NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY

MEMORANDUM

TO: NOACA Board of Directors
FROM: Grace Gallucci, Executive Director
DATE: January 16, 2015
RE: Resolution 2015-015 – Regional Transportation Investment Policy

ACTION REQUESTED
The Board of Directors is asked to approve Resolution 2015-015 which revises the Regional Transportation Investment Policy (RTIP) for technical compliance. This RTIP update is necessary to achieve compliance with the current NOACA Code of Regulations and planning documents, as well as current Federal and State regulations and program directives.

BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION FOR CURRENT ACTION
The RTIP is NOACA’s policy for planning, programming and prioritizing federal-aid transportation investments for the region. It contains policy statements and procedures related to planning requirements, project application requirements, funds management, and public involvement. Per the policy, all modifications will be presented to the Board of Directors for approval.

The RTIP last received a minor update in May 2012. Since that time, there have been several initiatives that have been implemented that require technical revisions to the policy, including the NOACA Code of Regulations and NOACA’s long range transportation plan, Connections’ 2035. Federal and state law and program changes have also necessitated changes to the RTIP. These include passage of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and the implementation of a statewide Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program. NOACA staff has assessed the existing RTIP in relation to these initiatives and is recommending updates to make the document compliant. These changes are summarized in the attached table and are detailed in the attached color-lined document.

On February 14, 2014, staff presented for information and discussion to the Committee the need to evaluate and revise the RTIP. On May 9, 2014, the item was presented to the Committee for input on policy evaluation and recommendations. However, it was tabled as the approach was too comprehensive, contributing to confusion regarding the parallel Regional Strategic Plan process and goal development. Therefore, at this time only technical compliance updates are being recommended. Additional recommendations will be considered after a more comprehensive evaluation is complete. The NOACA Policy Committee recommended this item for Board of Directors approval at its November 14, 2014 meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPACT
There is no financial impact at this time.

CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS
Staff will continue to work with the Board and committees to achieve a comprehensive evaluation of the RTIP’s policies and procedures and recommend additional revisions as appropriate.

Attachments: RTIP Summary of Revisions and DRAFT RTIP color-lined document
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 areawide water quality management agency for the same region; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Transportation Investment Policy (RTIP) represents NOACA’s policy for the planning, programming and prioritization of federal-aid transportation dollars for the region; and

WHEREAS, the RTIP is regularly reviewed for compliance with federal, state and NOACA directives and regulations; and

WHEREAS, the RTIP was last revised in May, 2012 for minor update; and

WHEREAS, since the 2012 update there have been changes in federal, state and NOACA directives and regulations that require revisions to the RTIP, such as the passage of MAP-21 federal bill, creation of a Statewide CMAQ Program and revisions to the NOACA Code of Regulations (Attachment A Summary of RTIP Revisions); and

WHEREAS, the proposed RTIP technical compliance revisions have been reviewed and recommended for approval by the NOACA Policy Committee.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, consisting of 45 principal officials serving general purpose local governments throughout and within the counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina that:

Section 1. The Regional Transportation Investment Policy update (January 2015) is approved.

Section 2. The Executive Director is authorized to transmit certified copies of this resolution to the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies.

Certified to be a true copy of a Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency adopted this 23rd day of January 2015.

Secretary: [Signature]
Date Signed: 1/23/15

Attachment A - Summary of RTIP Revisions (January 2015)
## NOACA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT POLICY


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Change</th>
<th>Recommended Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOACA Code of Regulations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Board of Directors name change, effective August 2013</td>
<td>• Revise terminology from ‘Governing Board’ to ‘Board of Directors’ for consistency with Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Standing Committees and subcommittees formation and charters, effective August 2013</td>
<td>• Modify reference to subcommittees and committees consistent with Code of Regulations (Regional Transportation Investment Subcommittee, Transportation Advisory Council, Transportation Subcommittee, Standing Committees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOACA Plans and Programs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NOACA Logo</td>
<td>• Replace old NOACA logo with new NOACA logo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NOACA Connections+ 2035 long-range transportation plan, effective May 2013</td>
<td>• Revise terminology from ‘Connections 2030’ to ‘Connections+ 2035’ for consistency with current plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI), new 2014 program guidance</td>
<td>• Revise to reflect TLCI objectives rather than goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inactive NOACA advisory councils</td>
<td>• Remove reference to inactive NOACA advisory councils: Transportation Water Quality Advisory Council, Environmental Advisory Council, and Transportation Infrastructure Management Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Law and Programs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), replaces Transportation Enhancements Program under MAP-21</td>
<td>• Revise the past Transportation Enhancements program policies and guidance to reflect the new MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program policies and guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High Priority Projects Program (Congressional Earmarks), cancelled under MAP-21</td>
<td>• Remove guidance and references to the Congressional Earmark program and application process. Federal High Priority Program not active under MAP-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (5310), new program under MAP-21 replacing old Specialized and New Freedom Programs</td>
<td>• Replace the old Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom program policies and guidance to reflect the new MAP-21 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program policies and guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State of Ohio Law and Programs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Statewide Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ), directed by ODOT</td>
<td>• Replace the NOACA CMAQ program policies and guidance to reflect the new Statewide CMAQ Committee program policies and guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transportation Review and Advisory Council (TRAC) and County Engineers (CEAO) Programs</td>
<td>• Update to reflect current program policies and guidance of the TRAC and CEAO programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regional Transportation Investment Policy

Planning and Programming Transportation Projects for the NOACA Region

May 2012

Revisions Legend:
Proposed changes to the RTIP are classified by four reason categories and are delineated in the document by color:

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NOACA Plans and Programs
Federal Law and Programs
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I. Overall Policies

A. NOACA’s Transportation Goals

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency’s Transportation Plan, Connections* 2030, contains ten long-range goals for regional transportation in Northeast Ohio.* These goals are the foundation of this policy.

**Transportation Plan Goals**

**Goal 1**
Advance the region’s economic competitiveness based upon a sustainable development approach integrating environmental, social equity and economic perspectives.

**Goal 2**
Enhance the natural environment and ecology of the region by improving air, land and water quality, conserving transportation energy and by identifying and preserving existing critical natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas.

**Goal 3**
Preserve and improve the efficiency and safety of the existing transportation system, prioritize elements of the system identified as significant and ensure the system serves homeland security.

**Goal 4**
Establish a more balanced transportation system which enhances modal choices by prioritizing goods movement, transit, pedestrian and bicycle travel instead of just single occupancy vehicle movement and highways.

**Goal 5**
Improve the transportation mobility of the transit-dependent and low-income individuals to jobs, housing and other trip purposes.

**Goal 6**
Provide additional transportation system capacity to move people and goods only when such capacity improvements promote the NOACA Principles, minimizing the adverse impacts of the investments on existing communities within the region.

**Goal 7**
Foster reinvestment in existing urban core areas throughout the region, and work to target and manage transportation investments to implement Plan goals.

**Goal 8**
Foster intergovernmental and private sector relationships to strengthen the regional community and assist in Plan implementation.

**Goal 9**
Direct the Plan and its investments toward efficient compact land use development/redevelopment that facilitates accessibility, saves infrastructure costs, preserves and enhances farmland, forests and open space and enhances the economic viability of existing communities within the region.

**Goal 10**
Foster improvement in the quality of life of residents in the region through attention to aesthetics in the planning of the transportation system.

*(Revised June 14, 2002 via Governing Board resolution 2002-042)*
B. Policy Statement

This Regional Transportation Investment Policy (RTIP) is the NOACA Governing-Board of Directors policy for planning, programming and prioritizing federal-aid transportation investments for the region. It is reviewed on a regular schedule and may be modified to reflect circumstances, such as changes in federal policies or revenues. All policy modifications will be presented to committees and board for approval. Project sponsors will be notified of any policy changes that may affect their programs or project(s).

