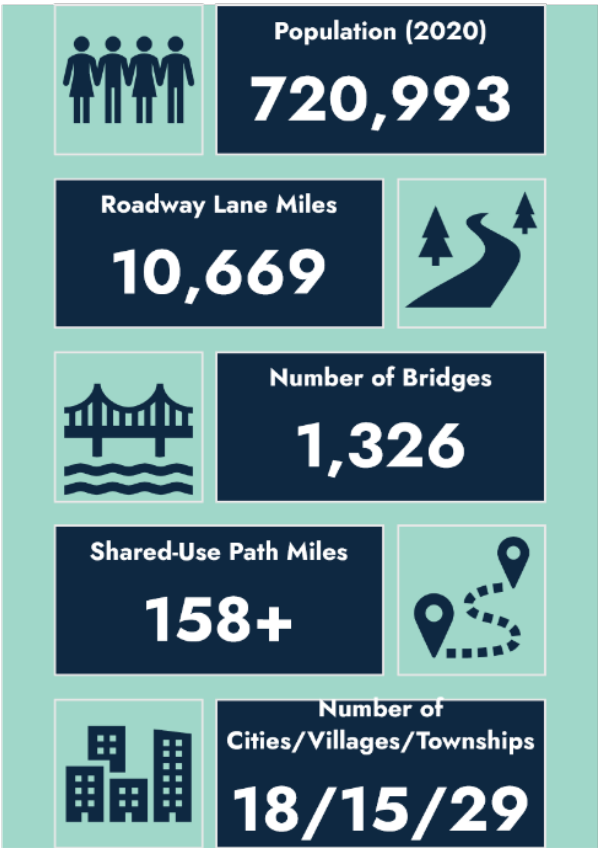
There are several different ways to get involved with AMATS which are presented in the 3P, most notably our Citizens Involvement Committee. Please note that the public is by no means limited to the strategies detailed in these pages. The agency actively seeks new opportunities to exchange ideas with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

About AMATS

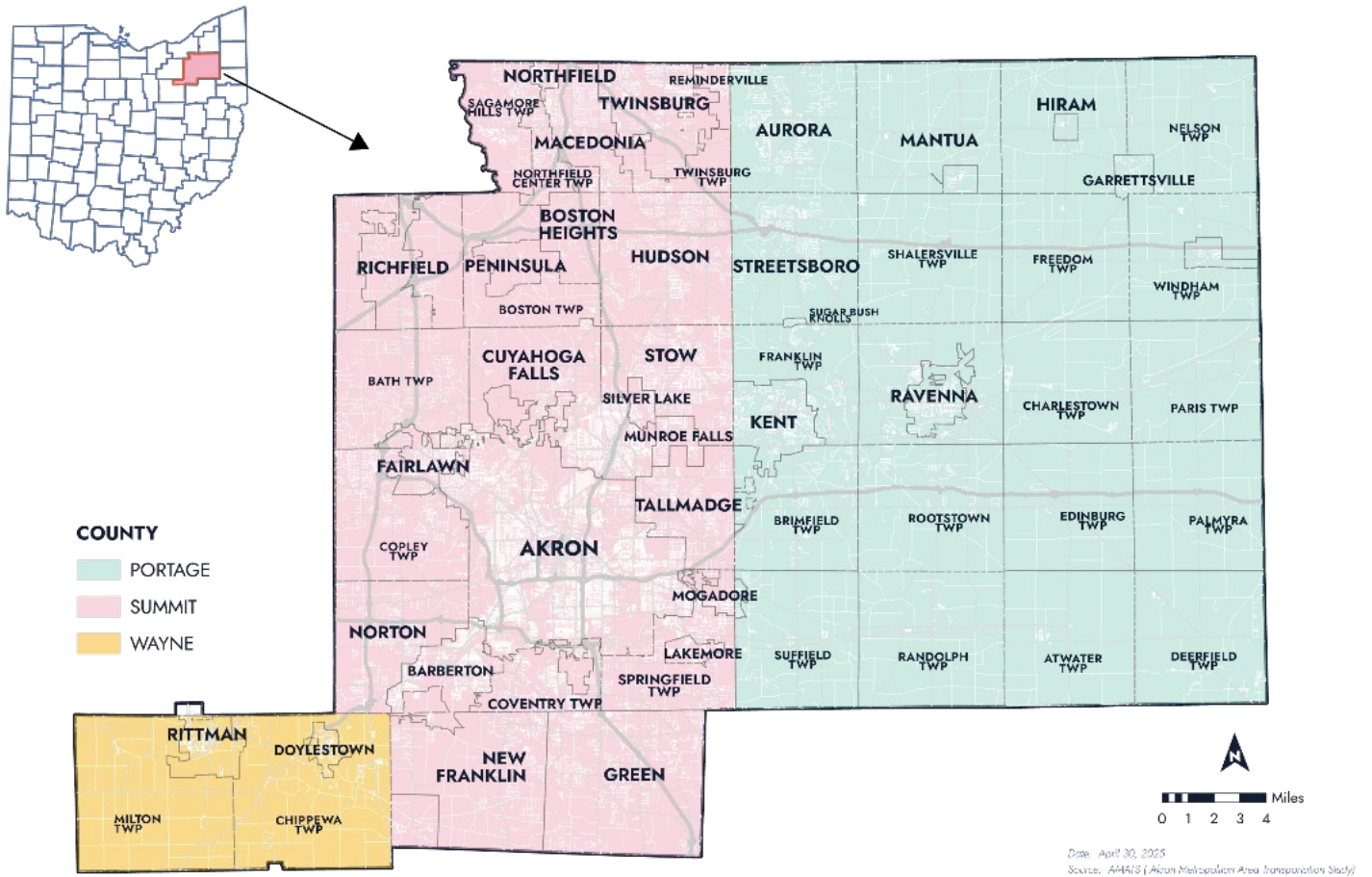
"AMATS" stands for the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study. AMATS is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which are federally authorized agencies responsible for the transportation planning and funding decisions within an urbanized area. The 1962 Federal Aid Highway Act created metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in keeping with the requirement that urban areas have a defined planning process to receive federal aid for transportation programs and projects.

AMATS is the designated MPO responsible for transportation planning within the Greater Akron area comprised of Portage and Summit counties and the northeastern portion of Wayne County. The agency conducts various studies pertaining to the transportation network and plays a key role in the planning and funding of the major transportation projects within the area.

AMATS Area Characteristics



AMATS Service Area



AMATS Committees and Staff

AMATS strives to make the Greater Akron area's transportation planning process as transparent and accessible as possible. Good transportation planning is dependent upon many stakeholders working together to plan an efficient transportation system for the future. Members of the public provide valuable and essential feedback to agency staff and AMATS' three formal committees.

AMATS Committees

The public is welcome to attend any AMATS committee meeting. The following table and descriptions outline the role of AMATS' committees.

AMATS Committees

Committee	Purpose	Composition	Meeting Frequency	Forum
Policy Committee	Decision-making body	Elected government officials, regional transit authorities, ODOT	Generally, six times per year or as needed for special business	In-person (currently ODOT D-4* offices)
Technical Advisory Committee	Advisory/technical review	Planners and engineers representing member communities and agencies	Generally, six times per year or as needed for special business	In-person (currently ODOT D-4* offices)
Citizens Involvement Committee	Advisory/relay public comments to Policy Committee	All members of the public	Six times per year	Online (currently via Teams)
Informal Committees (ad-hoc, steering committees, etc.)	For special initiatives or planning studies	Variable; typically includes citizens, elected officials, and other transportation stakeholders	Dependent upon committee	Dependent upon committee
* Ohio Department of Transportation District 4				

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee is AMATS' decision-making body, responsible for deciding how the area's federal transportation dollars should be spent. Currently, there are 44 voting members of the Policy Committee representing every community in the Greater Akron area (see *Appendix G – Committee Member Communities and Organizations*, p. 34). 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.

