



External Affairs Committee Meeting

October 10, 2025, 8:30 a.m.

NOACA Offices, 1299 Superior Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44114

RSVP to 216-241-2414 ext. 282
or boardliaison@mpo.noaca.org

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.



**NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY
MEMORANDUM**

TO: External Affairs Committee Members
Bishara Addison, Director, Workforce Innovation, Fund for Our Economic Future*
Ferzan M. Ahmed, P.E., Executive Director, Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure
Commission*
Larry Antoskiewicz, Mayor, City of North Royalton
Justin Bibb, Mayor, City of Cleveland
Jack Bradley, Mayor, City of Lorain
Tony Cuda, Mayor, City of Cleveland Heights
Timothy DeGeeter, Mayor, City of Parma
Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, CEO, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
James W. Dvorak, Commissioner, Geauga County
Aaron M. Harrison, Commissioner, Medina County
Michael J. Houser, Council Member, District 10, Cuyahoga County
Paul Koomar, Board President, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority
Valarie McCall, Founder & Chief Executive, Valarie McCall Consulting Agency*
Matt Moss, Senior Strategist for Transit and Mobility, City of Cleveland
Marvin L. Ranaldson, Planner II, Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates*
Richard Regovich, Commissioner, Lake County
Jeff Riddell, Commissioner, Lorain County
Chris Ronayne, County Executive, Cuyahoga County
Timothy Snyder, Chairman, Burton Township Board of Zoning Appeals*

*Ex Officio Member

FROM: Stephanie Howse-Jones, Chair
Council Member, Ward 7, City of Cleveland

DATE: October 3, 2025

RE: External Affairs Committee

Attached please find materials for the External Affairs Committee meeting on **Friday, October 10, 2025, from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. at NOACA's Offices, 1299 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio.**

Please note that in addition to the members listed above, any interested Board members are welcome to attend. Notice of this meeting has been publicly posted, and major public media has been notified.



Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency
Friday, October 10, 2025
8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

The public can view the meeting live at: youtube.com/live/mnQC9VagJ-s?feature=share

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

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Next Meeting: **TBD, 2026**

NOACA Offices, 1299 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio



NOACA External Affairs Committee

Meeting Minutes

July 11, 2025

NOACA Offices

Present: Please see the attached attendance record.

Mayor Jack Bradley, serving as Chair in the absence of the Committee Chair, convened the meeting at 8:37 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Ms. Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 11, 2025. Mr. Andy Haupt seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

Advisory Committee Updates

The External Affairs Committee received updates on the advisory council meetings that took place in June 2025.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

No public comments were made at this meeting.

Executive Director's Report

Director Grace Gallucci reported on the following:

- Boardroom Technology Update
 - Aging components that required specialized maintenance were replaced with modern, scalable systems. The upgrades ensure seamless integration with existing technology and support future expansion needs.
- Communications and Outreach
 - The 2025 Commuter Choice Awards Challenge recognizes and rewards employers who promote environmentally friendly commuting options. Participants gain recognition as champions of sustainable transportation and contribute to community impact by supporting regional efforts to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. Register by July 30. For more information, visit noaca.org.
- Announcements
 - Nominations for the 2025 Walter F. Ehrnfelt, Jr. Award for Outstanding Regional Contribution are due by August 15 for regional leaders who demonstrate outstanding leadership skills and exemplify collaborative and cooperative qualities. For more details, visit www.noaca.org/EhrnfeltAward.
 - The NOACA 2025 Annual Meeting will be held at the Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland on October 3, 2025, 12-2 p.m.
 - Ms. Jacqueline Muhammad, who served as the alternate for Ms. Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, passed away on June 19, 2025.

Action Items

No action items were presented at this meeting.

Presentation/Discussion Items

Government Affairs Report

Ms. Bev Burtzloff provided an overview of recent developments at the federal and state levels of government and summarized NOACA's advocacy efforts over the past three months since the previous meeting.

Ms. Burtzloff presented information on the following:

- Federal Updates
 - Federal Budget Reconciliation
 - Surface Transportation Reauthorization
 - NOACA Reauthorization Priorities
 - Funding advocacy / IIJA
 - NOACA's Funding Resources Webpage
 - Other Recent Advocacy
 - Other Federal Initiatives
- State Updates
 - Ohio 2026–2027 Biennial Operating Budget
 - General Assembly Adopted Budget
 - Gov. DeWine's Line-item Vetoes
 - Speed Limit Initiative
 - Draft Speed Limit Proposals

Public Affairs Report

Ms. Danielle Render stated that the public affairs report covers NOACA's fiscal year 2025 and highlights efforts related to public engagement, communication, marketing, and information dissemination. These efforts align closely with the work outlined in NOACA's vision statement. She explained that the NOACA Public Affairs Division functions as the conveyor of information, contacts, and insights to both external and internal audiences. The division continually works to enhance public understanding of the agency. All of its efforts are centered on public awareness, stakeholder engagement, and building partnerships. Ms. Render also noted that NOACA is actively working to elevate its presence and mission by connecting the agency's priorities to the region through clearly defined focus areas.