C. Access to Funds

The NOACA Governing-Board of Directors believes that all project sponsors and geographical areas in the region should have sufficient access to funds in order to improve and maintain the transportation infrastructure. Consequently, the Governing-Board of Directors strives to plan, program and prioritize projects on an equitable basis.

D. Regional Transportation Investment Subcommittee (RTIS) Standing Committees

NOACA is responsible to direct and manage federal funds it receives.\(^1\) Because of the complexities of the federal accounting system and Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) administrative policies, the NOACA Governing-Board of Directors authorizes the Regional Transportation Investment Subcommittee (RTIS) the appropriate Standing Committees (“Committee(s)”), in accordance with the NOACA Code of Regulations, to help direct and manage funds the agency’s planning and financial responsibilities. RTIS management Committee decisions are reported to the Transportation-Advisory Committee (TAC) and Governing-Board of Directors.

E. Community and Agency Plans

Requirement

At a minimum, communities must notify NOACA of all projects involving a road on the Federal Aid System (FAS) regardless of the funding source to be used for said project. This is due to federal requirements that MPOs be aware of all changes to the FAS regardless of the funding source for those changes.

Guidance

Improvements to the federal-aid transportation system should logically flow from an open and comprehensive planning process. Many communities create city-wide or corridor plans that include proposed improvements. To facilitate the planning process, communities and agencies are encouraged to submit their community-approved plans to NOACA for certification. City-wide or corridor plans may be submitted to NOACA for review by staff\(^2\). They will be presented to NOACA’s committees, with recommendations. Annually, the

\(^1\) See appendix 3 for information on how federal funds flow to NOACA

\(^2\) NOACA does not certify individual project plans.
NOACA Governing Board of Directors will certify plans as helping to achieve the goals of NOACA’s Transportation Plan. Projects drawn from a certified plan may flow more easily through the five-step process, described below.

F. Use of Funding Targets

The NOACA Governing Board of Directors may set funding targets annually. The funding targets may be related to specific geographical areas, transportation modes, programs or projects. Funding targets are not entitlements; they are tools to promote regionalism and encourage types of investment. (Federal regulations explicitly prohibit “entitlement” sub-allocations.)

G. Urban Core Communities

Transportation Goal 7 is to designed to foster reinvestment in urban core areas in the region. Below are policies that encourage this reinvestment. Within this policy are sections where urban core areas receive special consideration to help meet this goal. The NOACA urban core areas approved with the 1997 Transportation Plan and subsequent Plans are:

- Bay Village
- Bedford
- Berea
- Brooklyn
- Brookpark
- Cleveland
- Cleveland Heights
- Chagrin Falls Village
- Eastlake
- Bay Village
- Bedford
- Berea
- Brooklyn
- Brookpark
- Cleveland
- Cleveland Heights
- Chagrin Falls Village
- Eastlake
- East Cleveland
- Elyria
- Euclid
- Fairport Harbor
- Fairview Park
- Garfield Heights
- Lakewood
- Lodi
- Lorain
- Linndale
- Lyndhurst
- Maple Heights
- Mayfield Heights
- Mentor-on-the-Lake
- Newburgh Heights
- Oberlin
- Painesville City
- Parma
- Parma Heights
- Rocky River
- Sheffield Lake
- Shaker Heights
- South Euclid
- Timberlake
- University Heights
- Warrensville Heights
- Wickliffe
- Willowick
The policies below encourage this reinvestment.

NOACA’s urban core communities are eligible to apply for the following federal assistance programs. Note that funds may not be available in all years for the programs listed below due to availability of federal funds and system preservation needs. The RTIS Board of Directors determines the availability of funds annually.

**Urban Core Programs**

- **Urban Core Preliminary Engineering Program**
  - Urban core communities are eligible to apply for assistance for preliminary engineering for their transportation improvement. The RTIS Board of Directors shall determine the not-to-be-exceeded amount, dependent on the project and available funds.
  - Communities that receive federal aid for preliminary engineering must commit in writing that the project will advance to construction within an agreed upon time. If the project does not advance, by federal law, the community will be required to pay back the federal funds.

- **Urban Core Right-of-Way Program**
  - Urban core communities may apply for federal funds for right of way, minus the initial $50,000 right of way investment

- **Urban Core Neighborhood Planning Assistance**
  - Urban core communities are eligible to apply for NOACA’s Neighborhood Planning Program, wherein NOACA staff assists urban core communities in planning studies. More information on the program is available on NOACA’s web site.
H. The Five-Step Project Process (Summary)

NOACA employs a five-step process for project planning, programming, prioritization, and eventual construction/implementation. For more information on each step, see chapters II, III and IV.

**Step 1: Eligibility Determination and Project Planning Review**

All proposed projects must complete the appropriate application for federal funds. Application cycles vary based on type of funds and fund availability. Applications are accepted only for fiscal years listed in the specific application packet. Instructions and guidance on how to submit applications for the various federal funding categories are listed in Chapter II and on NOACA’s web site.

If an application is determined eligible, it will be processed through Project Planning Review (PPR). Upon successful completion of PPR, the project sponsor will receive a NOACA Governing Board of Directors resolution saying that the project is eligible to be placed on the Transportation Plan, contingent upon the sponsor addressing planning issues that may have been identified during PPR. The project sponsor must commit in writing that they will work to address PPR issues. Information on fulfilling planning requirements and guidance is contained in Chapter III and on NOACA’s web site.

**Step 2: Plan Amendment**

Sponsors of Plan eligible projects must provide evidence they are addressing PPR recommendations or requirements. The project will not be advanced until the RTIS-Planning and Programming Committee concurs that relevant issues are being adequately addressed. Upon successful review, the project sponsor will receive a Board resolution that the project is amended to NOACA’s Transportation Plan. (Being on the Transportation Plan indicates that the project will be implemented within the timeframe of the Plan. It does not prioritize a sponsor’s project in relation to other projects.)

**Step 3: TIP Eligibility Determination**

Through its annual meetings with sponsors, NOACA will monitor the development of projects. To be eligible for programming onto the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a NOACA-funded project must successfully complete scoping review by NOACA staff and committees by the RTIS. This scoping review will determine the readiness status of the project.
The project sponsor must provide: Guidance regarding fulfilling this step and submission of appropriate documentation are listed in Chapters III and IV and on NOACA’s web site. Upon successful completion of this step, a project sponsor will receive notification that the project is eligible to be placed on the TIP. This means the project is now ready to be programmed and prioritized for implementation.

Step 4: TIP Amendment

The RTIS Planning and Programming Committee will assess TIP-eligible projects in relationship to projected federal funds, regional priorities and county targets.

The RTIS Planning and Programming Committee will determine NOACA’s not-to-be-exceeded federal share (funding cap) for the project. The project sponsor must agree, in writing, that it will abide by the funding cap, barring special circumstances.³

Upon receipt of funding cap agreements, the RTIS staff will develop a list of projects to be programmed and will submit it to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Planning and Programming Committee and Board for approval. Following Board approval, a project sponsor will receive a resolution that the project is amended to NOACA’s TIP.

Information regarding this step and submission of appropriate documentation are listed in Chapter III and on NOACA’s web site.

Step 5: Lockdown List

Per ODOT requirements, NOACA must develop a lockdown list of projects for the upcoming state fiscal year (July-June) during the preceding December. At this time, the project sponsor must provide verification that their project can award a contract (encumber funds) within the lockdown year. Staff develops the draft lockdown list in coordination with external program managers for committee and Board approval.

II. Project Application Policies and Procedures

A. Federal-Aid Programs that Require a NOACA Application

There are a number of federal-aid programs that provide funding for transportation improvements. Below is a table listing programs that require a NOACA application. Note this table may be modified due to changes in programs or funding. Please see the NOACA web site for the most current table or contact NOACA staff.⁴

³ See Chapter V for policies regarding requesting funds above the funding cap.

