



ACTIVE
TRANSPORTATION
ALLIANCE

2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT



WALKING • BIKING • TRANSIT

Dear Friends,

Thank you for welcoming me with open arms into the Active Transportation Alliance family. As the new executive director, I've been familiarizing myself with Active Trans' legacy of achievements and current projects. Active Trans has maximized its impact over the years because collaboration has long been at the heart of its work. Partnering with our donors, members, volunteers, community leaders, experts, and residents, Active Trans has been able to successfully advance sustainable transportation infrastructure and policies that prioritize walking, bicycling, and public transit in metropolitan Chicago since it was founded more than 30 years ago.



That partnership has proven to be particularly vital over the last two years. By combining the support and insight of our stakeholders with our advocacy, research, and strategic expertise, Active Trans works persistently to improve Chicagoland's transportation landscape. When people have transportation options that are reliable, safe, and affordable, residents can connect to jobs, schools, healthcare, recreation, their families, and other opportunities that improve their quality of life and ultimately pave the way to creating thriving, vibrant communities.

Our collaboration with our supporters also allows us to quickly pivot and nimbly address pressing issues that arise unexpectedly. Active Trans has been spearheading the effort to ensure safe mobility during the COVID-19 crisis. For example, as the pandemic continues to hurt Black and Latinx communities on Chicago's South and West Sides disproportionately, we are working to prevent public transit shutdowns and keep passengers and employees safe—challenging leaders and stakeholders to view sustainable transportation through a social and racial justice lens in addition to health and climate lenses.

The impact we've made would not have been possible without supporters like you championing our mission and vision. Please read ahead to get the details on how your support has helped Active Trans move the needle and create systemic change for walking, bicycling, and public transit—and increase the relevance of sustainable transportation in our most pressing times.

Thank you and be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Rynell". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a faint, light-colored background graphic of a city street grid.

Amy Rynell





Advances in safety for people walking and biking

\$50 million annually for biking and walking

For the first time ever, Illinois' long-term budget began to include dedicated funding for walking and biking projects. This is an initiative that Active Trans championed with a bipartisan group of legislators in the Illinois State House and Senate, and fellow advocates from across the state. In addition to \$50 million dedicated annually to walking and biking, the capital bill also includes another first — sustainable funding for public transit.

Divvy expanded citywide

Divvy took an important step forward when Chicago City Council voted to expand the bikesharing program to all 50 wards over the next three years and keep the system under public ownership. The agreement, which Active Trans lobbied for, focuses resources in historically marginalized areas on Chicago's far South and West Sides.

Permanent e-scooter sharing program needed

Shared electric scooters proved to be a popular transportation option during a four-month pilot program in Chicago. Active Trans provided input on the pilot and, once it concluded, issued a report calling for the pilot to be made permanent. The report features a set of policy recommendations to help the city maximize the health, sustainability, and equity benefits of e-scooters.

The Bike Walk Education in Schools Act

Thanks to the efforts of Active Trans and our partners, state lawmakers passed a law that requires K-8 public schools to provide walking and biking safety education to students. Since the passage of this important law, Active Trans has been providing free walking and biking curriculum resources on its website.

Cutting down on “dooring”

State lawmakers approved legislation that adds the “Dutch Reach” method to Illinois' Rules of the Road manual, thanks to efforts of Active Trans and partners around the state. The method encourages drivers and passengers to use their far hand to open car doors after parallel parking, which allows them to see cyclists approaching from behind. In addition to this new recommendation, other related bike safety questions now appear on the state driver's license exam.





2018 Illinois Sustainable Transportation Platform

Before the gubernatorial primary election, Active Trans released a 2018 Sustainable Transportation Voter Guide so constituents could learn about the views of candidates for governor on transit, walking, and biking issues. We also released a state platform that called on leaders to:

- Establish a new Bike-Walk Fund in the state's annual budget.
- Increase state support for public transit operations and capital projects.
- Build better biking and walking facilities on state routes.



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More protected bike lanes get concrete curbs

Active Trans was thrilled that the Chicago Department of Transportation began adding concrete curbs to sections of protected bike lanes on Dearborn, Milwaukee, and Elston Avenues. The upgrades, which Active Trans had been calling for, make riders safer and help prevent the common problem of drivers obstructing the lanes.