Ms. Render presented information on the following

- External Affairs Committee Priorities – 2025
- Public Affairs Strategies
- Commendations as part of the Federal Highway Administration Certification Review
- FY 2025 Result Summary
- Brand Management
 - Brand awareness/identity
 - New Logo
 - Brand promotions
 - Campaign Marketing Drivers
 - Evergreen Messaging
 - Return on Marketing Investment (ROMI)
- Paid Advertisements
 - Billboards

- Audience Conversion Increased
- TV Ads and Segment Spots
 - 2024 Paris Olympics
 - Go Carbon-Free Challenge
 - "NOACA Loves Transit" campaign
- Radio ads
- Air Quality Education, Outreach, and Planning
 - Air Quality Advisories
 - Commuter Choice Awards
 - Go Car(bon) Free Challenges
 - No Idling Campaign
- Transportation Planning
- Public Involvement and Outreach
 - Effective Tools of Engagement
 - External Affairs Forums
 - Traveling Kiosks
 - Crowd Gauging Platform
 - Upcoming Engagements

Mr. Tom Jordan asked how much money NOACA spends on the program.

Ms. Render stated that NOACA collectively spent \$108,000 on eight campaigns, achieving a 400% return on investment. She added that if NOACA had considered the funds received as transactional expenses related to the marketing investment, the return would have exceeded 29,000%.

Mr. Jordan asked about the goal of the engagement.

Ms. Render explained that the goal of the engagement for something like the challenges is participation. Staff saw an increase in the number of people taking part in the challenges. However, the broader goal, especially with ongoing efforts, is to build brand awareness for NOACA and highlight its impact on the community. Staff want people to understand and engage with the work NOACA does, which is mission-driven and focused on improving their communities. Many people are not familiar with NOACA, and the name is not widely recognized. Funding typically goes through stakeholders—those who already do business with the agency. The goal is to expand outreach and connect with a broader audience so more people can see the larger impact NOACA has on the region.

Director Gallucci stated that NOACA conducted a Household Travel Survey over the past year. The agency's consultant initially recommended that staff ask ODOT for permission to use its name and logo when distributing the survey, noting that many people are unfamiliar with NOACA and might be more likely to respond if the survey appeared to come from a more recognizable source. This highlights the challenge NOACA faces with brand recognition. As a result, staff had difficulty getting people to participate and respond—something that is critical for federally required public engagement. Director Gallucci emphasized the importance of being more inclusive and deliberate in outreach efforts, but noted that staff still face challenges.

Ms. McCall said she wanted to commend NOACA, recalling a time when meeting discussions centered around the lack of marketing and limited impressions. She noted that it was encouraging to now see strong data and the various initiatives currently underway. She expressed appreciation for the efforts of NOACA staff and acknowledged the progress made. Ms. McCall also pointed out opportunities for further expansion, particularly by increasing outreach to communities through

resources like the kiosks located throughout the city of Cleveland. She suggested these kiosks could serve as effective options for engagement. Additionally, she encouraged staff to find ways to collaborate with local transit agencies, such as RTA and Laketran, which often seek positive messaging for their advertisements. She saw this as another potential avenue for expanding NOACA's reach. Reflecting on her experience as moderator for the External Affairs Forum, Ms. McCall said the recent webinar was well attended and generated a significant number of questions. She observed that public interest in neighborhood projects is growing, a point that became clear during the webinar. She encouraged others to watch the recording if they had not yet done so. Ms. McCall reiterated her praise for NOACA's branding efforts, acknowledging how difficult this type of work can be. She likened the progress to dropping something in a bucket that continues to ripple outward. She encouraged staff to keep up the momentum, to explore opportunities within the budget, and noted that the return on investment was substantial given the relatively small cost. She advocated for considering a slight budget increase to further build on the success and visibility already achieved.

Director Gallucci referred back to the Household Travel Survey. She explained that NOACA was unable to gather the minimum number of responses needed for a representative sample based on the initial survey distribution. As a result, NOACA had to delay the project and send the survey out a second time to obtain sufficient responses, which ultimately increased costs. Director Gallucci emphasized that increasing public awareness of NOACA can lead to financial benefits in the long run, as improved engagement can help avoid such additional expenses.