⁴ Project sponsors should complete the project notification form for projects on the Federal Aid System (FAS) not requiring a complete application. This would include any projects on the FAS that do not expect to utilize federal aid. The Notification Form is available at the NOACA web site.
Table 1: Federal-Aid Programs: Eligible Projects and Application Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/Fund</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Selected By</th>
<th>Eligible Projects</th>
<th>Eligible Applicants</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>NOACA Application Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOACA STP</td>
<td>FHWA/ODOT</td>
<td>NOACA Governing Board of Directors</td>
<td>Roadway preservation, reconstruction, and capacity; transit; bicycle; safety⁵; planning on the federal aid system</td>
<td>Municipalities, county governments, and transit agencies within the NOACA region.⁶</td>
<td>NOACA: <a href="http://www.noaca.org">www.noaca.org</a> 216-241-2414</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOACA Statewide Urban CMAQ</td>
<td>FHWA/ODOT</td>
<td>NOACA Governing Board of Directors</td>
<td>Must improve air quality: transit, travel demand management, emission reduction programs; signals, etc.</td>
<td>Municipalities, county governments, and transit agencies within the NOACA region.⁷</td>
<td>NOACA: <a href="http://www.noaca.org">www.noaca.org</a> 216-241-2414</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOACA Transportation Alternatives Program Enhancement (TAPE)</td>
<td>FHWA/ODOT</td>
<td>NOACA Governing Board of Directors</td>
<td>Pedestrian, bicycle, greenways, community improvement activities, safe routes for non-drivers, safe routes to school, scenic viewing areas, environmental, historic and archeological; must be related to transportation.</td>
<td>Municipalities, county governments, transit agencies and park districts within the NOACA region.</td>
<td>NOACA: <a href="http://www.noaca.org">www.noaca.org</a> 216-241-2414</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOACA</td>
<td>NOACA STP</td>
<td>NOACA</td>
<td>Planning projects</td>
<td>Municipalities,</td>
<td>NOACA:</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁵ Safety funds may be available for projects not on the federal aid system
⁶ NOACA itself may apply for STP for planning
⁷ NOACA itself may apply for CMAQ funds
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/Fund</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Selected By</th>
<th>Eligible Projects</th>
<th>Eligible Applicants</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>NOACA Application Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation for Livable Communities (TLCI)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Governing Board of Directors</td>
<td>consistent with TLCI goals objectives</td>
<td>county governments, and transit agencies within the NOACA region.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.noaca.org">www.noaca.org</a> 216-241-2414</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOACA Job Access/ Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (5310)</td>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>NOACA Governing Board of Directors</td>
<td>JARC: transportation services to jobs and employment-related activities for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals, and transportation options for reverse commuters, regardless of income. New Freedom: new public transportation services and alternatives beyond those currently required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Enhances mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs that serve the special needs of transit-dependent</td>
<td>Private non-profit organizations; State or local government authorities; Public operators of public transportation services; Private operators of public transportation services within the Cleveland urbanized area</td>
<td>NOACA: <a href="http://www.noaca.org">www.noaca.org</a> 216-241-2414</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program/Fund</td>
<td>Funding Source</td>
<td>Selected By</td>
<td>Eligible Projects</td>
<td>Eligible Applicants</td>
<td>Contact Information</td>
<td>NOACA Application Number</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODOT Federal Aid Highway Programs</td>
<td>FHWA/ODOT</td>
<td>ODOT; in consultation with the NOACA Governing Board of Directors</td>
<td>Roadway projects on federal aid facilities where ODOT is the responsible agency (e.g. interstates and state routes).</td>
<td>ODOT</td>
<td>ODOT District 3 and District 12 offices</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Ohio’s Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC)</td>
<td>Federal/State</td>
<td>TRAC, in consultation with the NOACA Governing Board of Directors</td>
<td>Major new transportation projects costing $125 million or more and add capacity or reduce congestion</td>
<td>ODOT; Municipalities, county governments, and transit agencies</td>
<td>Ohio TRAC website</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Earmark</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Congress; in consultation with the NOACA Governing Board</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Political subdivisions within Ohio</td>
<td>Congressional Offices</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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8 If not currently on Transportation Plan/Transportation Improvement Program
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/Fund</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County STP, Bridge (LBR) and Safety (HSIP)</td>
<td>FHWA/ ODOT</td>
<td>County Engineers Association; in consultation with the NOACA Governing Board of Directors</td>
<td>Roadway, bridge, and safety projects on federal aid facilities where County Engineers are the responsible agencies</td>
<td>County Engineers</td>
<td>County Engineers Association of Ohio</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Requirements and Guidance for all Applications

Requirements for All Applications

Eligible sponsors must complete the appropriate application for a proposed project. The completed application initiates the five-step process described above.

Applications for NOACA-controlled funds are accepted only for fiscal years identified in the application packet. NOACA staff will review all submitted applications and documentation. The responsibility for completing an application lies solely with the project sponsor. Ineligible or incomplete applications will not be processed.

Potential sponsors who are not familiar with the federal-aid process will be required to meet with NOACA staff.

Guidance for All Applications

It is highly recommended that all project sponsors review NOACA’s Planning Policies and Guidance (Chapter III) prior to submitting applications. Applications require sponsors to provide specific documentation, depending on the type of project and expected source(s) of funds.

C. NOACA Application 1

(NOACA STP; ODOT Programs, CEAO Programs, TRAC and Congressional Earmarks)

Application 1 Requirements

A completed Application 1 is required for the following:

- NOACA STP
- ODOT Federal-Aid Highway Programs (ODOT controlled)
- County STP, LBR, and HSIP (CEAO controlled)
- Transportation Review Advisory Council (state of Ohio controlled)
- Congressional Earmarks
- Proposed projects for the federal-aid system not requesting federal aid

Information on eligible projects and sponsors is contained in Table 1 (above).

Application 1 is available on the NOACA web site or by contacting NOACA staff. In general, project applicants must provide sufficient information to ensure that Project Planning Review (Chapter III) can be conducted.

Application 1 contains sections related to NOACA’s Plan goals (Section I.A):

- Transportation System Management and Preservation
- Financial Planning
- Multimodal Planning
  - Transit, bicycle, pedestrian, freight
- Environmental Planning
  - Air, water, environmental justice
- Economic development and Land Use
- Aesthetics

10 The amount of information required will depend on the type of improvement. For example, a basic resurfacing may simply require notification. However, a major interchange improvement that requires conformity analysis will require the full completion of an application.
NOACA accepts Number 1 applications for NOACA STP, ODOT Programs, CEAO Programs, and TRAC, and Congressional Earmarks at any time. However, the applications are processed quarterly. Staff will review Number 1 applications for eligibility and completeness. If an application is determined eligible, it will be processed through Project Planning Review (see Chapter III).

Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) Application Policies

Project sponsors sometimes apply to the State of Ohio’s Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) to supplement financing for a major transportation improvement. When TRAC announces an application round, the RTIS Transportation Subcommittee will set up application and review procedures. Project sponsors with proposed projects not currently on NOACA’s Transportation Plan will be required to complete a Number 1 NOACA Application.

Congressional Earmark Application Policy

Project sponsors sometimes request funds from elected representatives for federal transportation funds to supplement financing for a transportation improvement. NOACA has policies, requirements, and guidance regarding these congressional priority projects (earmarks).

Earmark Policies and Requirements

For projects currently on the Board-approved Transportation Plan (Plan) or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

- If requested, NOACA will endorse a request for congressional priority (earmark) funds.
- NOACA will amend its portrayal of the project’s financing in its Plan or TIP subsequent to a successful earmark bid.
- If a project sponsor requests NOACA funds above those currently allocated in the Plan or TIP for the earmark project, the request will be processed consistent with approved policies and procedures.
- If a sponsor secures supplemental earmark funds for a project that also is scheduled to use NOACA funds in a future year, the scheduling of the project may need to be adjusted depending on the availability of both funding sources.

