

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS CY2026 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

**Transit Council
August 15, 2025**

ACTION REQUESTED

No action is requested. This item is for presentation and discussion.

PREVIOUS ACTION

No previous action.

BACKGROUND

- NOACA's Board updates its Legislative Agenda each December
 - Guides NOACA's government affairs work at the federal and state levels
 - Basis for specific policy/funding goals throughout the year



STATE PRIORITIES

State Priorities

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

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

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



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OHIO 2026-2027 BIENNIAL TRANSPORTATION BUDGET

- Signed into law on March 31
- NOACA testimonies supported:
 - Increase transit funding: \$185M/year (OH Transit Needs Study) ✗
 - Long-term dedicated source transit funding/reflecting local investment ✗
 - Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership Program funding ✓

FEDERAL PRIORITIES

Federal Priorities

1

Strengthen the MPO's local control of core transportation programs

NOACA advocates that Congress should both revise the federal funding formula to create a more equitable distribution of funds to local communities and strengthen and expand local control to metropolitan planning organizations by allocating more money directly to regional/local authorities for core planning programs.

This would include the Surface Transportation Program, Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement Program, and the Transportation Alternatives Program. Directly allocating funding to MPOs and local communities would create a more predictable revenue stream for locally implemented priorities of air quality, improvement in mobility, and investments in economic growth. Direct allocation would also facilitate the ability of local communities to precisely define their funding priorities such as funding for multimodal transportation strategies and funding for transit.

2

Promote asset management as a funding priority

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

3

Incorporate safety, sustainability, multimodalism in planning & funding

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

A specific focus should be to include public transit, passenger rail, hyperloop, and bicycle/pedestrian funding programs.

Working to Achieve NOACA's Vision:

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

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FY26 THUD APPROPRIATIONS - HOUSE

- **July 14: House Appropriations Committee approved (35-28) HR 4522**
 - Total transit funding: \$19.2B (\$1.7B or 8.3% below FY25)
 - Cuts CIG funding (56.5% below FY25)
 - No added funding beyond IIJA authorized levels for Bus & Bus Facilities and Low-No Emission discretionary grants
 - Includes \$96M for public transit earmarks

FY26 THUD APPROPRIATIONS -- SENATE

July 24: Senate Appropriations Committee approved (27-1) nearly full funding (\$21.1B) per IJA

- Increases funding \$203M (1%) over FY25; \$1.94B over House
- \$3.5B for CIG: below FY25 but higher than House bill
- \$58.9M for congressionally directed spending (CDS)
- Additional funding for events: FIFA, Olympics
- 100% federal share for 5310 and 5311 grants

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

- **IIJA expires Sept. 2026**
- **Congress already holding hearings on next reauthorization**
 - House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee (T&I)
 - Senate Environment & Public Works Committee (EPW)
 - NOACA responded to request for priorities in May
- **U.S. DOT issued request for priorities, due Aug. 20 -- NOACA will respond**

NOACA PRIORITIES SUBMITTED

- MPOs becoming direct recipients for certain federal funds
- Shifting some discretionary funding to formula funding, with suballocation to MPOs
- Stabilize Highway Trust Fund & ensure transit is included
- Asset management over expansion
- Safety, sustainability, & multimodalism in planning & funding
- Support passenger rail
- Increase planning funds
- Reduce local match for federal transportation programs

NOACA FUNDING RESOURCES WEBPAGE

A screenshot of the NOACA website's 'Funding Resources' page. The page features a dark blue header with the NOACA logo and navigation links. A yellow starburst graphic with the word 'NEW' is overlaid on the right side of the page. The main content area includes a list of funding sources and a section for regional strategy.

NOACA
Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency

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NEW

Funding Resources

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Below is a list of funding programs available to entities within the NOACA region that are related to NOACA's core planning areas – transportation, infrastructure, environment, climate, and economic development. Please note that NOACA is not the main contact for some of these programs, and questions should be directed to the agency who is responsible for managing each program. If you see errors or know of additional programs, please contact us at govaffairs@mpo.noaca.org or 216-241-2414 ext. 275.

Funding Sources

- NOACA programs for Northeast Ohio Communities >
- Federal Economic Development Assistance - continuously available >
- State Funding Programs >
- Currently Available Funding Opportunities >

NOACA Regional Strategy to Coordinate Funding Opportunities: Bringing IIJA Transportation Grant Dollars to Northeast Ohio

Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)/Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) reauthorized the nation's

NEXT STEPS

- **NOACA will review Legislative Agenda at upcoming meetings of BAC/CAC/RAC/ELAC and External Affairs Committee**
- **Input from Councils and Committees will inform any potential updates for the CY2026 Legislative Agenda**
- **Board will be asked to adopt next year's Legislative Agenda at December Board meeting**
- **NOACA will continue to advocate for transit in funding and authorization bills at federal & state levels**
- **NOACA will continue to support discretionary funding applications**

DISCUSSION





NOACA

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency

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.