Mini-grants to community-based organizations

For Chicago Bike Week, Active Trans made available a series of mini-grants so that local community groups could host events like community bike rides, educational workshops, bike repair demos during the week. Over two years, a total of 10 grants went to We Keep You Rollin' Bike & Wellness Group, West Town Bikes, North River Commission, Garfield Park Community Council, Go Bronzeville, and the Logan Square Chamber of Commerce.

Technical assistance to Cook County, Jackson County, and Peoria

Active Trans has helped communities in Cook County, the Peoria region, and southern Illinois improve walking and biking as part of a federal grant that supports the Illinois State Physical Activity and Nutrition Program. The five-year initiative focuses on low-income and rural communities as well as communities of color that have been the most impacted by chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Riding skills program for kids wraps up

Thousands of students in dozens of communities have learned valuable riding skills and techniques thanks to Active Trans' two 25-foot cargo trailers full of kids' bikes. The program, which has allowed education programs to use the bikes free of charge, has been especially important in communities where families may not be able to afford to buy bikes for their kids. The program was wrapped up in 2019 when Active Trans donated the trailers and the bikes to local programs that plan to put them to extensive use.

Let's dial back individual ride hailing trips

In an effort reduce traffic congestion and tailpipe emissions, people who take solo Uber and Lyft trips now have a higher fee citywide while shared ride hailing trips have a lower fee. The policy includes a new surcharge on ride hailing trips that start or end in the downtown area. Active Trans provided input on the new policy, lobbied for its passage, and pushed for using a portion of the new revenue to expand the city's bus-only traffic lanes.



Improving the trail network



Lakefront Trail separation completed

After decades of advocacy by Active Trans and our community partners, it was a great moment when the project to create separate foot and biking paths along the Lakefront Trail was completed. The trail is safer for everyone, provides more space for people walking and biking, and cuts down on the congestion so common on the trail.

Most important part of Navy Pier Flyover opens

People on the Lakefront Trail can now use a new bridge to avoid what has long been the most dangerous, confusing part of the trail — the intersections at Grand Avenue and Illinois Street. The project, which Active Trans has long advocated for, is now one step closer to full completion when the flyover bridge will extend further south across the Chicago River.

Building Chicago River Trail coalition

To keep the momentum going for a continuous trail along the Chicago River and develop policy positions that will help with that process, Active Trans convened a diverse group of public and private sector organizations, including elected officials from city and state governments.

Chicago River Trail extended on Northwest Side

Chicago took some big steps toward a continuous walking and biking trail along the Chicago River in 2019. The Riverview Bridge on the North Branch of the river opened as the longest walking and biking bridge in the city and the Manor Greenway also opened on the Northwest Side, providing a valuable on-street connection.



Steps toward a world class transit system

The effort to improve Chicago bus service

As the number of Chicago bus riders has declined in recent years, so has bus service. To reverse this spiraling descent of bus service that hurts Black and Brown communities the most, Active Trans kicked off a campaign focused on achieving long-overdue improvements to the bus system: dedicated bus lanes, traffic signal improvements, and faster boarding. The unveiling of our Back on the Bus campaign combined with the release of our Speeding Up Chicago's Buses report garnered front page coverage in the *Chicago Tribune*.

Grading Chicago bus service

In the first-ever extensive evaluation on Chicago bus service, Active Trans found bus speed and reliability on the decline because buses routinely get stuck in traffic. The analysis rated all 50 Chicago wards and eight of the city's high-ridership routes using publicly available bus tracker data from the CTA. The report cards serve as an invaluable tool for advocates as they campaign for better bus service in their wards.

Chicago expands network of bus priority streets

It was a joyous moment when Chicago rolled out new dedicated bus lanes on some of the busiest bus routes in the city: Chicago Avenue, Western Avenue, and 79th Street. These new bus lanes, which make bus travel faster and more appealing, serve as an important win for our Back on the Bus campaign.

Metra improvements in Southland

Cook County started working with Metra in an effort to reduce fares and increase service on South Side and south suburban Metra lines. The Coalition for a Modern Metra Electric, organized by Southland community leaders and supported by Active Trans, has been on the forefront of the fight for this change.

Fair Fares report released

Active Trans launched Fair Fares Chicagoland, our campaign for a more fair and just transit system. Recommendations include fare capping, integrating fare collection, and testing the South Cook Fair Transit Pilot on Metra Electric and Rock Island lines.



Events that engage

Bike the Drive gets a new title sponsor

Active Trans successfully brought on Fifth Third Bank as our new title sponsor. In 2018, Bike the Drive garnered coveted exposure when it was featured on the cover of *Chicago Athlete* magazine. This promotion and others likely helped secure more event sponsors, more 30-Mile Challenge participants, and a record year for registration at nearly 22,000.