Mr. Jordan stated that encouraging participation in meetings is very helpful. He noted that sometimes, even if a public meeting is held in a prominent location, only a few people may attend. He emphasized that even if the public is not always aware that NOACA helped fund a transportation improvement project, it is important that stakeholders, such as cities, counties, and other partners, are recognized as part of those efforts. He reiterated that promoting public participation remains valuable and worthwhile.

Mr. Haupt acknowledged that outreach to constituents, to both gather input and share information about the organization, is important for any organization. He posed a question regarding the nature of the feedback received through various outreach methods. While some formats, such as billboards, do not allow for direct feedback, he asked whether social media platforms used by NOACA have comments enabled and, if so, whether any data is collected on the nature of that feedback—positive, negative, or otherwise. He noted that while enabling comments can be risky, it also offers an opportunity to gauge public engagement.

Ms. Render stated that what is considered a positive outcome for NOACA is the number of clicks received. She explained that 1.7 million clicks demonstrated significant interest. Once that interest is captured, the next question becomes: will that interest lead to action? Will people share content? What level of engagement follows? She noted that staff regularly post content daily and, while some negative comments are expected, engagement still occurs. NOACA has also built strong partnerships and developed a base of organic traffic visiting the website. This is important because those visitors are often unfamiliar with the agency. She emphasized the importance of analyzing these conversions—looking at website visits and platform interactions to determine whether the messaging is cohesive and effective. Ms. Render explained that success is measured by how the audience responds and converts, and this is why she wanted to focus on it. She acknowledged the existence of negative comments but underscored the value of the work NOACA does. More individuals are participating in forums, joining challenges, and engaging with media partners. She cited examples like the Cleveland Charge and Cleveland Monsters, which have reached out to NOACA. She added that people are seeing NOACA billboards and asking, "Who is NOACA?" She frequently receives calls from individuals who say they heard about

NOACA on the radio and want to learn more. While responding to those inquiries can be time-consuming, she sees it as a meaningful first step in audience engagement. Helping people understand who NOACA is and where to find more information is a sign of progress and a form of success.

Ms. India Birdsong Terry thanked staff for the information and commented that it was nice to see the digital marketing efforts currently underway. She noted that digital outreach is always helpful. She then asked whether there have been ongoing discussions about stratifying the marketing efforts by generation. She emphasized that generational targeting is often the most effective way to reach new and untapped markets. Acknowledging that NOACA does not have thousands of staff members, she expressed curiosity about how NOACA plans to bridge that gap—especially with specific groups such as older adults, individuals with disabilities, and new professionals. Ms. Terry also asked whether NOACA has considered outreach efforts within colleges and universities. She noted that, as a planning organization, NOACA risks missing early brand recognition if it is not present in the educational sector. She requested staff's thoughts on both generational outreach and engagement with academic institutions.

Ms. Render explained that one of the key things NOACA staff focuses on is analyzing trends and demographics across all NOACA's work. Digital platforms make it easier to visualize and share this information, which supports intentional marketing strategies. While NOACA operates with limited funds, the aim is always to maximize impact. Through the Long Range Plan, TIP, and Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, NOACA staff have used demographic data to guide communication and outreach. From an educational standpoint, most public meetings have been held at educational institutions. Messaging and materials are tailored to reflect the communities being reached. In fiscal year 2026, NOACA staff will work on refining the use of existing data and identifying next steps. A major focus will be face-to-face engagement, bringing NOACA's name and work directly into communities. She stated that is NOACA's responsibility not only to build awareness through digital platforms but to show up where people are. That is the direction of NOACA's strategy moving forward.

Ms. Annie Pease expressed appreciation for the update and noted that seeing some of the digital ads was particularly interesting. She suggested that it would be helpful for future External Affairs updates to break out the different audiences NOACA serves. While she acknowledged the emphasis on public audiences, she especially appreciated the example of the Household Travel Survey. Ms. Pease added that there is a lot of valuable information in the update and emphasized that NOACA has a variety of audiences. She recommended highlighting how this strategy addresses each of those distinct groups.

Ms. Render responded that she would be happy to provide that and noted that NOACA has compiled data that reflects the demographics collected so far. She explained that this information helps NOACA staff understand which audiences are engaging with different types of content. For example, social media posts about challenges tend to draw a certain age group, while transit-related messaging may reach others. When recruiting volunteers for bike counts, NOACA staff know what those demographics typically look like. Ms. Render said NOACA would be glad to share this data and, as future marketing strategies are planned, will show how those efforts align with and serve different audiences.

