A new chapter in NOACA’s history began July 1, 2012 with the arrival of Executive Director Grace Gallucci. Gallucci left the Regional Transportation Authority in Chicago to lead NOACA, but she is familiar with northeast Ohio’s transportation network and economic climate through previous employment at the Greater Cleveland RTA. One of Gallucci’s priorities at NOACA is to create a strategic plan that will guide the agency’s future. “I’ve met with all of the Governing Board members to get feedback and launch a visioning process for the strategic plan,” says Gallucci. She also intends to increase NOACA’s involvement in the Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium, and expand the agency’s communications and outreach efforts.

“It’s imperative that we engage the public and help them more actively participate in the regional planning process,” she notes. “We’re looking to obtain input from a broad cross-section of people throughout the region. These outreach efforts are particularly critical now as we update our bicycle, transit/human services and long-range transportation plans.”

Regional Travel Survey Tracks Daily Trips

Do you know how many trips you make on an average day? Do you drive to your destinations, or are some of your trips on transit or by bicycle?

NOACA is conducting a Regional Travel Survey that tracks the daily trips of volunteer households over a three or four day period. Survey participants use a global positioning system (GPS) device that collects data about the users’ travel habits, including where and how far they travel, how many trips they make, and travel modes used.

“This travel data will help NOACA understand how, why and where people travel in our region,” says Executive Director Grace Gallucci. “Knowing where people travel and the routes they take will help us identify transportation improvements that will meet their future needs.”

NOACA is collecting travel data from 4,250 randomly selected households throughout its five-county area. Through December 2012, 3,552 households completed the survey, which is 84 percent of the desired total.

We are pleased that people have been willing to participate and that we have almost reached our goal,” says Gallucci. NOACA uses travel survey data to update its transportation forecast model, which can predict future travel patterns and transportation needs. An updated forecast model is a vital component of the long-range transportation plan update, and necessary for receiving federal transportation funds.

NOACA and the Greater Cleveland RTA are also surveying transit users to gauge their travel patterns. In November, RTA started collecting data for their on-board transit survey. In the first part of the survey, workers are counting passengers getting on and off transit vehicles at each stop and observing boarding locations and final destinations. In early 2013, RTA will conduct the second part of the survey, collecting more detailed ridership information from random passengers.
Implementing RTA’s fiscal year 2012 Capital Grant Program, replacing the decks of the I-480 bridges over the Cuyahoga River for $3.4 million.

Repairing a slope along I-77 and I-480 in Independence, $1.2 million.

Replacing a bridge deck over a stream in Hunting Valley and Belevel Heights, $6 million.

Repairing a bridge over a stream in Lemon Hible and Parma, $504,000.

Repairing an all-purpose trail in Independence, $2.2 million.

Maintaining bridges throughout the county, $2.2 million.

Repairing and resurfacing Madison Avenue from Riverside Drive to West 177th Street in Lakewood, $2.4 million.

Reconfiguring the intersection of US-422, Warrensville Center Road, SR-8 and Van Aken Boulevard in Shaker Heights, $4.1 million.

Replacing a bridge deck over a stream in Hunting Valley and Pepper Pike, $6.5 million.

Resurfacing Emery Road from Northfield Road to Merrygold Boulevard in Warrensville Heights and North Randall, $3.5 million.

Performing preventive maintenance on I-71 in Strongsville and Middleburg Heights, $6 million.

Repairing a slope along I-77 and I-480 in Independence, $1.2 million.

Painting the structural steel of three bridges over I-90 in Rocky River and Lakewood, $3.4 million.

Resurfacing a bridge over a stream in Bedford Heights, $394,000.

Resurfacing Cedar Road from Euclid Heights Boulevard to Taylor Road in Cleveland Heights, $3.5 million.

Resurfacing I-480 from the Valley View Bridge to I-480 in five communities, $8.7 million.

Implementing traffic signal improvements in North Olmsted, $8.6 million.

Implementing RTA’s Clifton Boulevard Transit Improvement Project in Cleveland and Lakewood, $4.5 million.

Implementing RTA’s Electric Motor Conversion Project - $300,000.

Implementing RTA’s fiscal year 2012 – 2015 Bus Replacement Program, $6.3 million.

Repairing the Valley Parkway Bridge in Brecksville, $2.6 million.

