NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY

MEMORANDUM

TO: NOACA Board of Directors

FROM: Grace Gallucci, Executive Director

DATE: December 1, 2017

RE: Resolution 2017-040; NOACA 2018 Legislative Agenda

ACTION REQUESTED
The Board of Directors is asked to adopt the 2018 NOACA Legislative Agenda.

The External Affairs Committee recommended this action pending an amendment that has subsequently been incorporated into the document.

BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION FOR CURRENT ACTION
The NOACA Legislative Agenda is comprised of a platform of basic principals and specific priorities for advocacy efforts in Washington D.C. and Columbus. The 2017 NOACA Legislative Agenda was approved by the NOACA Board in December 2016.

The basic principles in the Legislative Agenda do not change much from year to year, as they are statements that reflect the core policy ideas of the Agency and are representative of fundamental NOACA values articulated in the NOACA Regional Strategic Plan. Language representing specific priorities included in the Legislative Agenda are subject to change more often, as the intent is to identify specific state and federal policies currently under consideration.

The 2018 Legislative Agenda will be used to inform audiences of the values and priorities of the NOACA region as they relate to state and federal policy. It contains the identical principles from 2016 and 2017. A draft document is attached for your review. Please note that the format has been modified to more succinctly communicate to stakeholders.

Additionally for consideration, during the October External Affairs Committee meeting, a suggestion was made to include language referencing equity as a priority consideration in the distribution of federal and state funds. Thus, the draft 2018 Legislative Agenda document has been modified to add such language.

FINANCIAL IMPACT
There is no financial impact.
CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS
With Board approval, the Legislative Agenda will guide NOACA advocacy efforts during calendar year 2018.

GG/mh/2972b
RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY

WHEREAS, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina, and the City of Cleveland; and the areawide water quality management agency for the same region; and

WHEREAS, NOACA is responsible for transportation planning and transportation system performance management in accordance with federal law – the FAST Act.

WHEREAS, the resources needed to preserve and maintain the transportation system of the NOACA region currently far exceed the funds available to the region in aggregate.

WHEREAS, NOACA has developed a legislative agenda in kind that advocates for a transportation platform that is consistent with the NOACA vision as well as specific priorities for consideration by policy makers.

WHEREAS, NOACA’s Executive Committee has recommended this resolution for adoption.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, consisting of forty-four principal officials serving general purpose local governments throughout and within the counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, and the City of Cleveland that:

Section 1. The NOACA 2018 Legislative Agenda (Exhibit 1) is hereby endorsed.

Section 2. The Executive Director is hereby authorized and directed to forward certified copies of this Resolution and the Legislative Agenda to President Trump and Governor Kasich, plus all appropriate members of Congress, federal administration officials and state administration officials.

Certified to be a true copy of a Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency adopted this day of December 8, 2017.

Secretary:

Date Signed: 12/8/2017

Timothy C. Lennon
The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for Northeast Ohio responsible for transportation and environmental planning. NOACA prepares the region’s long-range transportation plan and short-range transportation improvement program, which prioritizes and schedules federally funded transportation projects for the region. NOACA works with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), project sponsors and other stakeholders to help address Northeast Ohio’s transportation, air quality, and water quality needs.

Funding for NOACA’s transportation and environmental planning programs are derived from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), ODOT, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and annual dues paid by local governments throughout the region.

OUR AGENDA

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) Board of Directors and staff are proud to present the 2018 Federal and State Legislative Agenda.

Transportation infrastructure empowers Ohioans to reach jobs, access healthcare, education, recreational opportunities and see family and friends. Ideally, each of these destinations should be accessible by multiple modes. Furthermore, the optimal alignment of infrastructure and economic activity is the foundation of regional competitiveness. Uncertain funding impacts project delivery, increases congestion, jeopardizes safety, and reduces economic throughput.

The basis for these requests is NOACA’s Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), AIM Forward 2040. AIM Forward 2040 directs investment of all forms of transportation over the next 20 years. With the year 2040 as the planning horizon, NOACA will invest approximately $15.8 billion in the region’s transportation over the life of the plan.

The NOACA Vision Statement is a fundamental touchstone that will be applied to regional programs, priorities, and projects.

It is critical that we develop relationships with our delegation and stakeholders. We look forward to working with you and greatly appreciate your support.
Congress should both revise the federal funding formula to create a more equitable distribution of funds to local communities and strengthen and expand local control to metropolitan planning organizations by allocating more money directly to regional authorities for core planning programs. This would include the Surface Transportation Program, Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement Program, and the Transportation Alternatives Program. Directly allocating funding to MPOs and local communities would create a more predictable revenue stream to locally implemented priorities of air quality and improvement in mobility and investments in economic growth. Direct allocation would also facilitate the ability of local communities to precisely define their funding priorities such as funding for multimodal transportation strategies and funding for transit.

NOACA advocates that Congress should recognize the preservation of transportation assets as an equal or greater economic priority as compared to the development of new infrastructure. Regional authorities similar to NOACA allocate as much as 90 percent of available funding toward asset preservation. U.S. DOT has already recognized this priority by mandating Asset Management programming at the state level. NOACA advocates that the Congress should create funding streams for asset management implementation, for transit, road and bridge, at the regional/local level.

NOACA advocates that Congress should include safety, sustainability and multimodalism as specific priorities within state and local MPO planning requirements.

NOACA will evaluate rule-making and oversight of the FAST Act by applying the NOACA platform and briefing congressional staff as to the effect of federal policy on regional and local priorities.