Ms. Terry stated that it might be worth considering how NOACA can show not only the Board, but also the broader community, the outcomes of projects after funding has been delivered. She noted that, during meetings, there is typically discussion about what will be funded and where the money is going, but the conversation often stops there. While data related to safety, accidents, and other

secondary metrics are reviewed, she felt that this sometimes becomes a "check-the-box" exercise.

Ms. Terry emphasized that the "heart behind the data" can often be missing when the focus remains solely on numbers. That human element, she suggested, may be what creates a stronger connection with the community. She acknowledged that she is not a marketing expert but believed that this emotional connection could resonate more with the public. She compared NOACA's role to that of a bank—functional but not always engaging. However, when NOACA communicates the real-life community benefits enabled by its funding, such as infrastructure improvements or safety initiatives, it could serve as a compelling message to help people better understand NOACA's mission and view it as a community-centered agency. She suggested this approach, one that moves beyond financial figures to highlight meaningful outcomes, be considered in the future.

Ms. Render responded that she appreciated Ms. Terry's comment and agreed that the real impact lies in the community outcomes of NOACA's work.

Ms. Pease asked whether NOACA tracks participation in its public challenges. She referenced several digital ads related to the Gohio Commute Challenges and inquired about what participation looks like in those campaigns and how the numbers compare year over year.

Ms. Render replied that she did not have that data immediately available, but confirmed that NOACA does track those metrics and would be able to provide them.

Director Gallucci referenced the safety-related billboards, noting that NOACA had conducted an important safety campaign and, at the time, NOACA staff were exploring ways to reach a broader audience. The campaign had focused on the issue of speed and how increased speed contributes to crashes and fatalities. She added that NOACA would also be examining other aspects of safety in future initiatives.

Mayor Bradley expressed support for the idea of providing data on the benefits of projects to the community. He shared an example from the City of Lorain, where bike lanes had been installed on West Erie Avenue. Initially, he received numerous complaints, with residents questioning the purpose and suggesting that no one would use them. However, during budget discussions, the Clerk of Courts mentioned a noticeable drop in traffic fines issued on West Erie Avenue. According to the Clerk, the presence of the bike lanes forced drivers to slow down, as they could no longer pass other vehicles by crossing into the opposite lane. As a result, speeds decreased, and so did traffic violations. Mayor Bradley emphasized the importance of communicating these kinds of community benefits to the public. He stated that when public funds are used to encourage more biking and walking, there are real, measurable improvements, such as reduced traffic fatalities and fewer accidents. He added that this was a valuable example and suggested that NOACA staff consider incorporating similar success stories into future campaigns. Highlighting the positive outcomes of local investments, he said, could help the public better understand the impact and value of NOACA's work in their communities.

Reports/Updates

No reports or updates were presented at this meeting.

Old Business

No old business was discussed at this meeting.

New Business

No new business was discussed at this meeting.

Adjournment

Commissioner Jeff Riddell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 a.m. Mr. Haupt seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

The next regular meeting of the External Affairs Committee will be held on Friday, October 10, 2025, from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. at the NOACA offices.

Note: Additional information on the agenda items can be found on [NOACA's website](#) and [YouTube channel](#)

DRAFT



External Affairs Committee Attendance Record

Meeting Dates	1/31/25	4/11/25	7/11/25	10/10/25
ANTOSKIEWICZ , Larry (Thomas Jordan, Alternate)	X	X	A	
BIBB , Justin (Bonnie Teeuwen, Alternate) (Michael Culp, Alternate on 7/11/25)	A	A	A	
BRADLEY , Jack (Dale Vandersommen, Alternate)	X	A	X	
DEGEETER , Timothy J. (Scott Wangler, Alternate)	X	X	A	
DREYFUSS-WELLS , Kyle (Alternate TBD) (Angela Jones, Alternate on 1/31/25)	X	X	X	
DVORAK , James W. (Andy Haupt, Alternate)	A	A	A	
HARRISON , Aaron M. (Stephen D. Hambley, Alternate) (John Kalas, Alternate on 4/11/25)		A		
HOUSER , Michael J. Joseph Nanni, Alternate	X	A	A	
HOWSE-JONES , Stephanie (Jasmin Santana, Alternate)	X	X		
KOOMAR , Paul (India L. Birdsong Terry, Alternate)	X	X	A	
MERSMANN , Calley (Sarah O'Keeffe, Alternate)	X			
MOSS , Matt (Sarah O'Keeffe, Alternate)		X	A	
REGOVICH , Richard (Robert Fiala, Alternate)	X	X	A	
RIDDELL , Jeff (John Gall, Alternate)	A	A	X	
RONAYNE , Chris (Debbie Berry, Alternate) (Annie Pease, Alternate on 7/11/25)	A	A	A	
SEREN , Kahlil (Eric Zamft, Alternate)	X			
Ex-officio Members/Council Chairs				

