



NOACA
Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency

2026 Federal & State Legislative Agenda



The Legislative Agenda represents consensus-driven principles that have been approved by NOACA's 48-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.

Federal Priorities

1

1. Strengthen local control of core transportation programs

NOACA advocates that Congress should consider making metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) direct recipients for core planning programs -- to streamline the funding process, eliminate bureaucratic hurdles, and **empower local elected officials** serving on MPO boards to make decisions that directly impact their respective communities while reaching national goals. These core programs include the Surface Transportation Program, the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement Program, the Transportation Alternatives Program, and the Carbon Reduction Program.

Similarly, Congress should consider additional reforms to strengthen local control: a) reduce the number of discretionary grant programs and shift funding to MPOs to advance projects already prioritized in regional Long Range Plans; b) increase planning (PL) funds to meet complex federal planning requirements and ensure successful project implementation; c) reduce local match for federal transportation programs to remove barriers for low income rural and urban communities; and d) streamline environmental review and permitting to accelerate project delivery while maintaining critical natural resource protection and public review and input.

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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 like 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 programs at the state level; Congress should consider creating and augmenting funding streams for asset management – for transit, roads and bridges – at the regional/local level.

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3. Incorporate safety, sustainability, and multi-modalism in planning and funding

NOACA advocates that Congress should include safety, sustainability, and multi-modalism as specific priorities within state and regional planning requirements, and focus on expanding transportation choice for all residents through public transit, passenger rail, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and developing technologies like hyperloop.

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4. Stabilize the Highway Trust Fund (HTF)

NOACA advocates that Congress take action to stabilize the Highway Trust Fund to provide long-term predictable funding for transportation programs, inclusive of transit, and continue the traditional “user pays” system to support these critical investments.

State Priorities

1

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.

2

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 – which should be funded in a manner that reflects and enhances local and regional investments.

NOACA continues to support the recommendations of ODOT's 2015 Transit Needs study, which proposed bringing Ohio's public transportation network to a state of good repair and doubling statewide investment in public transit -- with the State of Ohio investing in the operating and capital costs of needed service. In fact, NOACA supports the creation of a dedicated, long-term source of transit funding. NOACA also advocates for increased funding for passenger rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and other forms of multimodal transportation facilities and operating assistance.

3

3. Advocate for state transportation programs, policies, and funding that will improve transportation safety, air and water quality, climate pollution reduction and resilience, and economic development opportunities.



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 2026 Federal and State Legislative Agenda.

Transportation infrastructure empowers Ohioans to reach jobs; access healthcare, education, and 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.

NOACA'S advocacy and outreach is guided by its Long-Range Plan, WeNEO2050+. This plan directs investment in all forms of transportation over the next 30 years. With the year 2050 as the planning horizon, NOACA will invest approximately \$13.2 billion in the region's transportation network 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 local, state and federal officials, and greatly appreciate their support.

NOACA'S VISION STATEMENT

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.



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