

# **NOACA**

## **Technical Memorandum**

### **Planning for Pedestrians**

As part of the Regional Transportation System



The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is a public Organization serving the counties of and municipalities & townships within Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina (covering an area with 2.1 million people). NOACA is the agency designated or recognized to perform the following functions:

- **Serve as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), with responsibility for comprehensive cooperative and continuous planning for highways, public transit, and bikeways, as defined in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century.**
- **Perform continuous water quality, transportation-related air quality and other environmental planning functions.**
- **Administer the area clearinghouse function, which includes providing local government with the opportunity to review a wide variety of local or state applications for federal funds.**
- **Conduct transportation and environmental planning and related demographic, economic and land use research.**
- **Serve as an information center for transportation and environmental and related planning.**
- **At NOACA Governing Board direction, provide transportation and environmental planning assistance to the 172 units of local, general purpose government.**

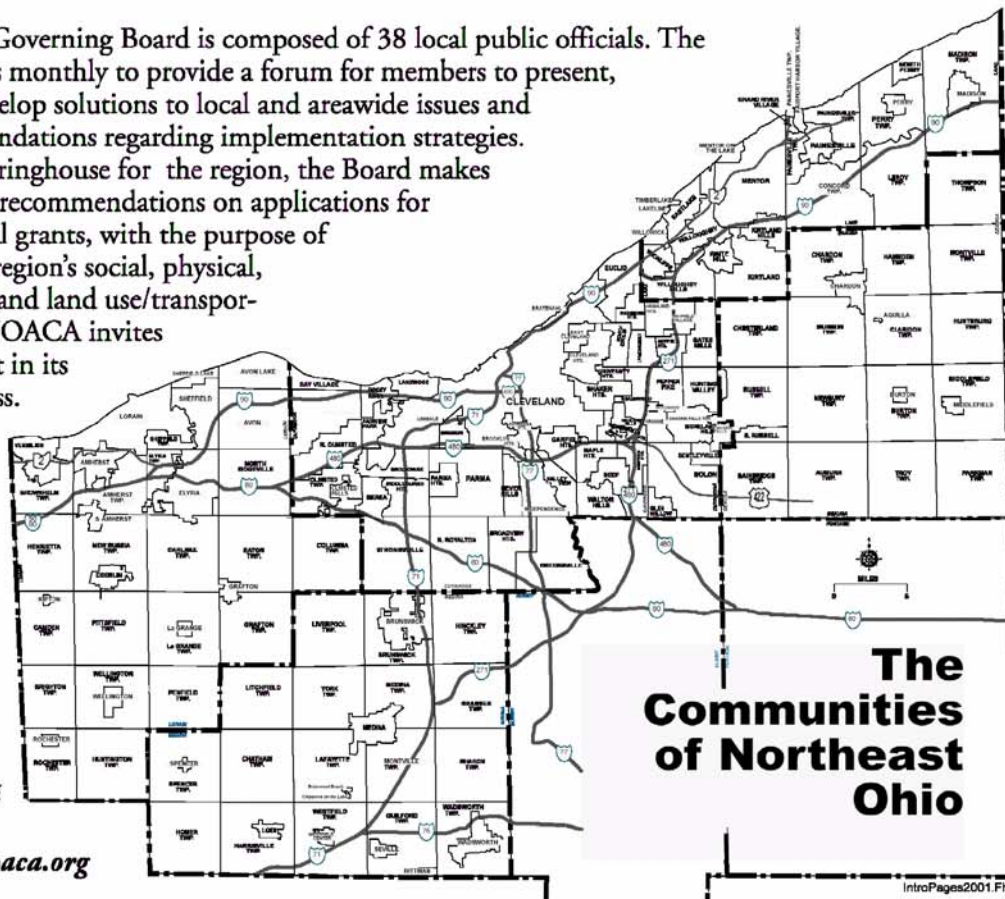
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<b>12) Abstracts</b>  This technical memorandum focuses on pedestrian transportation and is part of the Transportation Plan update. It includes the current sidewalk inventory and an analysis, pedestrian projects in the TIP, and a discussion of needs and strategies to improve conditions for pedestrians.	
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# **Pedestrian Planning**

*As part of the Regional Transportation System*

July 2004

Prepared by

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## **Abstract**

Goal 4 of NOACA's 10 goals put forth in the "Framework for Action 2025" is to establish a more balanced transportation system. It calls for increasing biking, walking, and public transit usage for transportation purposes. Additionally, federal law requires states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations such as NOACA to consider pedestrians in transportation projects and have plans and strategies to increase walking as a transportation mode.

