ABOUT NOACA

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.

ABOUT OUR AGENDA

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) Board of Directors and staff are proud to present the 2020 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.

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

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**FEDERAL PRIORITIES**

**PRIORITY 1**
Strengthen the MPO’s local control of core transportation programs

NOACA advocates that Congress should 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/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 for locally implemented priorities of air quality, 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.

**PRIORITY 2**
Promote asset management as a funding priority

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.

**PRIORITY 3**
Incorporate safety, sustainability, multimodality in planning & funding

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

A specific focus should be to include public transit and hyperloop funding programs.

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**STATE PRIORITIES**

**PRIORITY 1**
Improve the region’s rate of return from state allocated funds to meet regional asset management needs

NOACA advocates that the Ohio General Assembly 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 the creation of State 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 advocates that the Ohio General Assembly provide sufficient funding for both capital and operating costs to support the development and preservation of non-automobile transportation, particularly public transit.

The Ohio Department of Transportation performed a comprehensive assessment of current needs and long-term demands for transit in the state. NOACA supports the findings and recommendations of the ODOT study, which includes funding to bring Ohio’s public transportation network into a state of good repair; and doubling statewide investment in public transit, with the State of Ohio investing 10 percent of the operating and capital costs of the needed service.

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**WORKING TO ACHIEVE NOACA’S VISION:**

NOACA will STRENGTHEN regional cohesion, PRESERVE existing infrastructure, and BUILD a sustainable multimodal transportation system to SUPPORT economic development and ENHANCE quality of life in Northeast Ohio.