Achieving Goal 8

Project sponsors sometimes request funds from elected representatives for federal transportation funds to supplement financing for a transportation improvement. NOACA has policies, requirements, and guidance regarding these congressional priority projects (earmarks).
For projects not currently on the Board-approved Transportation Plan (Plan) or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

- Eligible project sponsors requesting an endorsement for a proposed project must complete a Number-1 NOACA Application contained on NOACA’s website. NOACA will not endorse a project for a requestor who is not eligible to receive federal-aid transportation funds.

- The proposed project must be processed through Project Planning Review (PPR) prior to an endorsement. The PPR resolution will be NOACA’s initial endorsement of the proposed project. PPR takes a minimum of three months depending on when the application is submitted and the complexity of the project. The PPR schedule is on the NOACA web site.

- Upon securing an earmark, the project will be considered for amendment to the Plan or TIP, consistent with approved policies and procedures.

- If a project sponsor requests NOACA funds for the earmark project, the project will be processed consistent with approved policies and procedures.

Earmark Guidance

It is recommended that all earmark requestors contact NOACA prior to applying for an earmark. Early coordination can help facilitate the processing of the request at the federal, state and local levels.

Most earmarks are a relatively small part of the overall project financing. Earmarks supplement funding; they do not replace a sound financial plan.

As project sponsors consider using earmarks, it is highly recommended that they review and select NOACA Board-approved projects as earmark candidates. Earmark requestors should also be familiar with federal and state requirements for using federal transportation funds. For example, all federal transportation funding is on a reimbursement basis; no cash is provided upfront to pay for projects.

Earmark requestors for projects not on the Board-approved Plan or TIP should select proposed projects that:

- Help meet regional Board-approved transportation goals.
- E.g., projects that improve sustainable economic development, improve environmental quality, solve a safety issue, etc.
- Have strong public and private support.
- Are developed enough to identify potential environmental concerns.
- Are developed enough to be implemented within the timeframe of the federal authorizing legislation.
- Have a solid financial plan to complete all phases of the project.
The federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding allocation is established by formula to ODOT based on air quality non-attainment and maintenance area populations. The program is managed by the Statewide CMAQ Committee, comprised of representatives of the eight large urban areas of Ohio – Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown.

CMAQ funds may be used to establish new or expanded transportation projects or programs that reduce emissions, including capital investments in transportation infrastructure, congestion relief efforts, vehicle acquisitions, diesel engine retrofits, or other capital projects. However, projects that add new capacity for single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) are ineligible for CMAQ funding unless construction is limited to high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes.

Operating projects or programs are also eligible, but are limited to new transit, commuter and intercity passenger rail services, intermodal facilities, travel demand management strategies, including traffic operation centers, inspection and maintenance programs, and the incremental cost of expanding these services. A full list of eligible project types with description is available on the NOACA website. NOACA will submit eligible CMAQ projects first to the statewide program prior to considering it for STP or TAP program funding.

The CMAQ program provides 80 percent of total eligible project costs associated with non-infrastructure activities and operating costs; and preliminary development, detailed design, right of way acquisition, and construction costs for infrastructure type projects. The minimum local share is 20 percent and must be provided from local, state, or other non-federal sources. Costs associated with a non-CMAQ funded phase are not considered as part of the local share.

Project sponsors requesting Statewide CMAQ Program funds are required to complete an application that will compete against other large urban area projects statewide. In addition to the general application information, eligible sponsors are required to submit any additional information needed by NOACA staff to technically assess their proposed project against program goals. NOACA staff will coordinate regional project applications for review, scoring, and prioritization and will submit applications and priority ranking to the Statewide CMAQ Committee for evaluation and determination of project funding recommendations.

If a proposed CMAQ project has successfully been selected for funding through the statewide program, it is eligible to be placed on NOACA’s Transportation Plan and TIP. The overall status of the statewide CMAQ funds availability will be a determining factor regarding a project’s placement on the Plan and TIP. Projects may be amended to the Plan quarterly in accordance with the planning process established for non-NOACA controlled fund sources. NOACA will monitor project delivery and maintain the Plan and TIP in accordance with the Statewide CMAQ Committee program management decisions.
NOACA has specific policies for Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) funds due to their unique nature. Project sponsors should consult the NOACA website or contact NOACA staff if they have questions about the program.

### Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Policies

Consistent with NOACA Resolutions 2006-031 and 2007-044, CMAQ funding priority shall be given to mobile source programs and projects described in NOACA’s recommendations to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency for the State Implementation Plan for attainment of the 8-hour Ozone and Annual Fine Particle National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

### Background and Purpose

The CMAQ program is the result of the partnership between NOACA and ODOT. ODOT receives CMAQ funds at the state level. The funds received are proportional to the severity of pollution and the population exposed to it in the state’s various nonattainment areas. However, ODOT is not required to suballocate CMAQ funds to the region. It does so because it believes NOACA is better able to judge the needs and merits of proposed CMAQ projects in its area. In return, NOACA provides an annual report of its CMAQ uses within the region to ODOT as part of its cooperative agreement with ODOT.

NOACA directs and manages the CMAQ program consistent with federal regulations and guidance. As expressed in federal guidance, the CMAQ program supports two important goals: improving air quality and relieving congestion. It is the explicit intent of NOACA to use CMAQ funds to help achieve transportation and environmental goals and objectives.
Project Review and Project Scoring

After initial application review, all proposed CMAQ projects are scored according to the following statewide program criteria:

1. Project Type - Recognized project types with proven emissions reducing benefits
2. Cost Effectiveness - Project’s ability to reduce emissions (HC/Nox/PM$_{2.5}$) per CMAQ dollar invested
3. Other Benefits - Impacts to Safety, Freight, Fixed Route Transit, Bike/Pedestrian, and EJ Areas
4. Existing Modal Level of Service - Current operating level of service of the facility
5. Positive Impact on Level of Service - Projected level of service the facility will operate post project
6. Status of Project - Project readiness, status of project development
7. Non-Federal Funds Commitment - Significance of non-CMAQ funding contributed to the project
8. Regional Priority - MPO priority given up to four projects
9. Past Performance - Past performance of the project sponsor regarding project delivery

Staff will prepare a draft CMAQ project list using the results of the scoring system noted above. Eligible projects will be submitted to the Statewide Committee and be reviewed according to their score and available funds.

A. Air Quality (AQ) cost effectiveness
   • This factor measures improvements to air quality in relationship to the project’s cost.
B. Congestion Management (CM) cost-effectiveness
   • This factor measures the scope and scale of the project. Projects that impact the region, for example, are given more points than projects that impact a local area.
C. Geographic scale
   • This factor measures the affected population. Projects that impact large numbers of persons receive more points.

Proposed projects that receive 0 to 10 points will not be processed further. Proposed projects that receive 10 or more points are eligible to be processed through Project Planning Review (PPR), which includes committee review, public involvement and Intergovernmental Review and Consultation. (See Section II.C. for more information on (PPR)).

Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Transportation Plan

If a proposed CMAQ project has successfully passed PPR, it is eligible to be placed on NOACA’s Transportation Plan (Plan). The overall status of the CMAQ account will be a determining factor regarding a project’s placement on the Plan. Projects may be amended to the Plan quarterly.

TIP
Only CMAQ projects that are on the Transportation Plan are eligible to be placed on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Plan projects will be assessed annually to coincide with the development of the annual priority list. To be eligible for TIP placement, the project sponsor must first:

- Provide evidence the final plan package will be ready for submittal within the next four years, or that the contract will be awarded within that time frame.
- Agree in writing to a final not-to-be-exceeded federal funding amount, not to exceed 80 percent federal funding, barring federal adjustments and funding balances.

Staff will prepare a draft CMAQ project list using the results of the scoring system noted above. Eligible projects will be prioritized according to their score and available funds.

A joint task force of the Regional Transportation Investment Subcommittee (RTIS) and the Air Quality Subcommittee (AQS) will review the project list. The task force will review the draft list and consider the following: urban core/environmental justice, modal balance, environmental priorities and project innovation. The task force will submit a recommended list for the committee review, public involvement, Intergovernmental Review and Governing Board approval.