- 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. The TAC meets one week prior to the Policy Committee.

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 committee meets at a minimum of six times a year and its membership is open to all who wish to participate. Regular meetings are held on the same day TAC meets, beginning at **6:30 p.m.** in an online virtual format. Additional committee meetings may be scheduled by the CIC members.

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.

AMATS Staff

The AMATS staff assists all three committees and carries out the daily administrative and technical work of the agency. The staff develops the area's long-range *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) (p. **24-25**) and the four-year *Transportation Improvement Program* (TIP) (p. **26-27**). More information on AMATS' current staff can be found at <https://www.amatsplanning.org/staff>.

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. Members of the public may contact the staff through various methods:

Ways to Contact AMATS Staff

Method	Contact Information	Notes
Phone	330-375-2436	Individual staff members' extensions can be available by calling the general phone line
E-mail	amats@akronohio.gov , or direct email address of staff members	Individual staff emails can be located by visiting the AMATS website staff page (https://www.amatsplanning.org/staff) and clicking on the photo of a staff member
Mail	1 Cascade Plaza / Suite 1300 Akron, Ohio 44308-1136	

It is the policy of AMATS that staff members will acknowledge receiving all electronic and written correspondence from members of the public regarding transportation issues of public interest and respond within a timely manner of receiving such correspondence. These initial staff responses should be deemed by the public as acknowledgments by AMATS that their concerns have been received by the agency. Initial responses should not automatically be misconstrued by the public as commitments by the agency or its personnel to address and respond to public concerns. Appropriate agency responses to public concerns may require more time—sometimes in excess of seven days—as circumstances may warrant. AMATS personnel will maintain files documenting all such correspondence throughout the public engagement process as part of its maintenance of transparent permanent records.

The staff is granted the discretion by the AMATS Policy Committee to make minor changes to the *Regional Transportation Plan* and the TIP, and various plan and TIP amendments, reports and studies as may be necessary, such as grammatical and typographical corrections. The staff will present all changes to the *Regional Transportation Plan* and TIP to the AMATS Policy Committee for transparency. (The criteria used by the staff in making such determinations are presented in *Appendix A - Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)* (p.24-25) and *Appendix B - Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* (p. 26-27) of the 3P.)

If the staff determines that formal amendments to the *Regional Transportation Plan* or TIP are warranted, then the agency will pursue the appropriate public participation procedures specified in Appendices A and B of the 3P.

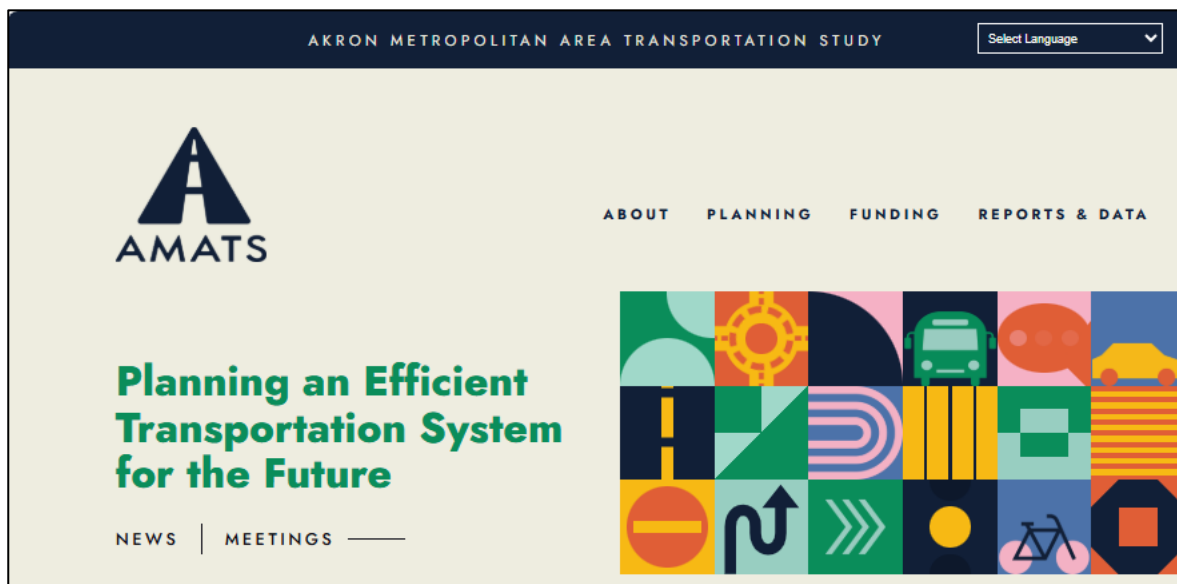
Online Engagement

Online engagement is essential in the dissemination of information to AMATS members and the public. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) encourages MPOs to utilize a variety of web-based tools and social media to further public involvement and solicit public feedback throughout the planning process. AMATS has had a strong and diverse online presence for many years, allowing the agency to reach a broad audience.

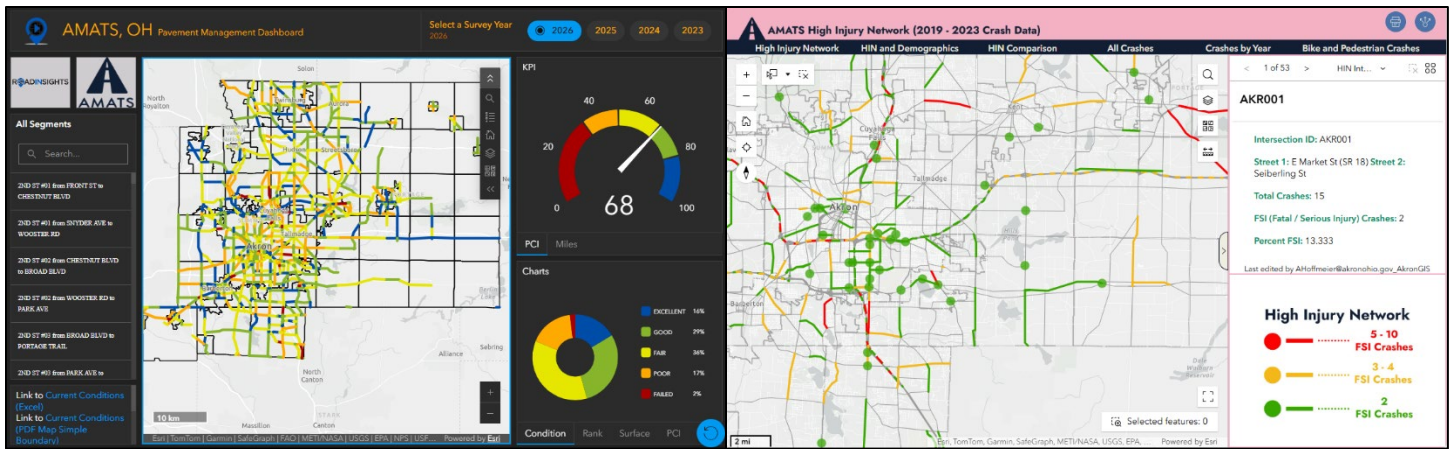
AMATS Website

The AMATS website, amatsplanning.org, is a vital source of information for members and the public alike. The AMATS website was completely updated in 2024 with a key goal being to improve site navigation for visitors. The AMATS website includes several features to present pertinent information. Some highlights of the website include:

Website Feature	Where to Find It
A searchable database to find all AMATS key planning resources	Hover to <i>Reports & Data</i> tab in upper right corner of the screen, then select <i>Reports, Maps & Data</i> (first option). Enter keywords (such as “safety”) or title, or search by category in the dropdown box below the search bar. amatsplanning.org/reports-maps-data
Interactive webmaps that display key data in an easily understandable, visual format.	Hover on <i>Reports & Data</i> tab in upper right corner of the screen. All webmaps are listed below the first option (<i>Reports Maps & Data</i>). <i>Examples of webmaps include congested locations, pavement condition, traffic volumes, safety, programmed/TIP projects, and the regional bicycle network.</i>
Meeting information and recordings	Click on <i>Meetings</i> on the left side of the home page (or by scrolling to the bottom of the home page) to see a list of upcoming meetings and other key events. To review past meeting packets or to listen to meeting recordings, click <i>Past Meeting Materials</i> on the right side of the screen. amatsplanning.org/meetings



AMATS Website Home Page



Examples of AMATS Webmaps: [Pavement Condition](#) (left) and [Safe Streets for All High Injury Network](#) (right)

Social Media

AMATS utilizes various social media platforms to increase public awareness of the agency's role. AMATS is currently active on Facebook, X, and YouTube, but may utilize additional or alternative social media platforms in the future. The table below provides details about AMATS' current social media pages. AMATS staff is open to exploring news ways to reach the public, making participation in the planning process available to everyone.

AMATS Social Media

Platform	Link	Function
	facebook.com/AMATSPanning	To share news stories, events and photos
	x.com/AMATSPanning	To share news stories, events and photos
	youtube.com/@AMATSPanning	To showcase original videos on various topics, such as planning efforts and the AMATS Annual Meeting

It is the policy of AMATS and its personnel to refrain from allowing personal or political biases to influence the agency's use of social media. Information and materials posted through various social media platforms are presented in an apolitical and objective manner with the sole goal of promoting a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative regional transportation planning process for all.

Participation Strategies

AMATS seeks and pursues a variety of innovative strategies to engage citizens and other stakeholders. Much of AMATS' engagement with the public revolves around AMATS work products and key processes. Other engagement centers on agency outreach at various events, allowing AMATS to interface with the public in a more communal and less formal manner.

Engagement Strategies Relating to AMATS Work Products

Like many agencies, AMATS has numerous cyclical planning products. A typical planning cycle is centered around the Long Range Transportation Plan, which is updated every four years. Within that four-year life cycle, various needs or input reports are developed, the TIP is updated twice, and other key documents, such as this 3P, are prepared. The table below lists and describes AMATS' primary work products and processes and the frequency and timing of each.

Primary AMATS Work Products and Update Cycles

Title	What is it?	When is it updated?
Public Participation Plan (3P)	Plan that defines a process for the public and other transportation stakeholders to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.	Every 4 years
3P Amendments	Minor changes to 3P process	As needed (not common)
Transportation Outlook (TO)	Regional long-range (20+ year) metropolitan transportation plan	Every 4 years (final approval typically in May)
TO Amendments	Changes to TO (new projects, revised goals or other policy shifts)	As needed (not common)
Transportation Outlook Input Documents	Needs documents that inform regional planning, e.g., <i>Planning Data Forecast; Highway Preservation Needs Report; Plans for Active Transportation, Micromobility, Transit, and Freight; Congestion Management Process, Annual Report on Congestion, Annual Crash Report, SS4A Action Plan</i>)	Most reports are every 4 years, ahead of TO update; some (crash report, report on congestion) occur annually
Other Special Planning Documents	Reports on specific transportation issues, e.g., <i>Roundabout Report, Road Diet Report</i> , and agency newsletters	Variable
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	Regional (four-year) program of funded projects	Every 2 years (final approval typically in Spring)
TIP Amendments	Major changes to TIP (new projects or phases, larger monetary changes, etc.)	Several times per year, before many committee meetings
TIP Administrative Modifications	Minor changes to TIP (smaller monetary or schedule shifts)	Regularly throughout each year
Annual List of Federally Obligated Projects	Status report of all federal transportation projects in the Greater Akron area that had funds obligated within the previous year	Annually (typically in September)
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	Outlines AMATS' planning priorities and activities to be carried out; detailing core functions, work products, and associated financial resources	Annually
Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan	Collaboratively developed, comprehensive strategy that integrates transportation and human services planning to improve mobility for seniors, people with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes	Every 4 years
Title VI Implementation Plan	Document that demonstrates how AMATS complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related federal and state nondiscrimination requirements	Every 4 years
Connecting Communities Planning Grants	Regional plans that seek to create more vibrant livable communities through the integration of transportation and land use planning	Typically, 2 grants every 18-24 months

Each work product dictates unique levels of involvement and tailored engagement strategies. The matrix below explains the outreach techniques typically utilized for each work product.

Outreach Techniques Matrix for Primary AMATS Work Products

Participation Method	Document or Process													
Key Always Occurs— ✓ Sometimes Occurs— ✓	Public Participation Plan (3P)	3P Amendments	Transportation Outlook (TO)	TO Amendments	TO Input Documents	Other Special Planning Documents	Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	TIP Amendments	TIP Administrative Modifications	Annual List of Federally Obligated Projects	Unified Planning Work Program	Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transp. Plan	Title VI Implementation Plan	Connecting Communities Planning Grant Plans
	Document/Process Review													
Draft Item posted on AMATS website	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Final item posted on AMATS website	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Item posted on AMATS website as part of committee meeting packet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Electronic copy emailed to MPO committees (including CIC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Electronic copy emailed to other identified stakeholders			✓		✓	✓	✓					✓		✓
Paper copy viewable at AMATS office upon request	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Opportunities to Comment														
Online Comment Form at amatsplanning.org	✓		✓					✓						
Presented and discussed at CIC Meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Presented and discussed at TAC and Policy Committee Meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Public Survey			✓		✓							✓		✓
Public events (open houses, public meetings, community events, etc.)			✓				✓					✓		✓
Notification														
News Release Created	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓					✓		✓
Social Media Postings—X and Facebook	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓					✓		✓
Published Advertisement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Formal Public Comment Period (30 day for TIP and TO, 45 day for 3P)	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓							
Email to interested parties and transportation stakeholders (work product sent as link or attachment)			✓		✓	✓	✓					✓		✓
Promotional videos posted to YouTube	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓							

Visualization

AMATS incorporates visualization techniques into its work products whenever possible. Visualization aids the presentation of complex data, proposed plans, and various projects. The effective presentation of a plan's impact to the public has become an increasingly essential part of the planning and design of transportation systems as the advance of technology creates new and improved opportunities for improved visualization.

The agency recognizes that planning concepts are clearly conveyed when visual elements are used. Examples of visualization techniques used by AMATS include:

- Maps, photos, and aerial photos
- Sketches, drawings, and artist renderings
- PowerPoint presentations, slide shows, and videos
- Newsletters
- Interactive mapping systems and GIS-based scenario planning tools
- Graphs, flowcharts, and tables
- Dashboard data summaries versus spreadsheets
- Familiar icons and logos
- Concise, comprehensible text
- Bullet lists

The US Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides helpful information on using visualization for transportation planning at this accompanying link: [Visualization for Transportation Planning - Visualization In Planning - Scenario And Visualization - Planning - FHWA](#).