E-scooter feedback night

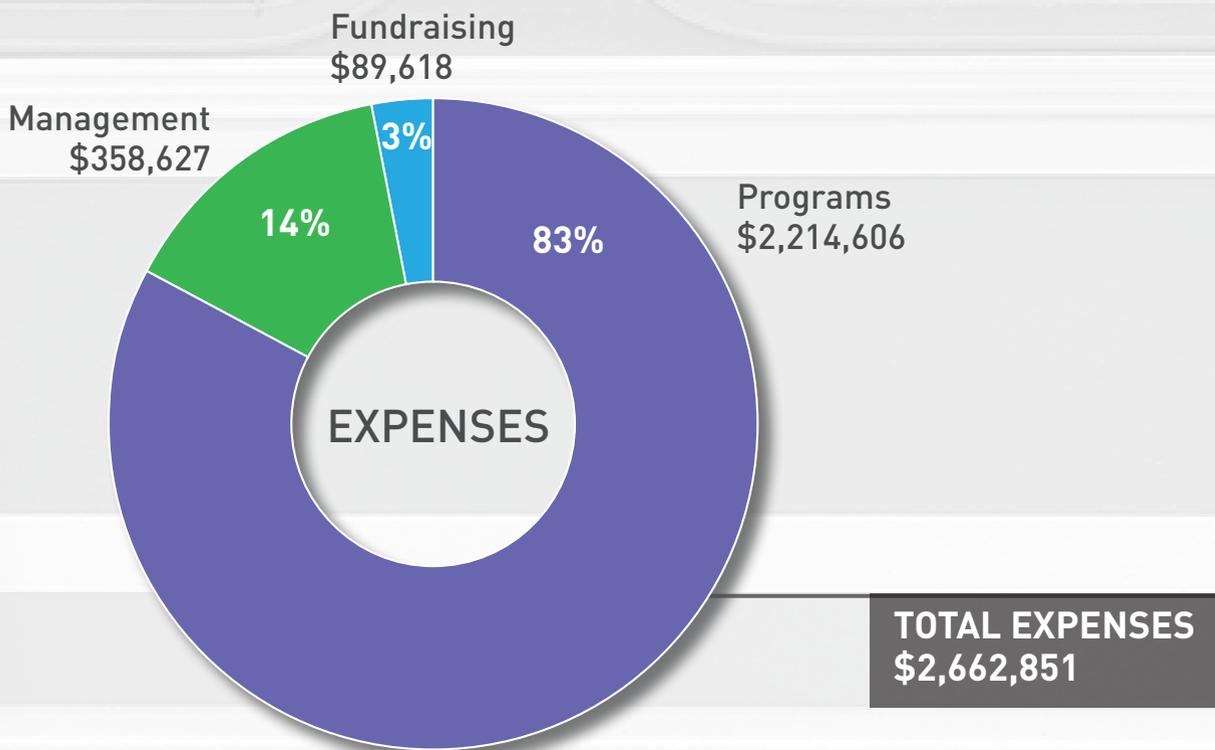
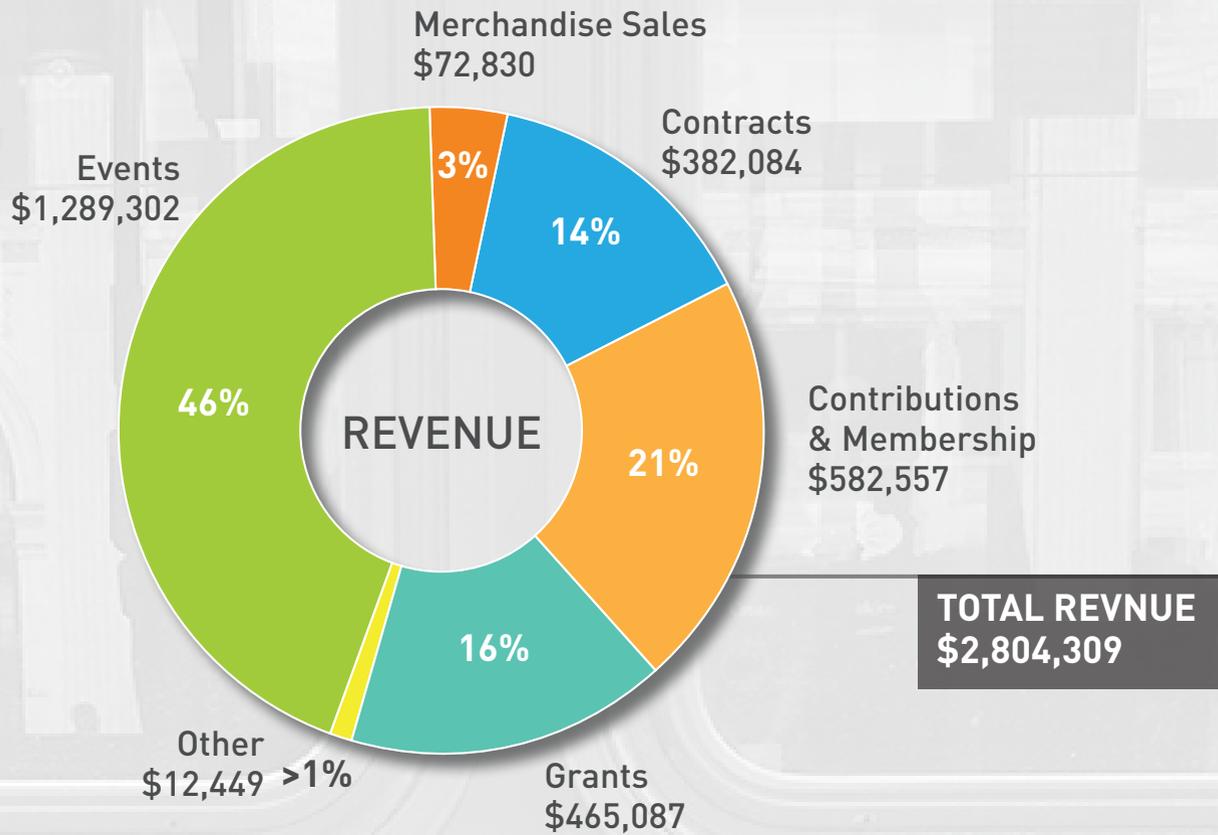
During Chicago's first e-scooter pilot project in 2019, Active Trans hosted a e-scooter feedback night at Revolution Brewing. More than 180 people joined us and gave passionate feedback about their experiences and suggestions regarding the rollout of e-scooters in Chicago.