Once a project is selected for the TIP, the project sponsor is expected to deliver the project at the agreed upon time. However, NOACA may need to shift projects within the four-year program to maintain fiscal balance within available appropriations.

Additionally, NOACA reserves the right to strategically advance certain CMAQ projects to help ensure long-term air quality. CMAQ projects on the TIP may need to be rescheduled at times to help ensure Transportation Conformity, or to augment efforts to attain or maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Project sponsors will be notified of any potential changes in scheduling at least one year prior to the project’s projected sale date.

E. Transportation Alternatives Program Enhancements

NOACA has specific policies for Transportation Alternatives Enhancement Program (TAPE) funds due to their unique nature. Project sponsors should consult the NOACA website or contact NOACA staff if they have questions about the program.

TAP Eligible Activities include:

- Facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists
- Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to-
  1. Address stormwater related to highway construction or due to highway runoff, 2. reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among habitats.
- Recreational trails program under section 206 of title 23.
- Safe routes to school program eligible projects and activities
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- Planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.
- Conversion and use of abandoned railway corridors for trails
- Scenic turnout, outlooks, and viewing areas
- Projects and systems that provide safe routes for non-drivers

Transportation Alternatives Enhancement (TAPE) Policies, Application and Selection Process

1) All applicants requesting TE funds must complete Application 1 and the TE Addendum.

Examples of TAPE-Eligible Activities

- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Pedestrian facilities
- Acquisition of scenic easements
- Acquisition of scenic or historic sites
- Landscaping or other scenic beautification
- Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including conversion for bike or pedestrian trails)
- Control and removal of outdoor advertising
- Environmental mitigation to address water pollution due to highway runoff
- Environmental mitigation to reduce vehicle crashes involving wildlife while maintaining habitat connectivity
- Each activity must demonstrate a relationship to surface transportation
2) Awards:

(A) Awards to individual projects are limited to $1.5 million in TEAP funds, although additional federal funds may be applied to the same project if local match requirements are met. If a project is considered to be of exceptional regional significance, the RTIS Finance and Audit Committee may recommend to the Governing Board of Directors that a higher TEAP limit be applied to the individual project.

(B) TEAP awards will be capped at their initial award amount for the life of the selected project. A request for additional funding will not be processed.

(C) To be eligible for funding, projects must meet the minimum score threshold as explained in the TEAP Addendum to Application 1. In the event that the amount requested during any quarter exceeds the TEAP funds currently available to program, those projects scoring highest will be funded first.

(D) All TEAP type projects and project elements must demonstrate sufficient coordination with interested affected parties prior to being placed on the Transportation Improvement Program. A letter of support from the affected entities will generally demonstrate sufficient coordination. The following specific forms of coordination must occur:

(i) Transit Coordination

a) A transit agency sponsored project or project element must be coordinated with the unit of government (e.g. city) in which it is located.

b) A project or project element on or along a designated transit route must be coordinated with the transit agency responsible for the designated route.

(ii) Inter-Governmental Coordination

a) A project or project element on an interstate or U.S. route must be coordinated with FHWA, ODOT, the county engineer for the county in which the project is located, and the unit of government in which it is located.

b) A project or project element on a state route must be coordinated with ODOT, the County Engineer for the county in which the project is located, and the unit of government in which it is located.

c) A project or project element on a county route or lower route classification must be coordinated with the county engineer and the unit of government in which the project is located.

d) A project or project element in a town or city center or its equivalent must be coordinated with adjacent property owners, the county administration, the county engineer, and the administration for the unit of government in which the project is located.

(iii) Other Coordination

a) A project or project element in a neighborhood with a recognized neighborhood association must be coordinated with the neighborhood association.

b) A project or project element in a neighborhood with no recognized neighborhood association must provide evidence of at least one
public meeting with neighborhood residents and a summary thereof.

F. NOACA Application 4: Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative

Project sponsors will be required to complete a Number 4 NOACA TLCI Application, which will be available on NOACA’s web site. TLCI applications are accepted only during announced cycles. Please see the NOACA website or contact NOACA staff for more information.

TLCI

TLCI Application and Selection Process

NOACA’s Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) helps communities in Northeast Ohio obtain federal funding and technical assistance for planning transportation projects that strengthen community livability. The TLCI consists of the following components:

- Planning Grant Program: Provides federal funding to conduct or contract for the planning of transportation improvements that advance the Initiative’s goals. Since 2005, the NOACA Governing Board has allocated approximately $1 million each fiscal year for the planning grant program, awarding individual grants up to $75,000.

- Neighborhood Planning Technical Assistance: As an alternative to the TLCI grant program, NOACA will offer staff technical assistance for planning and traffic related studies for small to medium-scale transportation projects. NOACA staff will work with communities to identify projects and corridors that will be prioritized for Technical Assistance. Provides free technical assistance to NOACA Urban Core Communities from staff for planning medium- to large-scale transportation improvements that advance the Initiative’s goals.

- Links Technical Assistance Program: Provides technical assistance from NOACA staff for planning small-scale traffic studies that advance the Initiative’s goals.
G. NOACA Application 5: Job Access/Reverse Commute and New Freedom Application and Selection Process Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (5310)

NOACA has been designated the administrator of federal funds for the Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (5310) program, which is intended to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs to serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services.

Funds are apportioned for urbanized and rural areas based on the number of seniors and individuals with disabilities. The participating federal share for capital projects (including acquisition of public transportation services) is 80 percent. The participating federal share for operating assistance is 50 percent. The local share may be derived from other federal (non-DOT) transportation sources or the Federal Lands Highways Program under 23 U.S.C. 204 (as in former Section 5310 program). Eligible entities include states or local government authorities, private non-profit organizations, or operators of public transportation that receive a grant indirectly through a recipient.

NOACA must certify that projects selected for funding are included in the locally developed, Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Northeast Ohio. The plan is available on the NOACA website. New project solicitation and program administration procedures are currently being developed in the NOACA Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program Management Plan and will be amended to this policy once finalized and approved by the Board of Directors.

NOACA has been designated the administrator of federal funds for the Cleveland urbanized area for two grant programs: Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom.

The JARC program (Section 5316) provides transportation services to jobs and employment-related activities for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals, and transportation options for reverse commuters, regardless of income.

The New Freedom program (Section 5317) supports new public transportation services and alternatives beyond those currently required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for individuals with disabilities.

Application Process

Federal Law requires that projects requesting funding under the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom and Specialized Transportation Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) programs be consistent with the goals of the Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan for Northeast Ohio. A copy of the Plan is available at the NOACA website.

Project sponsors will be required to complete a Number 5 NOACA JARC/New Freedom Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Application. Applications are accepted only during announced cycles. Please see the NOACA website or
Regional Transportation Investment Policy

III. Planning Policies and Guidance

A. Project Planning Review (PPR)

PPR Requirements

Project Planning Review (PPR) is NOACA’s process for meeting all federal, state and local planning requirements for projects requesting federal-aid, or federal-aid system projects not using federal funds. All applications, regardless of funding source, are processed through PPR. (NOACA Number 1 and Number 2 project applications are processed through PPR individually. NOACA Application Numbers 3, 4 and 5 are processed as a group.)

Projects successfully completing PPR will receive a NOACA Governing Board of Directors Resolution saying the project has fulfilled NOACA’s planning requirements and is eligible to be placed on NOACA’s Transportation Plan. The Resolution may contain comments and recommendations that must be addressed by the project sponsor prior to the project advancing.

Projects already on the Plan or TIP that request a change of scope or significant cost increase (greater than 20 percent\(^{11}\)) must go through PPR again.

PPR Guidance

PPR has multiple purposes:

- To assess if a proposed project helps to achieve one or more of the Transportation Plan goals to enhance the region’s transportation system and quality of life.
- To work with the applicant to develop a project that meets or exceeds multimodal goals.
- To meet public involvement and Intergovernmental Review and Consultation (IGRC) requirements.