Scenario Planning

Scenarios are neither forecasts nor predictions for a given point in time; instead, they represent alternative possible futures. Scenario planning allows AMATS and its planning partners to consider the "what-ifs" of tomorrow and whether those are desirable or undesirable states.

The agency regularly utilizes scenario planning as it permits AMATS and its community members to consider how different policies, plans, and programs will affect a community or region. Such considerations may include corridor planning, financial budgets, long-term risks, population shifts, and system management and operations.

Traditional scenario planning efforts assess possible outcomes by using measures such as traffic congestion, shifts in modal split (the percent use of cars, bicycles, public transit, walking), impacts on open spaces, or contributions to air pollution.

Among the advantages of scenario planning to AMATS are that it:

- Accommodates degrees of uncertainty and ambiguity.
- Allows communities to prepare for a range of plausible futures rather than a single forecast.
- Provides forums for engaging a diverse set of stakeholders to identify critical factors.
- Tests possible decisions and their impacts on multiple future scenarios.
- Encourages system-level thinking.
- Fosters a more adaptive, resilient organization.

Community Outreach

The work of AMATS cannot be done solely from within its offices. Outreach into the greater community is an important role of any MPO because regional transportation organizations depend upon meaningful input from a variety of stakeholders including citizens and various agencies. The following paragraphs explain the ways in which AMATS works alongside other agencies, speaks at various functions, and participates in community events. Those interested in seeking the agency's involvement in an event can contact AMATS at amats@akronohio.gov or at **330-375-2436**. Requests can be made via the agency's Public Information Coordinator.



AMATS Bike-N-Brainstorm event

Agency-to-Agency 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 ASIA, Inc., the Barberton Community Foundation, Direction Home Akron Canton, Global Ties Akron, The Kent Environmental Council, The Knight Foundation, Leadership Akron, Neighborhood Development Services, Torchbearers and other non-profits and neighborhood groups.

AMATS also engages representatives of various communities in scheduled online dialogues to discuss the circumstances and needs of the region's unique populations. Agency personnel have also hosted orientation meetings with representatives of new media outlets within the region to promote understanding regarding the regional transportation process.

The agency welcomes opportunities to work with new partners in appropriate community-oriented endeavors.

Speaking Requests

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 and presentations to civic groups and associations.

Community Events

Much of AMATS' engagement with the community is focused on its participation in unique events. This engagement presents opportunities to engage with the public beyond mere dialogue. Generally, these events entail a topic-specific activity geared to spur dialogue between participants and area policy makers.

Much of AMATS' community outreach has historically centered around the advocacy of active transportation—human-powered mobility like walking and bicycling—events such as Bike Rodeos, Bicycle Fun Days, Better Block, Jane's Walk, and Bike-to-Work or School events. These events encourage the public, sometimes with a specific focus on youth, to safely utilize active forms of transportation.

One recurring event AMATS helps lead and organize is its longstanding **Bike-N-Brainstorm** program. These events are centered around 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.

While many of the events AMATS attends are focused on encouraging active transportation, AMATS staff also participate in general community events and festivals upon request. These informal settings can be an ideal way to interact with communities and share what AMATS does for the region.

AMATS welcomes invitations and suggestions from the public to participate in and support community-oriented events benefiting the area's transportation systems.



AMATS staff participating in various community events

Public Information

As part of the agency's efforts to provide the region with a transparent planning process, AMATS 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 encouraged to subscribe to these e-mailings. All that's needed for a subscription to AMATS is a subscriber's name and their email address.

Agency reports, plans and studies are available for review and download on the AMATS web site. 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 recordings on the agency web site. AMATS will gladly forward pdf or printed versions of committee minutes to the public via email or postal delivery upon request. MP3 recordings may be downloaded from the site.

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

AMATS and Civil Rights

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. If 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, the agency provides a **Nondiscrimination Complaint Form** on our agency web site - amatsplanning.org. Using this form, citizens may describe in detail why they believe that their concerns or needs are not being addressed by the agency.

The agency web site - amatsplanning.org - includes a link to language interpretation software to assist those for whom English is not the first language. Using this link, visitors to our web site can translate pages into other languages including Chinese, French and Spanish. The **AMATS Title VI - Program Procedures and Documentation Plan** provides additional information.

Unique Communities and Populations

Long an adherent to the spirit and wording of Title VI of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, 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 June 2019, 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, 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 and Title VI Coordinator are 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.

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.

Demographics

AMATS strives to involve various communities in the Greater Akron area that include; *elderly, low-income, minority, individuals with disabilities and carless household* populations during the public participation process. AMATS relies on the definitions of these populations provided by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) and utilizes Census and American Community Survey (ACS) information to determine where in the Greater Akron area these populations reside.

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. AMATS has previously included organizations that either provide resources or knowledge on how to best reach this population during our public participation process which include:

- Metropolitan Housing Authorities
- Veterans Services
- County Health Departments

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)

The region is also witnessing growth in its Asian, African 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 communities within the area. The agency has initiated dialogues with members of these populations through various organizations including:

- the Akron National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- the Akron Urban League
- Asian Services in Action, Inc.
- Jin Ho Community Center
- Direction Home Akron Canton
- the International Institute of Akron
- the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission
- Torchbearers

The agency also recognizes that the **elderly** (populations are defined as being aged 65 and older) represent another growing segment of the region's population. This population is expected to increase in the following years as the Baby Boomer generation reaches retirement age, many of which will need some sort of transportation assistance as driving personal vehicles becomes more difficult or impossible for many. Some of the organizations involved in the public participation process include:

- VANTAGE Aging (Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP))
- Summit and Portage County Department of Jobs and Family Services
- Direction Home: Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities
- and other community and neighborhood groups.

AMATS incorporates **Individuals with Disabilities**, which includes people who have hearing, vision, cognitive, physical, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living difficulties. The disabled population is more geographically scattered than the other groups analyzed. AMATS involves the disabled community throughout multiple planning processes and includes organizations and groups such as:

- UDS
- Hattie Larlham
- Summit and Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities

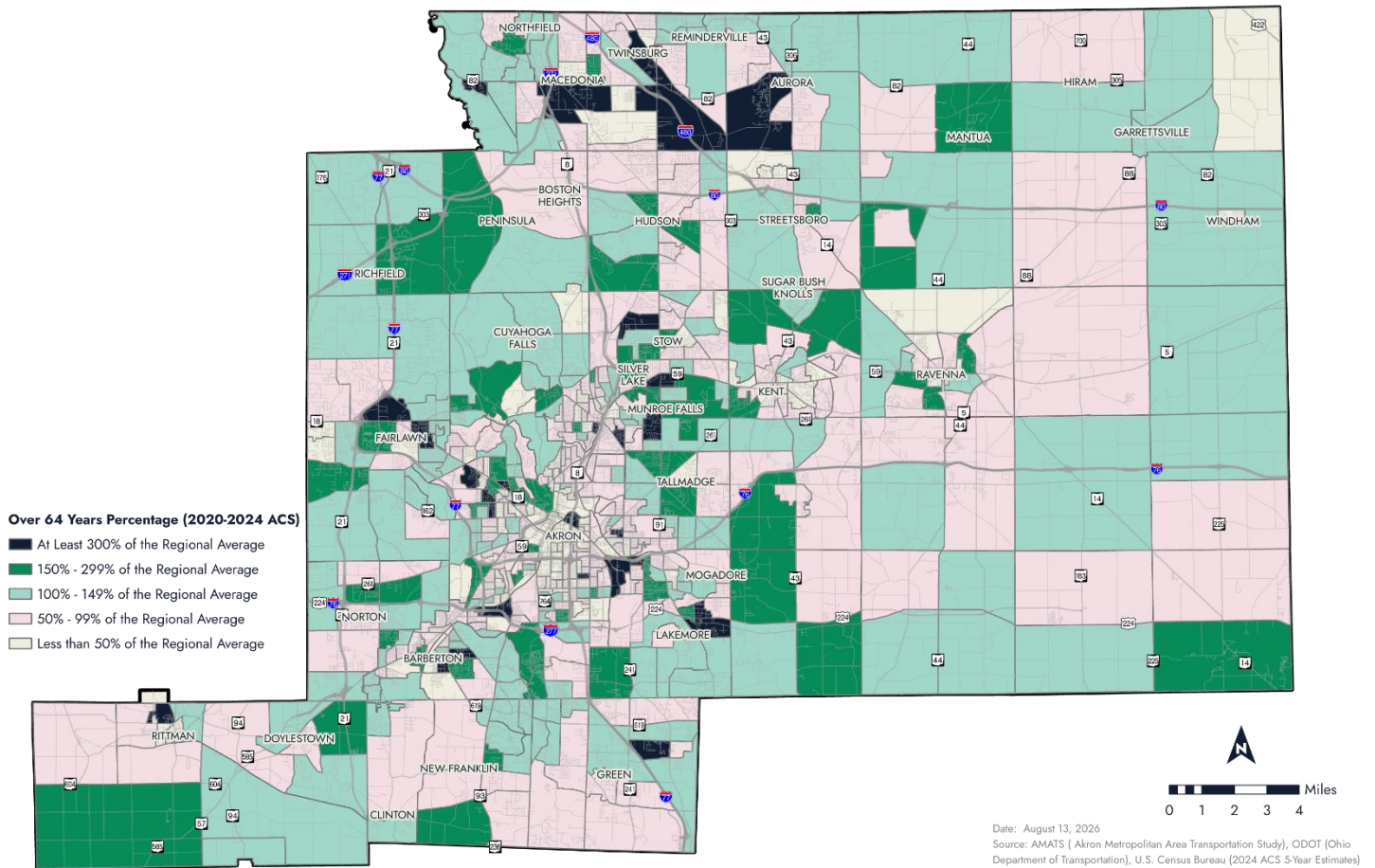
Carless Households are a vulnerable population and an important demographic for the local transit authorities to identify. Carless households in the corresponding map below shows data collected at the household level rather than the individual level and represents the percentage of households within each block group without a car. AMATS relies on the local transit authorities, METRO RTA and PARTA along with American Community Survey Census data to identify this population and include them in the public participation process.

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.

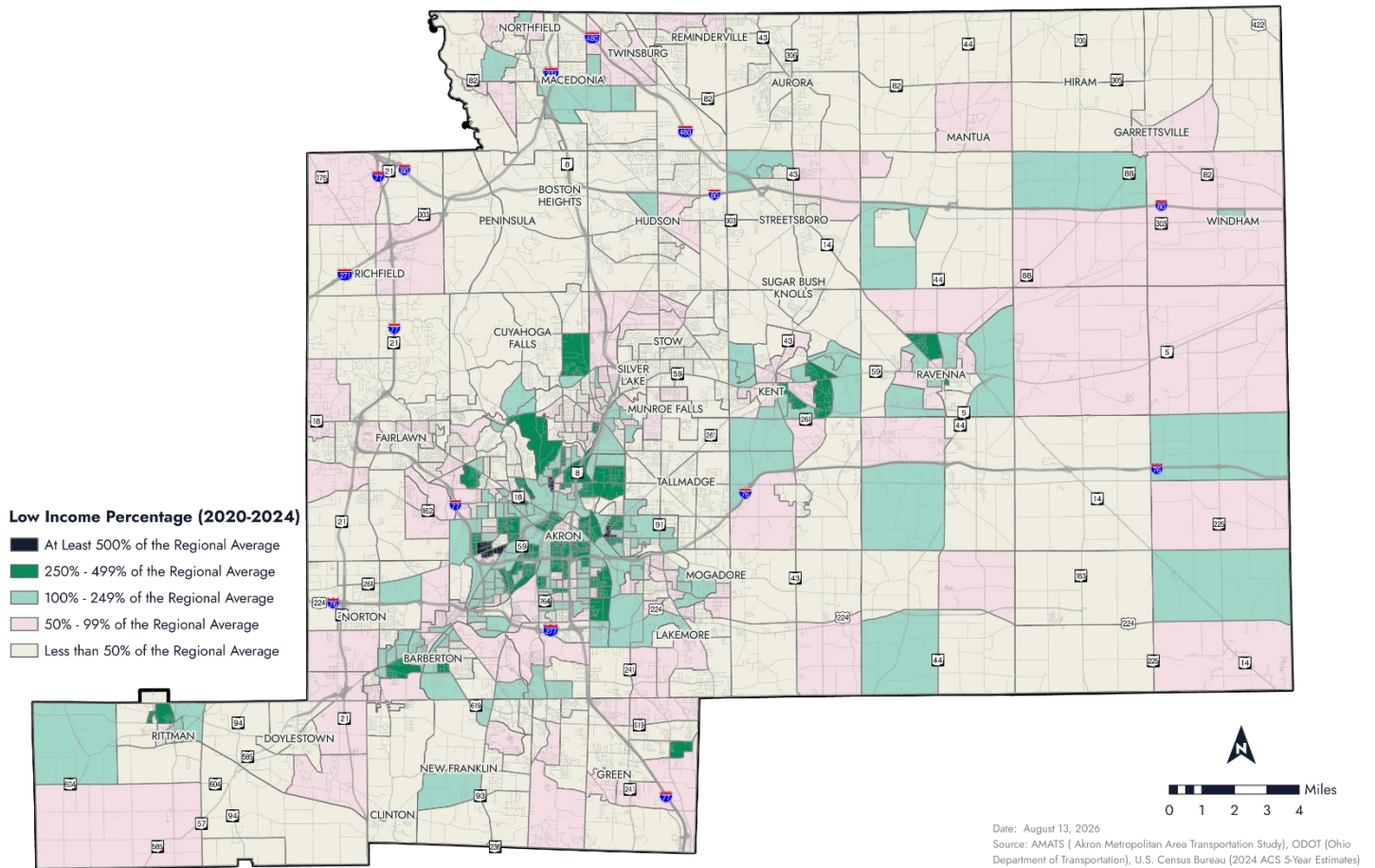
AMATS shall make every effort to accommodate the disparate and varied needs of these populations. The agency shall arrange for language translation assistance in circumstances where such assistance is warranted, e.g., during public meeting in communities where languages in addition to English are primarily spoken. Agency personnel will arrange for American Sign Language (ASL) and spoken language translation assistance to be available if deemed appropriate, feasible and necessary.

The accompanying maps on the following pages illustrate how the present-day regional population based on demographic information gathered (*elderly, low-income, minority, carless-households and individuals with disabilities*) through the United States Census 2020-2025 American Community Survey (ACS) at a Block Group (BG) level data distributed throughout the entire AMATS planning area. For more information on the region's demographics, visit the AMATS website, [reports, maps and data page](#) to explore different GIS experience maps. Some of these webmaps feature demographic information that can be compared to other data. For example, the region's [High Injury Network](#) (HIN) webmap allows users to compare demographic data to the locations of recent crashes.