Resurfacing Van Aken Boulevard from South Woodland Avenue to Farnsleigh Road in Shaker Heights, $4.1 million.

Replacing a bridge deck over a stream in Hunting Valley and Pepper Pike, $6.5 million.

Resurfacing Emery Road from Northfield Road to Merrygold Boulevard in Warrensville Heights and North Randall, $3.5 million.

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Maintaining bridges throughout the county, $2.2 million.

Repairing and resurfacing Madison Avenue from Riverside Drive to West 177th Street in Lakewood, $2.4 million.

Rebuilding a road on North Church Drive over Brandywine Creek in Parma Heights, $843,700.

Replacing two bridges on Rockside Road in Independence and Garfield Heights, $42 million.

Resurfacing Turney Road from Hathaway Road to Shadlin Avenue in Garfield Heights, $4.1 million.

NOACA has committed funding to construct Phase II of the Lake to Lakes Trail. Phase I of the trail, pictured above, was completed in fall 2012.

Coventry Road in Cleveland Heights.

When completed, this trail will provide access to other bicycle facilities and allow users to connect from the Shaker Lakes area all the way to Lake Erie.

The remaining three enhancement projects approved by the NOACA Governing Board in October are highlighted in the NOACA at Work in Cleveland publication.
Cuyahoga County boasts approximately 232 miles of bicycle and pedestrian paths, lanes and trails. Do the current facilities help you connect to your destinations? Can you commute or run short errands safely and efficiently? Do you have suggestions for expanding our bicycle network? NOACA seeks your input on these and other bicycle issues as the agency updates its Regional Bicycle Plan. In September 2012, NOACA conducted a public meeting in Solon to gather input on bike facilities and issues. Participants discussed how they use their bikes to get around, perceived gaps in the bicycle network, and obstacles that inhibit using bikes for commuting. If you have comments about bicycle or pedestrian issues, contact NOACA multimodal planner Marc Von Allmen and share your thoughts.

NOACA has developed a Regional Priority Bicycle Network that will be adopted as part of the Regional Bicycle Plan update. The network is an interconnected series of bicycle paths, lanes and bikeways, following major roadway corridors with access to business districts. You can see the proposed bike network using the Transportation System Data Portal on NOACA’s website. Access the data portal to see additional bike information, as well as pavement condition, truck counts and bridge condition data.

NOACA assesses the use of bicycle facilities through bike and pedestrian counts. Volunteers took counts at various intersections in NOACA’s five-county area twice during the past year to record persons walking or biking through an intersection, and to observe patterns of use over time. In September 2012, volunteers took counts at the following Cuyahoga County intersections:

- Front Street and Grand Street, Berea
- Bell Street and Pleasant Drive, Chagrin Falls
- Cedar Glen Parkway and Overlook Road, Cleveland Heights
- Edgewood Road and Overlook Road, Cleveland Heights
- East 22nd Street and Milton Drive, Euclid
- Detroit Avenue and Warren Road, Lakewood
- Shaker Boulevard and Fayette Road, Shaker Heights
- Hilliard Boulevard and Clague Road, Westlake
- Crocker Road and Hilliard Boulevard, Westlake

You can see the results of the bike count program on the NOACA website.

Two asphalt bicycle and pedestrian trails are scheduled to be constructed during fiscal year 2012-2013 by RTA. NOACA committed $600,000 in federal funding for this project. NOACA also committed $300,000 for matching funds from the Ohio Department of Transportation’s Transportation Alternatives Program. NOACA also provided a forum for local officials, planners, and trail advocates to share ideas, experiences and success stories about turning plans and concepts into thriving trails and greenways.

Conference attendees also discussed a vision for northeast Ohio’s multi-modal network and ways to promote further development of facilities that benefit the economy, environment, and health of communities.

Transit Projects get NOACA Funding Support

2012 was a rewarding year for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA). Cuyahoga County’s transit agency provided two million more rides than it did in 2011, a 4.3 percent increase in overall ridership. RTA’s Red Line rapid transit service, which is popular with commuters as well as gamblers headed to the new Horseshoe Casino, saw a ridership gain of more than nine percent during the past year. NOACA commits funding to projects that maintain transit infrastructure and service, to help RTA provide reliable and timely service to thousands of Cuyahoga County residents. In 2012, NOACA supported the following RTA projects:

- SFYs 2012-2015 Bus Improvement Program, first year - $5 million to purchase RTA replacement buses. NOACA also has committed $3 million per year for the next three years for RTA bus purchases under this program.