Meeting Dates	1/31/25	4/11/25	7/11/25	10/10/25
ADDISON , Bishara (Ryan Aroney, Alternate)		X		
AHMED , Ferzan M. (Charles Cyrill, Alternate)	X		X	
McCALL , Valarie (Kevin S. Schmotzer, Alternate)			X	
SNYDER , Timothy (Eric Hange, Alternate)				
RANALDSON , Marvin (Eric C. Mack, Alternate)		A		

DRAFT



**NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY
M E M O R A N D U M**

TO: NOACA External Affairs Committee
FROM: Grace Gallucci, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
DATE: October 3, 2025
RE: **Advisory Council Updates**

ACTION REQUESTED

No action is requested at this time. This is an informational item.

BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION FOR CURRENT ACTION

The External Affairs Committee evaluates recommendations from its four Councils: Business, Community, Rural and Emerging Leaders. The Councils provide advice and policy recommendations to the External Affairs Committee. Below is a summary of the joint Council meeting on September 26, 2025.

Business, Community, Rural, and Emerging Leaders Advisory Councils

Mr. Marvin Ranaldson chaired the joint meeting on Friday, September 26, 2025.

The Councils were provided with information on the following:

- Street Supplies Program
- Government Affairs Report
- Second Quarter SFY 2026 Project Planning Reviews (PPR)
 - Public Infrastructure Improvements in Brook Park (CUY SR 291-02.90)

The next BAC, CAC, RAC, and ELAC meeting will be held on Friday, December 5, 2025, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact.

CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS

Updates of the joint Council meeting will continue to be provided to the External Affairs Committee.

GG:eb:bw



**NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY
M E M O R A N D U M**

TO: NOACA External Affairs Committee
FROM: Grace Gallucci, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
DATE: October 3, 2025
RE: **2026 Legislative Agenda**

ACTION REQUESTED

The Committee is asked to consider recommending the 2026 NOACA Legislative Agenda to the Executive Committee for placement on the Board of Directors December 2025 meeting agenda.

BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION FOR CURRENT ACTION

The NOACA Legislative Agenda is a high-level statement of NOACA’s advocacy priorities at the federal and state levels, guiding NOACA’s government affairs activities throughout the year. It is also used to inform audiences of the core values and priorities of NOACA as they relate to state and federal policy. The priorities in the Legislative Agenda reflect the vision, goals, and objectives articulated in NOACA’s [Regional Strategic Plan](#).

Each year at its December meeting, NOACA’s Board of Directors approves NOACA’s Federal and State Legislative Agenda for the upcoming year. NOACA staff will present proposals for updating the 2025 Legislative Agenda, including updates discussed at the September 26 meeting of the Business, Community, Rural, and Emerging Leaders Advisory Councils. NOACA staff will lead Committee members in a discussion of these proposed updates and seek input on the final draft that will go to the Board of Directors for adoption at their December 12, 2025, meeting.

The current federal surface transportation reauthorization law, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), is set to expire in September 2026. Congress is seeking input from regions and communities as they consider new reauthorization legislation. With this in mind, staff will ask the Committee whether they would like to update the federal priorities in NOACA’s Legislative Agenda accordingly. Suggestions the Committee may want to consider include:

- Increase planning funds to meet federal planning requirements and ensure successful project implementation
- Shift some discretionary funding to suballocated formula funding to advance priority projects in metropolitan planning organizations’ (MPOs) Long Range Plans (LRPs)
- Reduce local match for federal transportation programs
- Streamline environmental review and permitting to accelerate delivery without compromising environmental protection
- Stabilize Highway Trust Fund (HTF) to continue the “user pays” principle in transportation funding

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact.

CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS

NOACA will incorporate Committee members' recommendations into a final draft that will be presented to the Board of Directors at their December meeting for formal adoption. NOACA staff will continue to provide quarterly Government Affairs updates to the Committee on steps taken to implement the Legislative Agenda.

GG:EB:bb

Attachment 1: 2025 NOACA Federal and State Legislative Agenda



NOACA
Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency

2025 Federal & State Legislative Agenda



The Legislative Agenda represents consensus-driven principles that have been approved by NOACA's 48-member Board of Directors in Northeast Ohio. It is intended to guide policy analysis and advocacy on infrastructure issues. While NOACA's principles endure, the national conversation and agenda on transportation infrastructure will change. In this way, NOACA can assist public officials by advocating emerging issues with a non-partisan view.