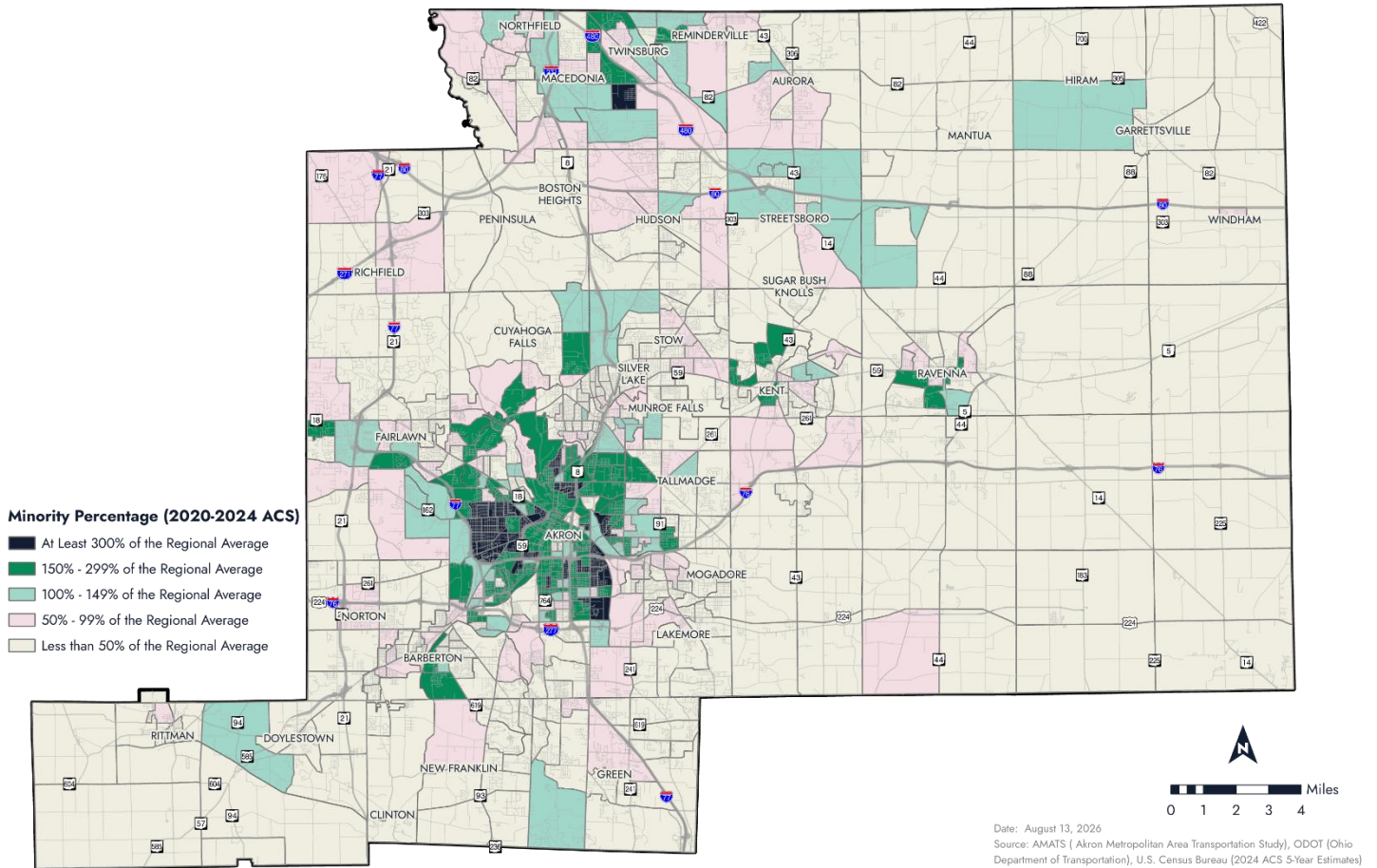
Elderly Population



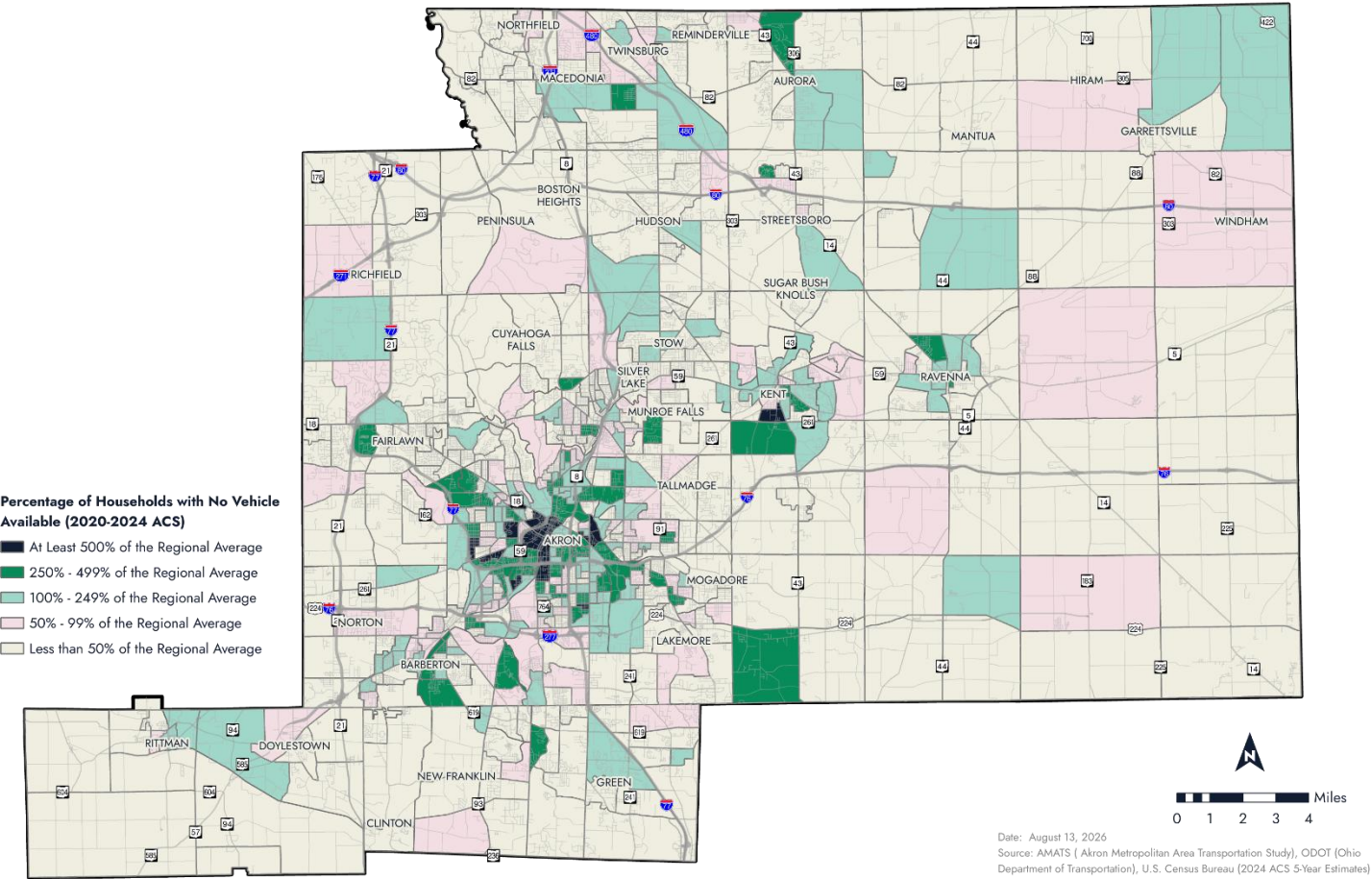
Low Income Population



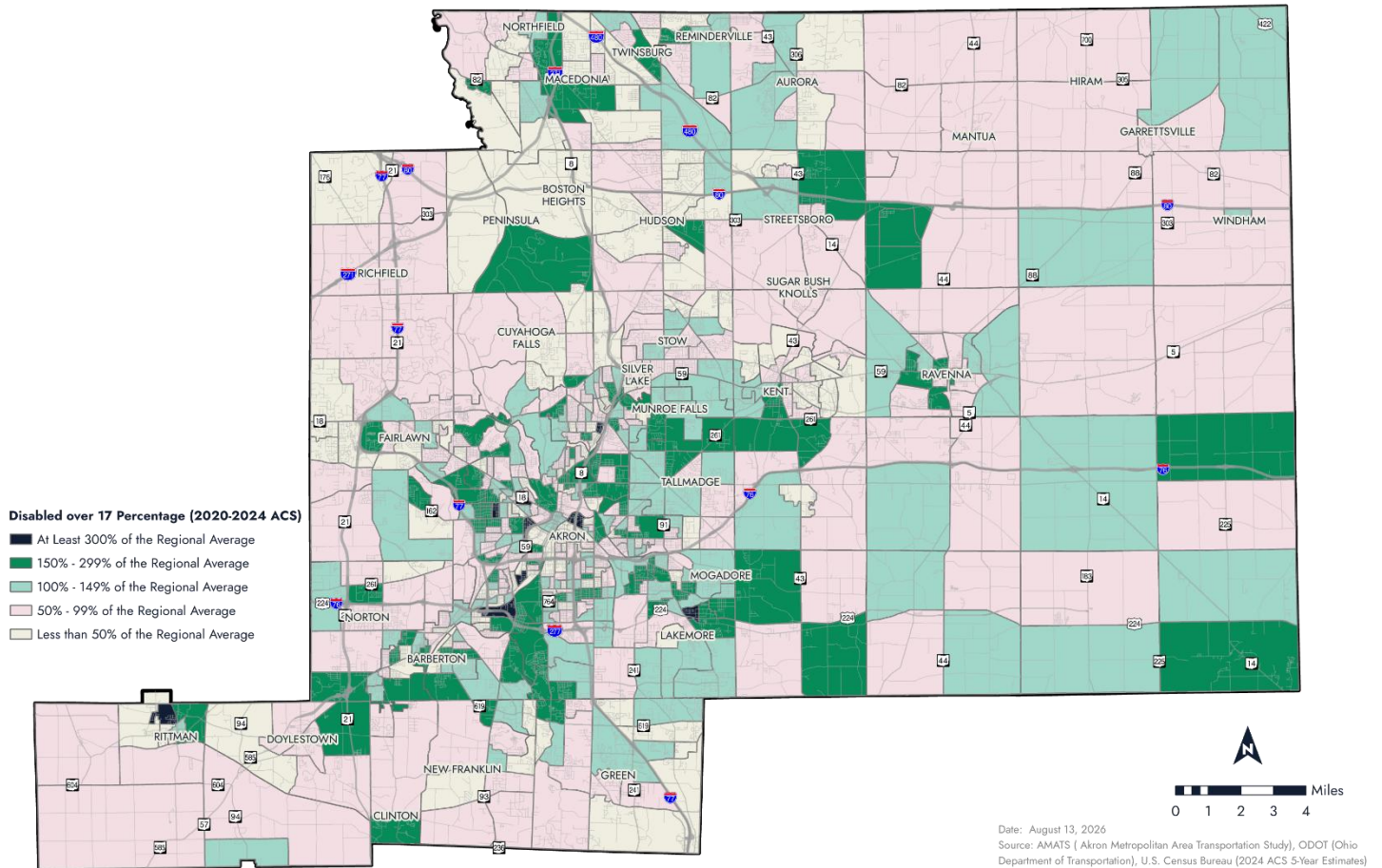
Minority Population



Carless Households



Individuals with Disabilities



Procedure for Addressing and Processing Public Comments

AMATS is committed to fostering a dialogue with our members, stakeholders and the public. Public involvement should inform transportation planners early in the long-range planning process, through the project programming and project development phases of the transportation decision-making process. Effective public involvement allows transportation practitioners to access the public's rich source of ideas and information, which allows for the early identification of opportunities and issues that may affect efficient project implementation. AMATS strives to employ an array of traditional and virtual public involvement techniques and strategies to broaden its engagement to all communities within the planning area. To ensure maximum effectiveness, AMATS routinely monitors the performance of their engagement techniques and strategies.

As a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), AMATS is responsible for:

- actively involving its members, stakeholders and the public in an open, cooperative, and collaborative participation process
- providing meaningful opportunities to influence transportation decisions at any stage
- considering social, economic, and environmental consequences
- demonstrating to the public that transportation projects support land use plans and community values
- consulting with interested parties to develop the Public Participation Plan (3P)
- evaluating the effectiveness of the 3P

To that end, AMATS incorporates a system for handling comments when they are received from the public.

Procedure for Addressing and Processing Public Comments -

1. Receive and acknowledge public comments promptly
2. Direct comments to the agency study director or planning administrator
3. Respond to public comments, answer questions, provide additional information
4. Incorporate survey responses or interactive web applications into planning documents or recommendations. Interactive webmaps allow people to drop pins on locations and leave their ideas or describe their concerns.
5. Incorporate public input into the production of major planning documents and the planning process
6. Demonstrate explicit consideration of and response to public input received during the development of the regional transportation plan (*Transportation Outlook*), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the unified planning work program, or any special studies
7. Incorporate all applicable public comments into the appendices of *Transportation Outlook* or the TIP, along with agency staff responses