The PPR process is comprehensive and takes at least three months, depending on the complexity of the project. PPR is comprised of:

- Staff Review
- Committee Review
- Intergovernmental Review and Consultation (IGRC)
- Public Involvement
- Governing Board of Directors Review/Consideration

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\(^{11}\) Project sponsors may appeal this 20 percent requirement if it can be shown that the cost increases were a result of an increase in material costs or inflation.
Below are the financial, multimodal, environmental, and economic development planning requirements for applications and projects wanting to advance to Plan or TIP amendment status.

B. Financial Planning

Financial Planning Requirements

Applications must contain the following financial information:

- An estimate of the total cost of the proposed project
- Desired federal funding amount
- Local match amount

Applicants requesting more than $5 million of NOACA controlled funds may be required to submit additional information.

Financial Planning Guidance

Reasonable cost estimates should be developed using the Ohio Department of Transportation’s preliminary cost estimating procedure or some similarly detailed cost estimating procedure. 12

Federal-aid transportation funds are not grant programs. They operate on a reimbursement basis.

C. Multimodal Planning

As per NOACA Plan goals, the regional transportation system must be planned and designed to serve all modes effectively, efficiently and safely. Below are bicycle, pedestrian and transit planning policies for all project sponsors.

12 Available at http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/Estimating

Achieving Goal 4

Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning Policies

Applicants are required to consider bicycles and pedestrians in the planning and design of their proposed project. In particular, sidewalks, shared use paths, street crossings (including over- and undercrossings), pedestrian signals, signs, street furniture, transit stops and facilities, and all connecting pathways should be designed, constructed, operated and maintained so that all modes and pedestrians, including people with disabilities, can travel safely and independently.

To this end, project sponsors must:

- Early in the planning process, contact NOACA staff to coordinate the proposed improvement.
- Work with the NOACA staff, and NOACA’s Regional Transportation Advisory Subcommittee (RTIS), Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Council (as appropriate) to identify bicycle and pedestrian planning and design issues appropriate to the project.
- Provide written documentation of the coordination when the Transportation Plan application is submitted. If documentation is not provided, the Plan application will be returned to the sponsor.
Regional Transportation Investment Policy

Bicycle and Pedestrian Guidance

It is highly recommended that applicants become familiar with NOACA’s Bicycle Plan which contains information about NOACA Board-approved priority bike routes.

Below are specific planning and design guidelines to assist project sponsors in the consideration of bicycles and pedestrians. It is strongly recommended that potential project sponsors use these guidelines in planning for and designing their projects. The guidelines will be used by NOACA staff and committees as a proposed project is processed through Project Planning Review.

1. Bicycle and pedestrian ways should be established in new construction and reconstruction of road and bridge projects unless one or more of four conditions are met:

1.1. Bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited by law from using the roadway. In this instance, a greater effort may be necessary to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians elsewhere within the right of way or within the same transportation corridor.

1.2. The cost of establishing bikeways or walkways that meet applicable standards would exceed 10 percent of the cost of the larger transportation project. This percentage is not a target for expenditure; it is a benchmark for assessing when provision of bicycle or pedestrian facilities is too costly for consideration.

1.3. There are extreme topographic or natural resource constraints. This would likely lead to a failure of the test suggested in 1.2 above.

1.4. The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) is projected to be less than 1,000 vehicles per day over the life of the project. Since the goal of federal transportation funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities is transportation based, it is unlikely that a facility with a low ADT (i.e. low automobile transportation usage) will be used extensively for bicycle or pedestrian transportation (i.e. trip purpose as opposed to recreational purpose).

1.5. The project is limited exclusively to resurfacing.

2. The design and development of the transportation infrastructure should improve conditions for bicycling and walking by:

2.1. Planning projects for the long-term. The design and construction of new facilities should anticipate likely future demand for bicycling and walking facilities and not preclude the provision of future improvements.
2.2. Designing context-appropriate facilities to the best currently available standards and guidelines. The design of facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians should follow commonly used design guidelines and standards such as the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, AASHTO’s Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, the ITE Recommended Practice “Design and Safety of Pedestrian Facilities”, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.

2.3. Addressing the need for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross-corridors as well as travel along them. Even where bicyclists and pedestrians may not commonly travel along a corridor that is being improved or constructed, they will likely need to be able to cross that corridor safely and conveniently. Therefore, the design of intersections and interchanges shall accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians in a manner that is safe, accessible and convenient.

Transit Planning Policies

Transit Planning Requirements

Sponsors are required to consider transit in the planning and design of their proposed project. To this end, project sponsors must:

- Early in the planning process, contact the agency responsible for public transit in the project study area to coordinate the proposed improvement.
- Work with the public transit agency to identify transit design issues appropriate to the project.
- Provide documentation of the coordination when the Transportation Plan application is submitted. If documentation is not provided, the Plan application will be returned to the sponsor.

As projects are processed through Project Planning Review (Section II.D.), the following will be considered:

- Proximity of a proposed project (roadway, bikeway, enhancement, etc) to transit rail and bus routes
- Inclusion of bus pads at bus stops
- Improvements to bus shelter waiting areas
- Inclusion of sidewalks for pedestrian access to transit stops
- Increased curb radii at intersections with buses making turns
- Potential to move transit stops to improve transit operations
- Potential for transit oriented development
- Transit operation improvements such as peak hour parking restrictions
- Traffic signal prioritization for transit vehicles
Transit Planning Guidance and Information

Below are specific planning guidelines to further assist project sponsors in the consideration of transit. (As noted above, project specific issues must be coordinated with the appropriate transit agency and documentation must be provided to NOACA.)

- For a roadway project, if a pavement on a bus route is less than 9 inches concrete, a 40 foot by 9 inch concrete bus pad should be installed at each bus stop.
- Sidewalks (pedestrian access) should be added to any roadway project within the urbanized area where none exist now. Existing and new sidewalks should be extended to the curb at bus stops. This will help facilitate pedestrian and ADA access.
- Curb (inner) radius should be no less than 30 feet to facilitate a standard 40 foot transit bus.
- Intersection geometries should recognize that the maximum body overhang (outer radius) of a 40 foot bus is 55 feet.
- Pure asphalt pavement is discouraged at intersections where bus traffic is prevalent.
- Traffic signal preemption systems should be amenable to granting transit vehicles an extended green (if already green, or an advanced green (if red).
- Communities should consider restricting parking on heavily traveled routes during morning and afternoon rush hours.

D. Environmental Planning Policies

Environmental Planning Requirements

Applicants are required to address environmental issues related to the planning and design of their proposed project. This includes water quality, air quality, environmental justice and other human and natural environmental issues such as archeological and historical preservation, energy conservation and noise.

To this end, project sponsors must:

- Work with staff and appropriate NOACA committees to identify environmental issues related to the project and its impacts. (This can include the Environmental Advisory Committee, the Air Quality Subcommittee and the Water Quality Subcommittee and the Transportation Water Quality Advisory Council."
- If requested, provide additional information that will assist in decision making and project planning and design.
- Work to implement recommendations that may result from Project Planning Review and provide environmental mitigation status updates as requested.
Regional Transportation Investment Policy

Environmental Planning Guidance

Project sponsors are encouraged to go beyond mandated environmental planning requirements to help improve the region’s environment. The following guidance identifies some of the ways that project sponsors can add value from an environmental perspective.

The most recent environmental guidance can be obtained at NOACA’s web site.

Water Quality

Transportation project sponsors are encouraged to explore mechanisms for exceeding the existing requirements for mitigating water quality impacts from transportation projects both pre and post construction. Some possible areas to consider include:

- Pervious and semi-pervious pavement applications to reduce runoff.
- Establishment of more than necessary/required wetland habitat and providing for its maintenance and planting with and harvesting of plant species known for sequestering toxic substances.