Federal Priorities

1

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.

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



About NOACA

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

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

About Our Agenda

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) Board of Directors and staff are proud to present the 2024 Federal and State Legislative Agenda.

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

The basis for these requests is NOACA's Long-Range Plan, *eNEO2050: An Equitable Future for Northeast Ohio*. This plan directs equitable investment in all forms of transportation over the next 30 years. With the year 2050 as the planning horizon, NOACA will invest approximately \$13.2 billion in the region's transportation over the life of the plan.

The NOACA Vision Statement is a fundamental touchstone that will be applied to regional programs, priorities, and projects. It is critical that we develop relationships with our delegation and stakeholders. We look forward to working with you and greatly appreciate your support.



NOACA

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)

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**NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY
M E M O R A N D U M**

TO: NOACA External Affairs Committee
FROM: Grace Gallucci, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
DATE: October 3, 2025
RE: **Public Affairs Report**

ACTION REQUESTED

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

BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION FOR CURRENT ACTION

In alignment with the strategic priorities approved for FY2025, the Division of Public Affairs continued to support the External Affairs Committee through targeted efforts in brand management, public engagement, and community awareness.

Over the course of the fiscal year, NOACA's Public Affairs team advanced its mission by refining its communications strategy, strengthening stakeholder relationships, and promoting the agency's visibility across the region. Through a clear organizational structure and dedicated leadership, the division ensured that all outreach and advocacy efforts were consistent, inclusive, and aligned with NOACA's long-term objectives.

FY2025 efforts included a comprehensive focus on:

- Brand Management
 - Increased visibility of NOACA's mission and initiatives through consistent branding across digital and print platforms
 - Development of key messaging and visual standards to reinforce the agency's identity and values
 - Expansion of media partnerships and marketing strategies to amplify NOACA's impact regionally
- Public Engagement
 - Hosted community forums, listening sessions, and stakeholder briefings to foster transparent two-way communication
 - Enhanced digital engagement through social media campaigns, newsletters, and a refreshed online presence
 - Implemented inclusive outreach practices to reach underrepresented and historically underserved populations
- Community Awareness
 - Launched public awareness campaigns to educate Northeast Ohio residents about NOACA's programs, policies, and planning tools, along with accessible materials to broaden community access and understanding.
 - Leveraged media coverage, public speaking engagements, and strategic partnerships to strengthen regional awareness of NOACA's role.

The presentation to the External Affairs Committee will provide an overview of the division's FY2025 accomplishments, including strategies deployed in capacity building, advocacy, media relations, and marketing. These tools not only elevated NOACA's brand recognition but also enhanced its ability to engage meaningfully with the community and stakeholders. An overview of the virtual External Affairs forums will be discussed, along with a request for topic recommendations for FY2026. A follow-up survey will be sent after the meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact.

CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS

NOACA staff will continue to engage Committee members to share information and elicit input and recommendations. Staff will continue to seek guidance and feedback to ensure future efforts are aligned with NOACA's mission, foster greater stakeholder involvement, and deepen the agency's influence throughout the region.



**NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY
M E M O R A N D U M**

TO: NOACA External Affairs Committee
FROM: Grace Gallucci, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
DATE: October 3, 2025
RE: **Government Affairs Report**

ACTION REQUESTED

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

BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION FOR CURRENT ACTION

NOACA staff will lead a discussion regarding recent and upcoming activities carried out by the Government Affairs team, pursuant to the Federal and State Initiatives for Action document, in order to implement NOACA's 2025 Legislative Agenda. In particular, staff will discuss:

- NOACA's recommendations for reauthorization of federal surface transportation law, including:
 - Increase direct funding to MPOs – empower local officials
 - Shift some discretionary funding to formula – allow MPOs to fund projects in their Long Range Plans (LRP)
 - Prioritize asset management over expansion
 - Stabilize the Highway Trust Fund, inclusive of transit funding
 - Prioritize safety, sustainability, and multimodalism
 - Fund service improvements for passenger rail
 - Increase planning funds to meet federal requirements
 - Reduce local match
- Federal funding opportunities and recent awards
- Safety/speed limit initiative in Ohio
 - Recent "interested parties" meeting at Statehouse
- Proposed state legislation regulating MPOs
 - Status of HB 445, referred to Local Government Committee
- Passenger rail – strategies to advance passenger rail in NE Ohio
 - Outreach to congressional delegation in coordination with MPOs and advocacy groups across the Great Lakes region requesting additional FRA support for added east-west service through Cleveland
 - Preparing to reapply for the next round of the federal Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program
 - Continued outreach to the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) to support advancement of two corridors: Cleveland-Toledo-Detroit and 3C+D

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact.

CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS

NOACA will continue to provide quarterly government affairs reports and seek to engage Committee members on government funding and policy issues that impact Northeast Ohio.

GG:EB:bb



**NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY
M E M O R A N D U M**

TO: NOACA External Affairs Committee
FROM: Grace Gallucci, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
DATE: October 3, 2025
RE: **Irishtown Bend Project Crowdfunding Campaign**

ACTION REQUESTED

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

BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION FOR CURRENT ACTION

The [Irishtown Bend Slope Stabilization Project](#) is a \$65 million major capital improvement that encompasses the installation of steel bulkheads along a half-mile section of the Cuyahoga River ship channel. The hillside along the Irishtown Bend area of the river was determined to be at high risk of failure due in large part to the significant deterioration of existing bulkheads. The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority is the owner and manager of the project.

The Cuyahoga River serves as a key part of the system of infrastructure that facilitates the movement of goods and materials throughout the region. Given the Irishtown Bend Project's importance to the local economy, the project has received significant funding from NOACA and many other federal, state and local partners. NOACA's support for the project includes \$19.8 million in Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding. In addition, NOACA was awarded \$9.02 million from the US Department of Transportation's (US DOT) Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant program for the Irishtown Bend project. In the application to the USDOT INFRA Program, NOACA committed to raising a portion of the project's required local funding share through an "innovative financing strategy," with crowdfunding identified as the financing method for implementation. Crowdfunding is a method of raising money via an internet-based campaign.

To fulfill the innovative financing obligation of the INFRA Grant agreement with USDOT, NOACA has engaged [InfraShares, Inc.](#) to develop and implement a crowdfunding campaign. InfraShares' proposed approach for the Irishtown Bend campaign is included in Attachment 1. Through this initiative, a crowdfunding model will be used to generate funds for the Irishtown Bend Slope Stabilization project through public-private partnerships (P3s). Potential donors include civic groups, philanthropic organizations, local businesses, and individual community members. The campaign will employ digital marketing through Google ads, social media, targeted email, and monthly newsletters, in addition to community-based engagement through local organizations and forums to achieve its objectives. The net fundraising goal for the crowdfunding campaign, as stated in NOACA's INFRA grant application budget, is \$726,000, with an intended completion date of December 31, 2026.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The cost of the contract with InfraShares is a not-to-exceed amount of \$57,000. This includes a flat fee of \$20,000 that will cover aspects of work needed to develop, deploy, market, and execute the Irishtown Bend Project Crowdfunding Campaign, plus a commission of 5% of the total funds raised. The not-to-exceed amount is a maximum estimate based on the flat fee plus a 5% commission applied to a scenario where the net goal of \$726,000 is achieved.

CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to update the External Affairs Committee on the progress and outcomes of the Irishtown Bend crowdfunding campaign.

GG:AB:LB:EB

Attachment 1: InfraShares Project Approach

Project Approach – Scope of Services

As an operating crowdfunding platform catering to infrastructure P3s, InfraShares offers a comprehensive scope of services aligned with NOACA’s objectives for the project. The InfraShares process begins with project onboarding, where InfraShares works with NOACA to collaboratively define milestones, target contributor profiles, risk mitigation strategies, and integrate the project with NOACA’s public communication efforts. This work is memorialized in a Strategic Plan including deliverables and milestones. We also recommend a community advisory group is engaged to guide campaign messaging and outreach.

Next, legal and financial infrastructure is developed with the formation of an escrow account to aggregate contributions from individuals, simplifying tracking and financial reporting. InfraShares ensures regulatory compliance by conducting Bad Actor Checks on key personnel, facilitating subscription agreements, and opening a compliant escrow account under a three-party agreement.

A detailed campaign package is then prepared, including the Campaign presentation, Contribution Agreement, and education materials such as campaign videos. The narrative emphasizes the economic, environmental, and social benefits of the IB project, such as preserving \$3.5 billion in economic activity, protecting jobs, creating public green spaces, and promoting equitable community development. Disclosure documentation is generated, including audited financial statements if required, alongside a professional slide deck outlining key project features, terms, risks, and expected outcomes.

Platform setup involves building a dedicated campaign page on InfraShares’ platform, integrating backend systems for KYC/AML, user dashboards, payments, and e-signatures, and enabling tools like live Q&A functions and automated notifications. Marketing and outreach efforts target diverse contributor pools, including civic groups, philanthropic organizations, local businesses, and community members. The campaign execution includes digital marketing, SEO, social media, Google Ads, partnerships, email campaigns, webinars, and project updates over a 4–6 month live offering window to reach the \$1 million goal.