The Legislative Platform includes the following infrastructure questions which reflect NOACA’s vision statement:

- Does the issue STRENGTHEN regional cohesion?
- Does the issue PRESERVE existing infrastructure?
- Does the issue BUILD a sustainable multimodal transportation system?
- Does the issue SUPPORT economic development?
- Does the issue ENHANCE the quality of life in Northeast Ohio?

These questions provide clear guidance for transportation planning and programming in Greater Cleveland. While NOACA’s principles endure, the national conversation and agenda on transportation infrastructure will change. In this way, NOACA can assist public officials by advocating emerging issues with a non-partisan view.

But most importantly, the Legislative Platform incentivizes NOACA to identify emerging trends, which allows for forward-looking, strategic decisions. Currently, the Legislative Agenda focuses on:

- Developing relationships with stakeholders and federal/state public officials
- Supporting local responsibility and local control
- Prioritizing asset management projects over those that increase capacity
- Placing a premium on sustainability
- Expanding equitable funding to ensure full opportunity for all Northeast Ohioans

The Ohio General Assembly should review and amend the state funding formula such that the NOACA region would receive an equitable amount of State gas tax dollars as compared to what is contributed by gas tax payers from the NOACA region. The NOAO Board advocates a redress of this condition through creation of new programs that would allocate more funding to priorities that are the sole responsibility of MPOs and local communities.

Formation of new programs or supplementing existing programs that contribute funding to local and regional planning priorities such as asset management programs would help create a more equitable rate of return.

The study recommends that to best meet the needs of Ohioans that the statewide investment in public transit be doubled, from its current $900 million a year to $1.8 billion per year, and that the State of Ohio invest 10 percent of the $273.5 million in funding is needed to bring Ohio’s public transportation network into a good state of repair, plus the cost to replace Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority’s aging rail car fleet, which is the oldest average fleet in the nation. The study recommends that to best meet the needs of Ohioans that the statewide investment in public transit be doubled, from its current $900 million a year to $1.8 billion per year, and that the State of Ohio invest 10 percent of the $273.5 million in funding is needed to bring Ohio’s public transportation network into a good state of repair, plus the cost to replace Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority’s aging rail car fleet, which is the oldest average fleet in the nation.

The results of the study is that $273.5 million in funding is needed to bring Ohio’s public transportation network into a good state of repair, plus the cost to replace Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority’s aging rail car fleet, which is the oldest average fleet in the nation.
Congress should both revise the federal funding formula to create a more equitable distribution of funds to local communities and strengthen and expand local control over metropolitan planning organizations by allocating more money directly to regional/local authorities for core planning programs. This would include the Surface Transportation Program, Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement Program, and the Transportation Alternatives Program. Directly allocating funding to MPOs and local communities would create a more predictable revenue stream to locally implemented priorities of air quality and improvement in mobility and investments in economic growth. Direct allocation would also facilitate the ability of local communities to precisely define their funding priorities such as funding for multimodal transportation strategies and funding for transit.

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<td><strong>Strengthen the MPO’s local control of core transportation programs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Promote asset management as a funding priority</strong></td>
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**ACHIEVING NOACA'S VISION**

The Legislative Platform represents consensus-driven principles that have been approved by NOACA’s 45-member board in Northeast Ohio. The Legislative Platform is intended to guide policy analysis and advocacy on infrastructure issues.

The Legislative Platform includes the following infrastructure questions which reflect NOACA’s vision statement:

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**PRIORITY 1**

**Improve the region’s rate of return from state allocated funds to meet regional asset management needs**

The Ohio General Assembly should review and amend the state funding formula such that the NOACA region would receive an equitable amount of State gas tax dollars as compared to what is contributed by gas tax payers from the NOACA region.

The NOACA Board advocates a redress of this condition through creation of new programs that would allocate more funding to priorities that are the sole responsibility of MPOs and local communities.

Formation of new programs or supplementing existing programs that contribute funding to local and regional planning priorities such as asset management programs would help create a more equitable rate of return.

**PRIORITY 2**

**Advocate for the inclusion of multimodal transportation within state programs & funding**

NOACA urges the State to provide funding for the development and preservation of non-automobile assets.

The Ohio Department of Transportation recently released a comprehensive assessment of current needs and long-term demands for transit for the state. NOACA supports the findings and recommendations of the ODOT study.

The results of the study is that $273.5 million in funding is needed to bring Ohio’s public transportation network into a good state of repair, plus the cost to replace Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority’s aging rail car fleet, which is the oldest average fleet in the nation.

The study recommends that to best meet the needs of Ohioans that the statewide investment in public transit be doubled, from $273.5 million annually to $5.8 billion per year, and that the State of Ohio invest 10 percent of the operating and capital costs of the needed service.

Furthermore, we urge the State of Ohio to ensure the sustainability of local revenue such as sales tax from Medicaid, which impacts all local governments and transit authorities.

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**STATE PRIORITIES**

**FEDERAL PRIORITIES**

**OUR PLATFORM**
FEDERAL PRIORITIES

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NOACA will evaluate rule-makings and oversight of the FAST Act by applying the NOACA platform and briefing congressional staff as to the effect of federal policy on regional and local priorities.

OUR PLATFORM

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The study recommends that to best meet the needs of Ohioans that the statewide investment in public transit be doubled, from $1 billion annually to $2 billion per year, and that the State of Ohio invest 10 percent of the operating and capital costs of the needed service.

Furthermore, we urge the State of Ohio to ensure the sustainability of local revenue such as sales tax from Medicaid, which impacts all local governments and transit authorities.
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