Air Quality

Transportation project sponsors are encouraged to develop transportation corridors that are supportive of multi-modal transportation options that can reduce transportation impacts on air quality. Such considerations can include:

- Traffic signal synchronization to maintain traffic flow and thereby reducing congestion and idling.
- Utilizing turning bays/lanes to maintain traffic flow and thereby reduce congestion and idling.
- Supporting/implementing public transit busing amenities that could increase the attractiveness of busing. For example - covered stops, stop identification systems, snow removal at bus stops, etc.
- Ensuring bicycling options and bicycling accommodations (e.g. racks/lockers) throughout your communities’ transportation corridors.

Environmental Justice

In 1994, President Clinton issued an Executive Order to address Environmental Justice. Environmental justice is based on the principle that people—in particular minority and low income populations—should be protected from environmental pollution and have the right to a clean and healthy environment.

Below are some environmental justice guidelines to help ensure that your project advances environmental justice. See NOACA’s web site for more information:

- Contact staff to determine if the location of your project is in an environmental justice area
- Ensure that all project-related public involvement activities identify and address the needs of minority and low-income populations in making transportation decisions.
- Develop projects that deliver equitable levels of service and benefits to minority and low-income populations.
Regional Transportation Investment Policy

- In planning and designing projects, avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations.

E. Economic Development and Land Use Planning Policies

Economic Development and Land Use Planning Guidance

Transportation Plan Goal 1 is to advance the region’s economic competitiveness based upon a sustainable development approach. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Therefore, from a transportation project perspective, communities are encouraged to conduct their economic development activities where the existing transportation system can accommodate them. This means the use of infill, adaptive reuse, and/or demolition and reuse of previously developed properties. Not only does each new foot of pavement generate permanent maintenance costs that are becoming increasingly difficult, but also new roadways impact the natural and human environments. Where system expansion is necessary to accommodate economic growth, project sponsors are encouraged to seek ongoing financial assistance from the private sector entities needing that expansion to assist in ongoing maintenance costs.

LEED Certification

The US Green Building Council has expanded its (LEED) certification beyond stand alone buildings to neighborhood development. Project sponsors are encouraged to explore the LEED for Neighborhood Development Guidelines at www.usgbc.org.

ATtempting to achieve the goals of this program can aid in identifying efficient, environmentally sound transportation solutions for communities.

F. Roadway Planning Policies

Asset Management Policy

To help implement Plan Goal 3, NOACA has entered into a partnership with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). ODOT has agreed to collect pavement condition data for all the federal-aid routes in the NOACA region. Data are collected annually for federal-aid routes for which the state is responsible, and every two years for all other federal-aid routes. NOACA is not charged for the data. NOACA uses the data as input to a Regional Pavement Management (RPM) program.

NOACA establishes that 95 percent of federal-aid routes within the region will have a pavement condition rating (PCR) of 60 or better by 2015. To achieve this goal, the following thresholds are established:

- 2010: 90 percent of all federal-aid routes will have a PCR of 60 or better
- 2015: 95 percent of all federal-aid routes will have a PCR of 60 or better.
NOACA-controlled federal funds will be used to help achieve these thresholds, contingent upon availability of funds and consistency with other elements of the RTIP. The RPM program is directed by NOACA staff and committees a permanent council of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), the Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC). The mission objectives of the TAMC program include the following:

**Pavement Management**

- Monitor the overall RPM program to help ensure that Board-approved pavement condition benchmarks are achieved. This will be done through the monitoring of data, software and RPM program outputs.
  - Review the PCR thresholds annually to ensure their practicality.
- Proactively work and coordinate with communities and agencies regarding the development and selection of projects that will help to achieve Board-approved pavement management benchmarks.
- Every two years (to coincide with the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), develop a recommended list of projects to be programmed. Multiple scenarios should be developed to account for changing financial and project planning circumstances.
  - The multiple scenarios are to be delivered to the Regional Transportation Investment Subcommittee (RTIS) and the TAC Planning and Programming Committee.
- Investigate the collection of pavement condition data for non-federal-aid routes. Specifically:
  - Determine if federal aid funds may be used to collect pavement condition data for local routes.
  - If usage of federal aid funds is permitted, develop a program to collect the data in three to five year cycles, using federal aid and a local match (percent to be determined).

**Other Assets**

In coordination with the Ohio Department of Transportation, the region’s transit agencies and other public agencies develop a regional asset management program to assist the Board in the identification and selection of projects and programs related to bridges, transit facilities/capital equipment, and other federal transportation assets.

**New Capacity Project Policies**

New capacity project applications are processed the same as other projects. However, NOACA may require information for new capacity projects in addition to that required for all projects. This is because new capacity projects may have complex positive and negative impacts.

**Project Planning Review for New Capacity Projects**

PPR for new capacity projects is more complex and requires considerably more time. Subsequently, project sponsors are advised that a staff PPR
for a new capacity project may take longer than six months.

Committees and staff may identify alternatives or modifications to the proposed project based upon this evaluation. NOACA will work with the project sponsor regarding any proposed changes.

The NOACA share for highway capacity projects or highway projects with capacity elements (e.g. new roadways, major widenings) is limited to up to 50 percent.

In general, a major new investment is any proposed capital project greater than $512 million that is:

- Capable of serving large volumes of persons, passengers, motor vehicles and goods movement, or
- Of sufficient size to alter the vehicle miles traveled (or vehicle hours traveled) so that regional corridor-level mobile source emissions are affected, or
- Of sufficient cost to trigger a Major Investment Study (MIS), or
- Expected to increase mobility, provide connectivity, increase accessibility for development or redevelopment, or
- Expected to increase the capacity of a transportation facility or reduce congestion, or
  - Reasonably expected to have a regionally significant impact on project area land uses and densities, or on economic activities, or
- Funded using a funding source that is eligible for public investment, as prescribed by public law.

G. Aesthetics Planning Policies

Achieving Goal 10

Aesthetic Guidance

Transportation Plan Goal 10 is to use aesthetics to improve the quality of life for residents in the region. Federal code\textsuperscript{13} cites that the aesthetic effect of a proposed project must be fully considered in the preparation of environmental documents. United States Council on Environmental Quality regulations identify aesthetics as one of the factors in the human environment which must be considered in determining the effects of a Federal action.

Proposed transportation projects have varying degrees of potential to change the appearance of the region and its communities. That opportunity depends on the scope of the project, the nature of its surroundings and community desires.

\textsuperscript{13} Title 23 U.S.C. 109(h)
For project sponsors, a good first step to help develop an aesthetics strategy is to use the following checklist, based on one developed by the Ohio Department of Transportation:

**Aesthetics Checklist**

- What is the context of the improvement?
  - Is the project located in a historical or cultural district? Is the project in a park, or over a scenic river?
- What is the adjacent land use? Residential, commercial, recreational?
- Is there any planned development?
- Is the project the initial phase of something bigger?
- Will the view shed be altered by this project?
- Is this the time to create a vision for the corridor that would support this and future projects?
- Has a corridor vision already been established?
- Are there local standards that should be applied to the project?
- Who could serve on an interdisciplinary design team?
- Have stakeholders been involved?
- Has the community been given an opportunity to participate in the design?
- Is landscaping part of the scope?
- Have pattern, color, texture and relief been considered when developing the project?

For additional information on transportation aesthetics, please see the NOACA website.
IV. Plan and TIP Amendment Policies

A. Plan Amendment

Plan Amendment Requirement

Sponsors of Plan eligible projects must provide evidence they are addressing PPR recommendations or requirements. Documentation must be submitted to NOACA for committee and staff review. The project will not be added to the Plan until the Regional Transportation Investment Subcommittee (RTIS) the Planning and Programming Committee concur that all issues have been sufficiently addressed.

Upon successful review, a project sponsor will receive a Board resolution that the project is amended to NOACA’s Transportation Plan. (Being on the Transportation Plan indicates that the project will be implemented within the timeframe of the Plan. It does not prioritize a sponsor’s project in relation to other projects.)