A rudimentary sidewalk inventory has been supplied by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and a map and analysis of this inventory is included herein. Additionally, there are a section that lists the pedestrian-related projects currently in the TIP and a section that discusses future pedestrian planning and strategies to be undertaken by NOACA to increase walking.

The information in this document will be used to update NOACA's 2030 Transportation Plan.

## **Introduction**

National data indicates that 25% of all trips (to work, shopping, recreation, school, etc.) are 1 mile or less; 40% are 2 miles or less; and 2/3 are 5 miles or less.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the share of walking as a mode of transportation nationally is only 7% of all trips, and in the NOACA region, 6% of all trips. NOACA must continue to plan how to increase walking in the 5-county region if Goal 4 is to be met.

There are obvious issues in the region that need attention if walking is to increase:

- There are important destinations that are not accessible to pedestrians because there are no sidewalks leading to them, or the sidewalks are in poor condition. It can also be the case that there are sidewalks along the roadway, but none leading to the destination. For example, there may be sidewalks around a shopping mall, but a person would have to walk through a sea of parking and access roads to reach stores.
- Even when there are sidewalks in the vicinity of important destinations, other factors, such as a lack of enough crossing opportunities, or confusing intersections, can discourage sidewalk use.
- Children walk to school or other destinations less and less due to perceived safety issues.

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<sup>1</sup> 1990 Nationwide Personal Transportation Study.

- The roadways must become compliant with ADA requirements to allow people of differing abilities to travel, including people in wheelchairs. This is especially important as the general population gets older.
- There needs to be a change in attitude about walking. As is well known, the northeast Ohio region shares the nation’s car-culture and sedentary life styles.

Strategies to overcome the various barriers to walking will be discussed in the last section of this memo.

### **Existing Sidewalk Inventory**

At this time, the only sidewalk inventory for the region, including location and condition, is from ODOT’s Pavement Management System data. The sidewalk information it provides is for the non-state part of the federal aid system. At this time, ODOT does not have data on sidewalks that are on the state highway system. Additionally, the federal aid system does not include roads functionally classified as “local.” Because approximately 85% of the roadway system is composed of local roads, this inventory is of limited usefulness. However, NOACA is now in the process of hiring consultants to develop and implement pavement management system software that will be used for the entire federal aid system. Eventually, the system may be expanded to include other roadways and their sidewalks, including local streets, and the rudimentary inventory in this technical memo could then be expanded. Furthermore, staff will employ other methods to supplement this inventory, such as surveys of local jurisdictions.

Although the Functional Class Update has been completed this year, this memo is based on 2003 data. It may be possible to update this memo prior to the Transportation Plan Update.

Another limitation of ODOT’s current sidewalk inventory is that it shows when a sidewalk is present on a roadway, but does not say if sidewalks are located on both sides of the roadway or on one side only. Therefore, the sidewalk condition rating is for a sidewalk located on one side only or indicates the poorest condition of a pair of sidewalks. The condition ratings for sidewalks are “Good,” “Fair,” and “Poor.” ODOT’s data also has codes that indicate when there is no sidewalk and when there is no data recorded about sidewalks. The latter category means that there may or may not be sidewalks, but the data did not get recorded in the field.

These are the definitions of the condition ratings:

- Good – Sidewalk is not cracked and provides good, free pedestrian walk space.
- Fair – Sidewalk has some minimal cracking and separation facilitating pedestrians.

- Poor – Sidewalk has multiple cracks with spalling and loose or missing pieces requiring immediate maintenance or impeding pedestrian use.

**Regional Summary**

The ODOT data indicates that approximately 581 miles of roadway, out of a regional total of 1,289 miles,<sup>2</sup> have sidewalks on at least one side; that there are 657 miles of these roadways with no sidewalks; and there is no data for 51 miles of roadways. Map 1 shows the locations of the sidewalks, as well as their conditions, and the roadways with no sidewalks and those for which there is no data.

Table 1 summarizes the miles of sidewalks in the region and in each county (in miles of roadway with at least a sidewalk on one side) and their condition, as well as the amount without or unknown.