8. Incorporate all applicable public comments and survey summaries into the appendices of plans and major studies, such as the Active Transportation Plan and the Safe Streets for All Action Plan.

Conclusion

AMATS 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.

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

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

Appendix A - Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

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

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

Once a Draft RTP has been created, AMATS will:

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

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

Amending the Plan

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

Major Amendments

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

Minor Amendments

If the amendment does not include a project such as one previously mentioned, it will be considered a minor amendment. Such amendments will be available for public consideration and comment through the appropriate

Meeting Packet link and the *Get Involved* page of the agency website - amatsplanning.org - prior to Policy Committee action.

Administrative Modifications

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

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

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

Appendix B - Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

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

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

Once a Draft TIP has been created, AMATS will:

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

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

Amending the TIP

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

Major Amendments

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

Minor Amendments

If the amendment does not include a project such as one previously mentioned, it will be considered a minor amendment. Such amendments will be available for public consideration and comment through the appropriate

Meeting Packet link and the *Get Involved* page of the agency website - amatsplanning.org - prior to Policy Committee action.

Administrative Modifications

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

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

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

Appendix C - Involvement of Interested Parties and Public Comment

The *2026 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 *2024 Public Participation Plan* and will be an input into the upcoming *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) and *Transportation Improvement Program* (TIP).