Plan Amendment Guidance

A project sponsor who has completed Step 1 and received a Plan-eligibility resolution should coordinate project planning work with NOACA staff. This will enable the project to more easily receive consideration as a Plan amendment.

Guidance regarding fulfilling PPR recommendations are contained in Chapter III.

B. TIP Eligibility Determination

TIP Eligibility Requirements

NOACA committees and staff will monitor the development of projects. To be eligible for programming onto the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a NOACA-funded project must successfully complete scoping review by the NOACA staff and committees. This scoping review will determine the readiness status of the project.

The project sponsor must provide:

- Verification that planning issues identified during PPR were addressed
- A financial plan in year of expenditure dollars
- Authorizing legislation
- Verification of local match and public involvement
- Verification that the project can encumber funds within the next four years.

C. TIP Amendment

TIP Amendment Requirements

The RTIS-Planning and Programming Committee will assess TIP-eligible projects in relationship to projected federal funds, regional priorities and county targets.

The RTIS Board of Directors will determine NOACA’s not-to-be-exceeded federal share (funding cap) for the project. The project sponsor must agree, in writing, that it will abide by the funding cap, contingent upon special circumstances.

Upon receipt of funding cap agreements, the RTIS staff will develop a list of projects to be programmed and
will submit it to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Planning and Programming Committee and Board for approval. Following Board approval, a project sponsor will receive a resolution that the project is amended to NOACA’s TIP.

**TIP Amendment Guidance**

The TIP is usually amended on a quarterly cycle. By July 1 of each State Fiscal Year NOACA will publish a schedule of TIP Amendment dates. This schedule will be developed in coordination with ODOT to coincide with the STIP amendment schedule. (Note that the schedule for the proposed projects may vary, depending on the source of funding. The decision on when to program a project is contingent upon:

- NOACA’s current financial commitment to projects already on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- The source of federal funds requested by the project sponsor
- Programming priorities as determined by the NOACA Governing Board of Directors
- The status of the federal funding accounts
  - Example: If a federal account balance is low, programming may be delayed.
- The project schedule
- The planning status of the project.

**D. Lockdown List**

**Lockdown List Requirements**

To be selected for the lockdown year, a project sponsor:

- Must provide evidence that the final plan package is ready for submittal
- Must agree in writing to a not-to-be-exceeded federal funding amount
- Must agree in writing to encumber funds within a specific quarter of a state fiscal year.

Staff develops the draft lockdown list for RTIS Planning and Programming Committee and Board approval.

**Lockdown List Guidance**

In developing the draft lockdown list, staff will use county targets as guidance. The targets are based on each county’s relative share of the region’s population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Percentage Share</th>
<th>2000 Census Population**</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cuyahoga</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>1,393,978</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geauga</td>
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<td>Lake</td>
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<td>Lorain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medina</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>2,148,143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regional Transportation Investment Policy

V. Financial Management and Other Policies

A. Project Funding Limit

In developing the lockdown list, the RTIS staff and Planning and Programming Committee will work to ensure that no single project will adversely impact other ready projects. The Finance and Audit Committee may recommend the following regarding projects whose cost is greater than 25 percent of the annual federal fund allocation:

- Financing a portion of the cost through the State Infrastructure Bank to be repaid with future allocations of NOACA federal funds.
- Sponsor financing of a portion of the cost of a project. The sponsor would be paid back with future allocations of NOACA federal funds.

B. Project Cost Increases

By agreeing to the not-to-be-exceeded funding amount for their project, project sponsors are acknowledging their firm commitment to helping manage project cost increases. Because unforeseen events can occur, a project sponsor may petition the RTIS Finance and Audit Committee for additional funds. The RTIS Planning and Programming Committee may be requested to will investigate technical the causes of the cost increases. The RTIS Finance and Audit Committee may:

1. Deny the request
2. Request additional local funds be used for the project
3. Reduce future NOACA commitments to the project sponsor by the amount of the request
4. Reschedule the project
5. Accept the full request
6. Partially accept the request

Staff will retain records of project cost increases by project sponsor and project type. To help manage potential cost increases, in the development of the lockdown list NOACA will set aside 10 percent annually. If these funds are unused near the end of the fiscal year, the RTIS Finance and Audit Committee may select an appropriate project scheduled for the next fiscal year, or the RTIS may recommend to carry over the federal funds to the meet next fiscal year obligations.

C. Management of Delayed or Abandoned Projects

Through coordination efforts, projects may be dropped from the TIP due to direct input from sponsors. NOACA requires cancellations be in writing from the project sponsor. The Governing Board of Directors will be informed of any project cancellations. (These project cancellations may result from resolutions that rescind legislation (cooperative agreements), sponsors deciding not to prepare programming materials or hire consultants, or decisions to perform work without federal funds).

Annually, NOACA reviews the status of projects on the TIP. Sponsors must demonstrate that the project is being advanced for construction, and that funds will be encumbered near the project’s scheduled time.

If a project is not advancing, and it appears unlikely that it will be able to encumber funds within a reasonable time, the RTIS Board of Directors may remove the project from the TIP until the project begins to move forward again. (The project will remain on the Transportation Plan).
D. Right of Way, Preliminary Engineering and Utility Rearrangements

Generally, NOACA controlled federal funds may not be used for project-level preliminary engineering. An urban core community may request federal-aid funds for preliminary engineering. At the time of request, the project will be reviewed by the RTIS Planning and Programming Committee, which will then provide a recommendation to the TAC Board of Directors.

Project sponsors may request funds for right of way (ROW) for a NOACA funded project. When the cost of right-of-way is greater than $50,000, NOACA will pay 50 percent of the cost above $50,000. NOACA will not pay for right-of-way costing $50,000 or less. If NOACA funds are used for the ROW phase, NOACA cannot assure that the construction phase will automatically be given program priority the following fiscal year.

A proposed improvement may affect publicly owned utilities in such a way that utility rearrangements are necessary. NOACA considers the costs for these utilities rearrangements to be part of the construction phase where eligible for federal reimbursement is expected, unless the consent legislation or other agreements specify otherwise.

E. Local Public Agency (LPA) Administered projects

ODOT implements a Local Public Agency (LPA) policy permitting local project sponsors to perform project responsibilities in an attempt to streamline certain elements of the project delivery system. NOACA staff will coordinate with ODOT to ensure that any LPA agreements that are entered into with project sponsors using NOACA federal funds accurately reflect Governing Board of Directors’ policies.

F. TIP Monitoring Reports

NOACA staff will develop a monthly TIP project status report for use by NOACA committees and the Board. The report will contain information regarding the status of projects for the current fiscal year and other relevant information.

G. Signal Pre-Emption Planning Policy

NOACA strongly encourages regional and countywide signal pre-emption policies that help police, fire and other emergency vehicle response times. Based on existing pre-emption equipment and agreements, NOACA requires 1.) future pre-emption systems in Cuyahoga and Medina Counties be sound activated, and 2.) future pre-emption systems in Lake County be light activated.

Requests for new traffic signaling systems must be coordinated with the agency responsible for public transit in the project study area to help ensure that the system is capable of signal priority for public transit vehicles in a transit corridor.
H. Expedited Plan and TIP Amendments

As previously noted, the Plan and TIP are amended according to a published schedule. However, the Plan and TIP may be amended outside the published schedule in the case of expedited projects. Expedited projects are defined as those projects necessary for the safety of the traveling public, projects of significant economic impact, or projects that are inconsistent with federal or state law or regulation. In all cases the burden of proof rests with the project sponsor.

Expedited projects are reviewed by NOACA committees and recommendations are made to the Governing Board of Directors.

I. Technical TIP Amendments

The TIP may be amended at any time without Board approval for clerical errors, bookkeeping, line-item project descriptions and other non-policy reasons that do not impact policy implementation or funding balances. The Board of Directors will be informed of any clerical TIP amendments.