The return of the BLT

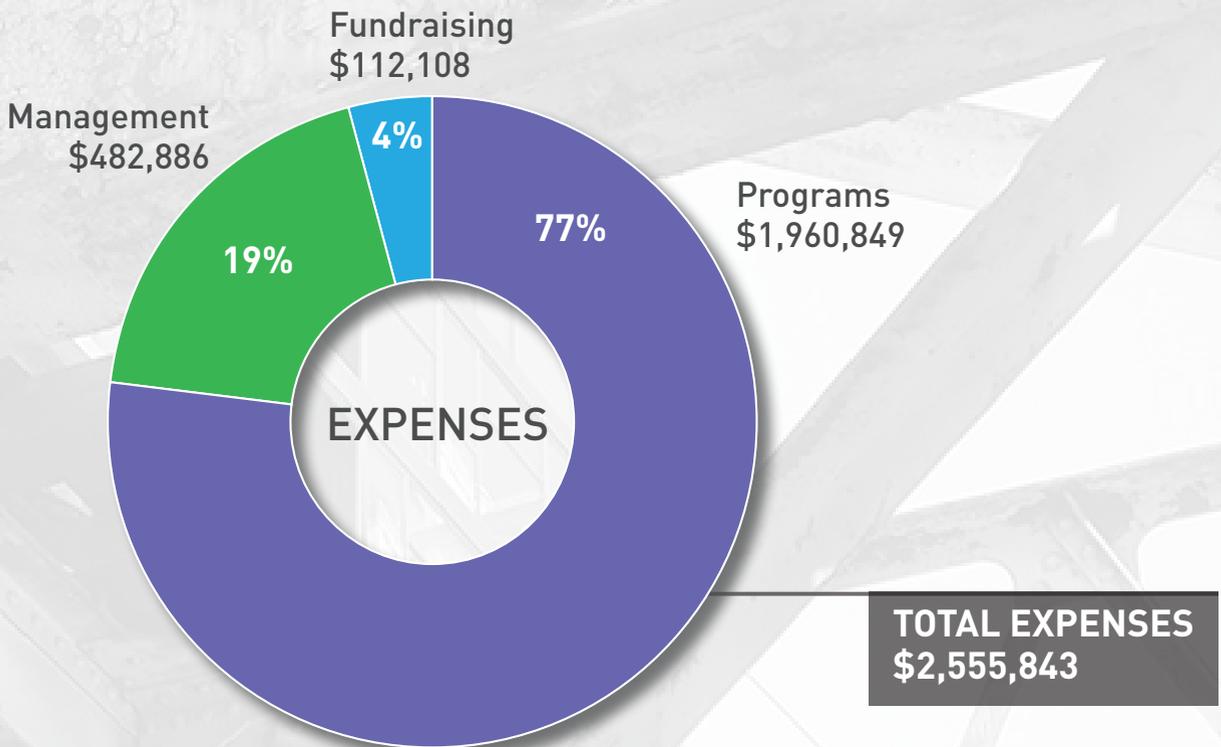
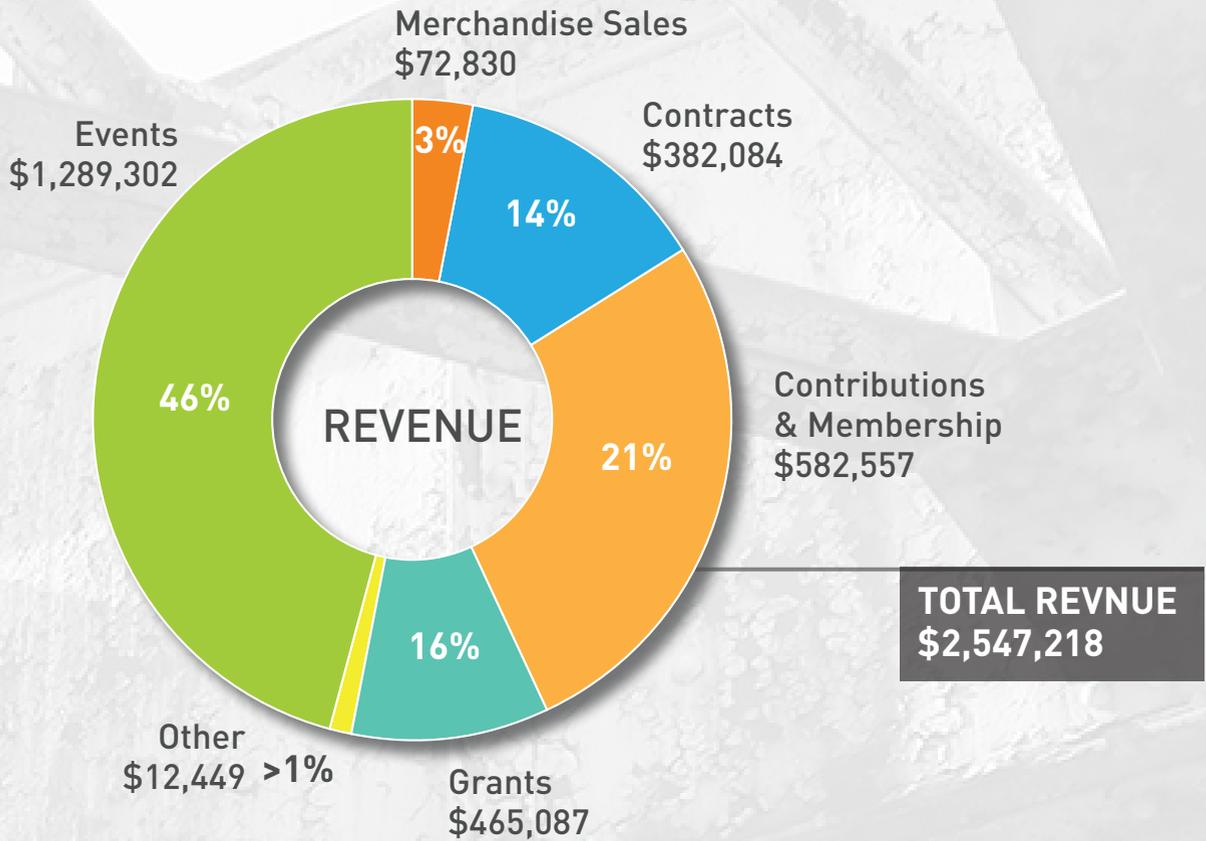
Active Trans brought back its classic ride, the Boulevard Lakefront Tour, in 2018 and turned it into a successful fundraiser. For the first time, we offered digital versions of the route maps.



2018 Financial Information



2019 Financial Information



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