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

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

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

AMATS provides a 45-day comment period for the Draft 3P. During the 45-day period, the public may review and present comments for consideration by the AMATS Policy Committee for possible incorporation into the final version of the draft. The Draft 3P was available for public comment for 45 days beginning on **August 6, 2026 through September 20, 2026**. A Public Comment Form for the Draft 3P was available as a pdf for downloading through the agency web site - [amatsplanning](https://amatsplanning.org) - and is presented as part of *Appendix D* with this draft document. The Draft 3P will be presented to the public for review and comment during the **6:30 p.m.** virtual online meetings of the AMATS Citizens Involvement Committee (CIC) scheduled for **August 6, 2026** and **September 17, 2026**. These meetings were promoted through advertisements in the *Beacon Journal* and *Record-Courier* newspapers, press releases and various social media. These ads will be included in *Appendix D* when available.

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
1 Cascade Plaza / Suite 1300
Akron, Ohio 44308-1136



Comment Form - 2026

Draft Public Participation Plan - "3P"



Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Comments: _____

You may deliver or mail completed forms to:

AMATS
1 Cascade Plaza, Suite 1300,
Akron, OH 44308

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

Appendix E - Title VI Complaint Procedures

Any person who believes that he or she has been excluded from participation in or has been denied the benefits or services of any program actively administered by ODOT or its sub-recipients, MPOs and RTPOs, on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, or income status may file a complaint of discrimination under Title VI, other non-discrimination statutes, and executive orders. The person filing the complaint may submit the written complaint to any agency (local government, MPO, ODOT or directly to FHWA/FTA). Once received, the most relevant federal funding source is used to determine which agency will lead the investigation. For FTA-funded programs, most investigative work would be completed at the local level. For FHWA-funded programs, agencies should route the complaint up the government agency hierarchy to the FHWA District Office, who will initiate the investigation. Please see Appendix E for additional information on the Title VI complaint process.

At a minimum, an agency must:

1. Inform the public of the local Title VI policy and outline the steps an individual must complete to successfully file a complaint. This information should be readily available and easy to access. Examples of where Title VI information (and access to complaint forms) might be effectively disseminated include:
 - Prominent placement on the agency's website (home page link and/or a dedicated Title VI page)
 - Posters prominently placed in common areas of agency's facilities
 - Brochures at public events
2. Provide the mailing address where complaints can be filed
3. Provide the contact information of the office that can answer questions regarding the complaint filing process (Title VI Coordinator, etc.)

The AMATS Title VI Complaint Form is included on the following page. The form can be provided in other languages upon request. The full AMATS Title VI Civil Rights Program Procedures and Documentation can be found at: [**AMATS Title VI Civil Rights Program Final-May 2024**](#). The complaint procedure is explained more fully in this document.

**AKRON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (AMATS)
TITLE VI / CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT FORM**

Section I				
Name:				
Address:				
Telephone (Home):			Telephone (Work):	
Electronic Mail (E-Mail) Address:				
Accessible Format Requirements?	Large Print		Audio Tape	
	TDD		Other	
Section II				
Are you filing this complaint on your own behalf?			Yes *	No
*If you answered "yes" to this question, go to Section III.				
If not, please supply the name and relationship of the person for whom you are filing this complaint:				
Please explain why you have filed for a third party: _____				
Please confirm that you have obtained the permission of the aggrieved party if you are filing on behalf of a third party.			Yes	No
Section III				
I believe the discrimination I experienced was based on (check all that apply): ☐ Race ☐ Color ☐ National Origin ☐ Other _____				
Date of Alleged Discrimination (Month, Day, Year): _____				
Explain as clearly as possible what happened and why you believe you were discriminated against. Describe all persons who were involved. Include the name and contact information of the person(s) who discriminated against you (if known) as well as names and contact information of any witnesses. If more space is needed, please use the back of this form. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____				
Section IV				
Have you previously filed a Title VI complaint with this agency?			Yes	No

**AKRON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (AMATS)
TITLE VI / CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT FORM**

Section V

Have you filed this complaint with any other Federal, State, or local agency, or with any Federal or State court?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, check all that apply:

☐ Federal Agency: _____

☐ Federal Court _____ ☐ State Agency _____

☐ State Court _____ ☐ Local Agency _____

Please provide information about a contact person at the agency/court where the complaint was filed:

Name:

Title:

Agency:

Address:

Telephone:

Section VI

Name of agency complaint is against:

Contact person:

Title:

Telephone number:

You may attach any written materials or other information that you think is relevant to your complaint.

Signature and date required:

Signature

Date

Please submit this form in person at the address below, or mail this form to:

Jeff Gardner
Title VI Coordinator
Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS)
Suite 1300 PNC Building
1 Cascade Plaza / Akron, Ohio 44308-1136
Phone: 330.375.2436 x.4431
E-Mail: amats@akronohio.gov

Appendix F - Program of Projects Requirement for Transit Projects Akron, OH Urbanized Area

The FTA requires recipients of Section 5307 and 5339(a) funding to develop, publish and submit a detailed Annual Program of Projects (yearly capital program). AMATS assists both local public transit authorities (METRO RTA and PARTA), with public involvement, regarding their annual capital projects development. AMATS publishes a program of projects (POP) each year, for both METRO and PARTA, that lists all the current and upcoming projects for the calendar year and presents the project information to the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Policy Committee and Citizens Involvement Committee's (CIC). The public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comment on the TIP satisfies the Program of Projects (POP) public review requirements of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5307 and 5339 (a) Programs for METRO RTA and PARTA. Any amendments to the program of projects or capital transit plan are reflected through TIP amendments and all amendments follow the same public comment period as the yearly transit POP. Below is an example of language in our resolutions that satisfies the public involvement requirement when making transit amendments to the TIP.

"WHEREAS, public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comment on the TIP will satisfy the Program of Projects (POP) public review requirements of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 Program and 5339 (a) Programs;"

For more information on how AMATS interacts with our transit authorities see the Memorandum of Understanding among the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study, the METRO Regional Transit Authority, the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority, and the Ohio Department of Transportation Concerning the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process. This can be found on AMATS website at: <https://www.amatsplanning.org/transit>

Appendix G –Committee and Technical Advisory Committee Composition

Policy Committee Members

Akron	Mantua	Rittman
Aurora	METRO RTA	Silver Lake
Barberton	Mogadore	Stow
Boston Heights	Munroe Falls	Streetsboro
Clinton	New Franklin	Sugar Bush Knolls
Cuyahoga Falls	Northfield	Summit County Engineer
Doylestown	Norton	Summit County Executive
Fairlawn	Ohio Department of Transportation—D4	Summit County Comm. & Econ. Dev.
Garrettsville	PARTA	Summit County Comm. & Econ. Dev.
Green	Peninsula	Tallmadge
Hiram	Portage County Commissioners	Twinsburg
Hudson	Portage County Engineer	Wayne County Commissioners
Kent	Ravenna	Wayne County Engineer
Lakemore	Reminderville	Windham
Macedonia	Richfield	

Technical Advisory Committee Members

Akron Engineering Bureau	Lakemore	Ravenna
Akron Planning Department	Macedonia	Richfield
Akron Traffic Engineering	METRO RTA	Rittman
Aurora	Mogadore	Silver Lake
Barberton	Munroe Falls	Stow (1)
Cuyahoga Falls (1)	NEFCO	Stow (2)
Cuyahoga Falls (2)	New Franklin	Streetsboro
Doylestown	Northfield	Summit County Comm. & Econ. Dev.
Fairlawn	Norton	Summit County Engineer
Green (1)	Ohio Department of Transportation—D4	Summit County Small Villages
Green (2)	PARTA	Summit County Township Association
Hudson (1)	Portage County Engineer	Tallmadge
Hudson (2)	Portage County Regional Planning Comm.	Twinsburg
Kent (1)	Portage County Small Villages	Wayne County Engineer
Kent (2)	Portage County Township Association	Windham