- SFYs 2012-2015 Americans with Disabilities (ADA) service, first year - $2.5 million to support special transit service for the elderly and persons with disabilities. NOACA has also committed $2.5 million per year for this service over the next three years. NOACA also contributed $688,000 for the second year of RTAs SFY 2012-2013 Pavement Rehabilitation Program, a project to rehabilitate pavements at eight transit center, rail station and park-and-ride lot locations, and expand the parking at the Southgate Transit Center. To date, the Southgate park-and-ride and North Olmsted park-and-ride lots have been completed.

NOACA allocated funding for pavement rehabilitation at the North Olmsted park-and-ride lot.

NOACA Commits Enhancement Funding to Clifton Boulevard Transit Project

To upgrade transit service, provide multi-modal connectivity, and give Clifton Boulevard a much-needed facelift, RTA initiated the Clifton Boulevard Transit Enhancement Project. The project involves constructing peak-hour, curb-lane bus lanes from the east end of the Shoreway at Lake Avenue in Cleveland to the west end loop at the Lakewood terminus, and landscaped medians in the Cleveland portion of the boulevard. Sixteen RTA transit stations will also be constructed, with concrete bus pads, signage, and pavement markings designating when the lanes will be for buses only. Masonry planters, sidewalk pavers, new curbs, lighting and other streetscape amenities will be implemented to enhance the corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists.

In 2010, NOACA awarded RTA $600,000 in transportation alternatives funding to cover the cost of the 16 new transit stations and landscaping along Clifton Boulevard. In June 2012, RTA requested and received $2.4 million in funding to help move the project forward. RTA expects the project to begin in spring, 2013.

Plan Recommends Transportation Improvements for Lee Road

In the next few years, you could see Lee Road transformed into a more efficient, safe and attractive route for pedestrians and bicyclists. In November, the City of Shaker Heights completed a plan to improve access for all modes of transportation and traffic circulation on Lee Road with the help of a $600,000 NOACA Transportation for Livable Communities grant. The plan examines ways to improve access for all modes of transportation and circulation on Lee Road, and make the commercial district south of Chagrin Road more attractive through streetscape enhancements. The recommendations from this plan will guide development in the corridor and support bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Some of the improvements recommended in the plan include:

- pedestrian amenities
- dedicated bike lanes
- widened shoulders on roadways
- connections to bike facilities
- curb and crosswalk improvements
- reconfiguration of several intersections

NOACA at Work

Bicycle Business

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- pedestrian amenities
- dedicated bike lanes
- widened shoulders on roadways
- connections to bike facilities
- curb and crosswalk improvements
- reconfiguration of several intersections
NOACA is updating its Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Northeast Ohio with the goal of developing strategies and prioritizing projects that can improve transportation for three special populations: the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes. To update the plan, NOACA is gathering input about current specialized transportation services and unmet needs. In September, NOACA held public meetings throughout its five-county area, including two at public libraries in Warrensville Heights and Fairview Park.

Meeting participants discussed their current transportation issues, identified gaps in the transportation network, and noted locations that are hard or impossible to reach. This information will be used to target priority areas for project funding. Frequency of transportation service, cost of service, lack of cross-county connections, and lack of service on nights and weekends emerged as the most significant issues at the public meetings.

NOACA followed up by hosting a workshop for specialized transportation stakeholders in November. Participants discussed and prioritized the key issues identified at public meetings and brainstormed possible projects and partnerships that would address these issues.

In November, NOACA held a stakeholder meeting in Fairview Park for specialized transportation providers to prioritize strategies for the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan.

NOACA Updates Wastewater Boundaries

While sewers may not be something many people think about, directing sewage flows efficiently to appropriate treatment facilities is important both to water quality and to cost control for communities. NOACA has been updating facility planning area (FPA) boundaries for wastewater management and treatment in conjunction with the Clean Water Plan update. Staff drafted FPA maps depicting all of the Governing Board-approved changes since 2005. The maps show areas currently served by sanitary sewers, areas to be served over the next 20 years and areas that will remain on individual lot systems.