**TABLE 1**

**SIDEWALK INVENTORY (MILES) & CONDITION<sup>3</sup>**

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>FAIR</b>	<b>POOR</b>	<b>TOTAL RATED</b>	<b>NO SIDE-WALKS</b>	<b>NO DATA</b>	<b>COUNTY TOTAL</b>
<b>CUYAHOGA</b>	203	223	76	502	218	32	<b>752</b>
<b>GEAUGA</b>	0	1	0	1	103	0	<b>104</b>
<b>LAKE</b>	5	13	<1	19	79	19	<b>116</b>
<b>LORAIN</b>	12	34	3	49	157	0	<b>206</b>
<b>MEDINA</b>	2	8	0	10	102	0	<b>112</b>
<b>REGION</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>1,289</b>

As can be seen, Cuyahoga has the vast bulk, about 86%, of these sidewalks in the region, followed by Lorain County, then Lake County. Geauga and Medina Counties have very small amounts in their cities and villages, 1 mile and 10 miles, respectively.

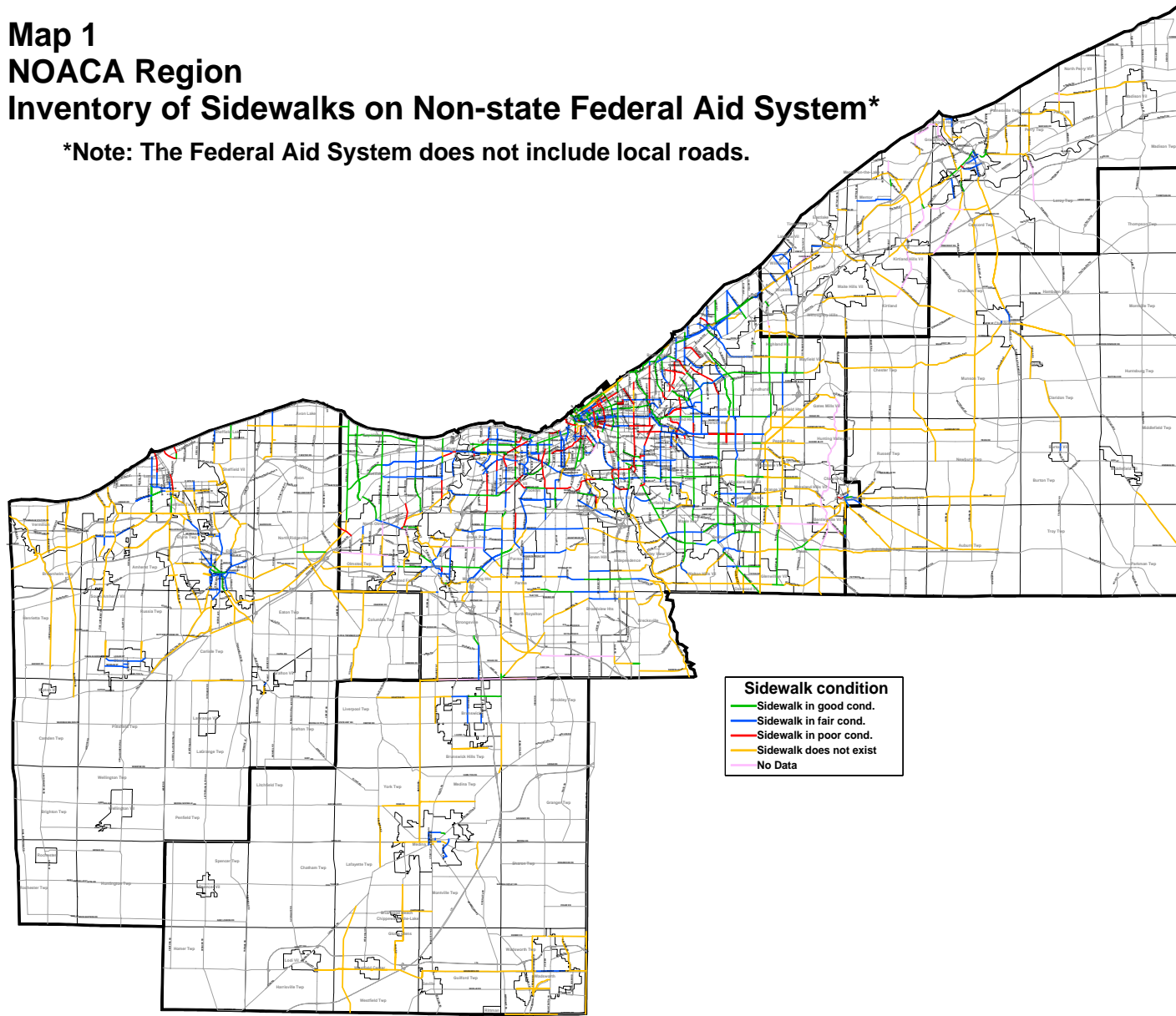
About 38% of the region’s rated sidewalks are in good condition, about 48% are in fair condition, and about 14% are in poor condition. Over half of the roads in this inventory have no sidewalks.

<sup>2</sup> The inventory includes the non-state portions of the federal aid system. The federal aid system does not include roads that are functionally classified as “local.”

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 2 above.

# Map 1 NOACA Region Inventory of Sidewalks on Non-state Federal Aid System\*

\*Note: The Federal Aid System does not include local roads.



# Map 1 NOACA Region Sidewalk Inventory

## Summary of Urbanized Area

The urbanized area is a priority for adequate pedestrian facilities due to high, or potentially high, volumes of users and the multitude of destinations that are within walkable distance from residential areas. To focus in on this area, Table 2 includes the sidewalk inventory for only the urbanized area. The functionally classed “rural roads” have been eliminated.

**TABLE 2**

**URBANIZED AREA  
SIDEWALK INVENTORY (MILES) & CONDITION<sup>3</sup>**

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>FAIR</b>	<b>POOR</b>	<b>TOTAL RATED</b>	<b>NO SIDE- WALKS</b>	<b>NO DATA</b>	<b>COUNTY TOTAL</b>
<b>CUYAHOGA</b>	203	223	76	502	218	32	<b>752</b>
<b>GEAUGA</b>	0	1	0	<1	58	0	<b>59</b>
<b>LAKE</b>	5	13	<1	18	74	17	<b>109</b>
<b>LORAIN</b>	12	34	3	49	135	0	<b>184</b>
<b>MEDINA</b>	2	8	0	10	43	0	<b>53</b>
<b>REGION</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1157</b>

The total for Cuyahoga County is unchanged, as it is all in the urbanized area. The majority of Geauga and Medina Counties are not in the urbanized area, about half of Lorain County is not in the urbanized area, and most of Lake County is in the urbanized area. The total roadway system for the urbanized area is 1,157 miles compared to 1,289 miles for the entire inventory. The amount and rating of sidewalks that are good, fair, and poor, does not change. The main change seen in looking at just the urbanized area is that fewer of the roadways have no sidewalks—about 46%, whereas about 51% of the total inventory does not have sidewalks.

## County Sidewalks

Maps for each county follow the brief summaries below.

### **Cuyahoga County:**

The vast majority of sidewalks in Cuyahoga County are located in the urban core area of the county. Of the approximately 500 miles of rated sidewalks, approximately ½ are in fair condition, 40% are in good condition, and 15% is in poor condition. Virtually all of the county’s sidewalks in poor condition are also found in the core area. Most of the sidewalks located outside of the urbanized area, in the newer suburbs, are in good and

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote 2 above.

fair condition. The southern and western cities and villages are the mostly likely not to have sidewalks. (See Map 2.)

**Geauga County:**

The only sidewalks in Geauga are short segments in Chardon and Burton Village totaling about 1 mile. These are in fair condition. (See Map 3.)

**Lake County:**

Less than 20% of the roadways in this inventory have sidewalks. The segments that do are in Wickliffe, Willoughby, Willowick, Mentor, Fairport Harbor, and Painesville. Except for a very small segment in poor condition, they are all in good and fair condition. (See Map 4.)

**Lorain County:**

Only about a quarter of Lorain County's roadways included in the survey have sidewalks. The roadways that do are concentrated in the cities of Lorain and Elyria. There are also sidewalks in Amherst, Oberlin, Sheffield Lake, Sheffield Township, Elyria Township, Avon Lake, and North Ridgeville. All the sidewalks in poor condition are located in the City of Lorain. The majority of Elyria's sidewalks are in fair condition with some in good condition. (See Map 5.)

**Medina County:**

In Medina County, less than 10% of the roadways in the survey have sidewalks. These are located in the cities of Medina, Brunswick, and Wadsworth. Mostly they are in fair condition, with some in good condition. (See Map 6.)