NOACA sent the draft FPA maps to all the Designated Management Agencies (DMAs) requesting updates and revisions. Many boundaries on the old maps cut across parcel lines and did not follow jurisdictional lines well. NOACA has received feedback from all of the DMAs about the maps. The next step involves mapping the results from the DMAs to see where conflict occurs. Changing boundaries will require consensus from each DMA, so NOACA staff will be facilitating discussions about the updated boundaries.

Road Safety Audits Help Improve Safety at Intersections

NOACA, together with safety personnel from communities and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), conducts safety audits at high-accident intersections in northeast Ohio. A road safety audit team evaluates the traffic and operating conditions at intersections or along road segments, identifies deficiencies and hazards, and recommends low-cost improvements that will boost safety and reduce accidents.

NOACA staff, along with ODOT and the City of Cleveland, conducted a road safety audit (RSA) at the intersection of East 152nd Street with St. Clair Avenue and Ivanhoe Road in the City of Cleveland. This intersection is listed as the 9th highest crash location in the region, according to NOACA’s 2009 Crash Report. As part of the RSA process, staff conducted a field review to examine the operation of the location. The team recommended mostly low-cost, short-term measures to increase the level of safety at the intersection. Recommendations include: improving the curb curvature at St. Clair Avenue and East 152nd Street to better accommodate trucks and buses, adding a push-button countdown device at pedestrian crossings, improving pavement markings and signage, and modifying traffic signal timing and phasing. You can access the full RSA report on the NOACA website at noaca.org/transrept.html.

NOACA Summit Addresses Change and Moving Ahead

In June 2012, NOACA held its 13th Annual Summit, Moving into a New Era, at Cleveland State University’s Wolstein Center. The Summit highlighted changes that would be affecting the agency, including changes in leadership and staff, updated communication tools, and preparations for a new surface transportation law. The Summit also featured a keynote presentation on the new, improved Cuyahoga County government by Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald, and a roundtable discussion about “Dealing with the Realities of Transportation Funding.”

A road safety audit team studied the intersection of East 152nd Street, St. Clair Avenue and Ivanhoe Road to identify hazardous conditions and recommend safety improvements.
Now that the winter months are here, high ozone days have gone with the summer winds. Northeast Ohio is, however, impacted by fine particle pollution all year long. Fine particles are generated by motor vehicle exhaust, industry, outdoor fires and other sources, and accumulate in the air, where they can build to unhealthy levels. NOACA’s air quality programs staff issues air quality advisories when weather conditions prove favorable for ground-level ozone or fine particles. The advisories inform the public about unhealthy levels of pollution and encourage the elderly, young children, and people with asthma or other respiratory diseases to stay indoors or limit outdoor activities. NOACA also encourages people to make voluntary changes in their everyday activities on air quality advisory days, including riding the bus, carpooling or biking to work, and avoiding outdoor burning, to reduce air pollution.

The hot and dry summer in northeast Ohio served as a precursor to a warm fall. In November, NOACA staff issued air quality advisories four straight days as temperature inversion conditions led to haze and excessive fine particle pollution in Cleveland. NOACA encourages motorists to avoid excessive idling to reduce fine particles in the air. Air quality staff have distributed aluminum anti-idling signs for organizations to post, reminding employees and vehicle fleet drivers to avoid unnecessary vehicle idling.

Air Quality Awareness and Outreach

Air Quality staff conduct an active outreach program to educate the public about the impacts of ozone and fine particle pollution, and encourage commuters to embrace cleaner alternatives to driving alone to work, including carpooling, taking transit, bicycling, walking, and working at home. Staff participated in several outreach events during the past year, including:

- Philips Medical Systems Earth Day event
- Green Dream Eco-Expo
- Healthy Planet, Healthy People 5K Run
- American Lung Association Fight for Air Week
- Seven Hills Wellness Fair
- Berea Autumn Vendor Fair
- Shaker Heights 2012 Senior Adult Health Fair and Expo

NOACA staff distributed air quality materials and promoted alternative commuting at several outreach events this past year, including (clockwise from top) the Green Dream Eco-Expo in Beachwood; Berea Autumn Vendor Fair; and Healthy Planet, Healthy People 5K Run in North Olmsted.