## **Discussion**

This database can be used in several ways. NOACA's planned Regional Pavement Management System that will result from the new RPMS software being sought will offer various alternatives for prioritizing roadway projects. When road and bridge projects are prioritized to be constructed or undergo major rehabilitation, the sidewalk conditions, or lack of sidewalks, can be considered for upgrade or installation.

Another approach would be to prioritize the upgrade of sidewalks as projects on their own through a process of defining high pedestrian priority areas (such as schools, shopping, parks, etc.) and targeting them for improvement. This approach could be combined with RPMS prioritization and is discussed further in the last section. The inventory could also be used with data from local public transit providers to see if transit stations and bus stops are served by sidewalks.

## **PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS IN THE TIP**

The current TIP includes the following pedestrian-related projects. Some are multipurpose paths, and the rest are enhancements to the pedestrian experience, such as landscaping design features and benches, to encourage more people to walk in a certain area. These types of projects can indirectly cause an increase in walking for transportation.

**Bagley Road Pedestrian Project** – Construct Median and create a pedestrian crossing on Bagley Road in Berea.

**Broadway Avenue Streetscape Project in Bedford (Phase II)**

**Chagrin Falls Scenic & Watershed Enhancements**

**Cleveland Racks/City Seats Program** – Install 500 bike racks and 200 benches throughout the City.

**Coventry Road Business District Landscape Enhancements**

**East 9<sup>th</sup> Street & Prospect Plaza in Cleveland** – Develop pedestrian and bike plaza

**Kinsman Road Streetscape Enhancements**

**Lee Road Enhancement Project** – Pedestrian, bike & scenic enhancements

**West Creek Connector Trail** – Multipurpose path in Seven Hills

**Wheeling & Lake Erie Trail/bikeway** – Construct trail and create bikeways in Cleveland

**Euclid Avenue Streetscape Project** – Street enhancements in Wickliffe

**Lake Greenway Multipurpose Path Extension** – Colburn Road to Girdled Road in Lake County

Other projects in the TIP may include sidewalks: adding them or upgrading them, but this isn't routinely included in the project description.

### **FUTURE PEDESTRIAN PLANNING**

These are some research, analysis, and planning strategies NOACA could undertake to improve the walkability of the region.

#### **Defining need and prioritizing:**

- Continue to refine the sidewalk inventory. An accurate picture of where there are no sidewalks, or sidewalks are in bad condition, is needed as a base for future decisions.
- Use the results of the future Pavement Management System as one method of prioritizing needs.
- Using various NOACA databases (with locations of industrial parks, shopping, schools, public transit stations and bus stops, to name a few) in conjunction with the sidewalk inventory, identify important destinations and delineate radii of reasonable walking distances to the destinations.
- Investigate methodologies in use by other MPOs to prioritize pedestrian needs. An example is the Maricopa Association of Governments' (MAG) that uses travel demand modeling and "Level of Service" calculations.

#### **Research and strategies:**

- Conduct a survey of the local jurisdictions in the region to gather any sidewalk inventories they may have and information on who provides sidewalks, under what circumstances are they provided, and how are they maintained.
- Research design treatments for street crossings, in particular large and complicated ones.
- Research what other MPOs do to improve their pedestrian environment and promote walking for transportation.
- Implement (or assist in implementation of) a Safe Routes to School program.

- Encourage conformance with the ADA requirements.
- Apply for the National Center for Bicycling and Walking’s “Walkable Communities Workshops” program. (This program provides professional training and workshops to six local communities in the MPO’s region.)
- Continue to implement NOACA’s multimodal planning policies contained in the Regional Transportation Investment Policy that require project sponsors to consider pedestrian needs in their projects and to meet with NOACA early in the planning process. Refine the process of applying the policies to the Project Planning Review process.
- Try to implement a better way to integrate NOACA’s PPR review process with the TRAC<sup>2</sup> process of project selection. Currently, many projects that apply for TRAC funding don’t go through the PPR process. However, NOACA does score these projects in order to recommend the region’s priorities to ODOT, and as part of the scoring, points are awarded for the inclusion of sidewalks.

For the next Transportation Plan Update, NOACA plans on having a separate Regional Pedestrian Plan.

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<sup>2</sup> ODOT funds large projects (\$5 million and more) throughout the state with its funds. MPOs submit recommendations to ODOT based on scoring the projects.