Project Approach – Scope of Services

Contributor onboarding is facilitated through account creation, identity verification, and transaction processing. Once the funding goal is met, capital is transferred from escrow to the Project owner's designated account, along with issuing a closing summary and confirmation. Post-contribution support includes ongoing relations through dashboards, regular updates on milestones, and tax documentation. InfraShares ensures continuous regulatory compliance.

Finally, InfraShares monitors and documents campaign metrics, contributor participation, and community engagement, presenting results and strategic insights in a final campaign report. This approach seamlessly integrates InfraShares' technical and regulatory capabilities with NOACA's vision of community crowdfunding for critical infrastructure projects.

Project Approach – Management Plan

InfraShares' project management strategy is specifically designed to address the complexity, regulatory requirements, and stakeholder engagement involved in NOACA's Irishtown Bend Crowdfunding Campaign. Our approach combines structure and flexibility to ensure transparency, performance, and community trust throughout all project phases. The strategy is built upon core principles of clear communication, accountability, flexibility, and continuous improvement. InfraShares commits to maintaining proactive communication with NOACA's Project Manager (PM) and stakeholders to align goals, expectations, and timelines. Transparency will be ensured through comprehensive documentation of activities, deliverables, and engagement metrics. Our team will remain responsive to NOACA's evolving needs and incorporate feedback to optimize campaign effectiveness.

At the beginning of each project phase, we will convene kickoff meetings to review scope, timelines, and communication protocols. A detailed work plan will be developed, based on the strategic work plan developed at the beginning of the project, outlining deliverables, regulatory milestones, and platform deployment dates, with benchmarks informed by similar successful projects. A cloud-based project management platform such as Trello or Asana will be used to track task assignments, timelines, compliance deadlines, and investor workflows. This tool will provide a transparent view for NOACA and will be updated consistently.

Additionally, we will submit monthly progress reports documenting task status, campaign performance metrics, risks, and regulatory updates. Quarterly review meetings will be held to assess campaign outcomes, discuss lessons learned, and make necessary adjustments. Considering that this crowdfunding initiative is part of NOACA's match commitment under a federally funded INFRA grant, we will coordinate the timing of platform deployment and community outreach with NOACA's public communication milestones and provide detailed documentation as needed to support NOACA's grant reporting, audit readiness, and board-level approvals.

The primary risk of the Project being an unsuccessful campaign, InfraShares will expend significant effort upfront to ensure that once the campaign is live there is already significant interest and demand. Furthermore, since our primary compensation is tied to the amount raised we are highly motivated to mitigate that risk.

Project Approach – Marketing and Community Engagement Strategy

InfraShares will spearhead the marketing and community engagement strategy to support NOACA’s crowdfunding campaign for the Irishtown Bend Stabilization Project, with the goal of increasing awareness, attracting a diverse range of contributors, and fostering long-term community support. The marketing approach centers on a compelling narrative that underscores the regional significance of the project, clearly outlines the project benefits, and encourages stakeholders from all backgrounds to participate in shaping the future of Northeast Ohio’s infrastructure.

The campaign’s primary objectives are to elevate public awareness of the project’s economic, environmental, and civic value; educate potential contributors; ensure equitable access to contribution opportunities for a wide audience; and drive campaign performance to help NOACA achieve its \$1 million fundraising target. To reach these objectives, InfraShares will deploy a multi-tiered outreach strategy targeting civic and community leaders, philanthropic and nonprofit organizations, private sector entities in key industries, local business owners, and individual residents, including first-time contributors and those directly impacted by the project.

Core messaging will focus on several central themes: the economic preservation of \$3.5 billion in annual trade and the safeguarding of over 20,000 jobs; the importance of infrastructure resilience for the Cuyahoga River and surrounding communities; the creation of public benefit through a revitalized riverfront and enhanced multimodal access; and the empowerment of local residents to benefit from—essential infrastructure.

InfraShares plans to execute an integrated marketing plan that combines digital and community-based outreach with institutional engagement. Digital marketing will leverage geo-targeted Google Ads, dynamic updates and video storytelling on Facebook and Instagram, professional engagement via LinkedIn, and real-time campaign progress and events on X (Twitter).

Project Approach – Marketing and Community Engagement Strategy (Continued)

Targeted email campaigns and monthly newsletters will provide segmented outreach and consistent updates to stakeholders. Community-based engagement will involve presentations to local organizations, participation in public forums, and the cultivation of ambassador relationships with trusted community leaders. All campaign content—including campaign materials, FAQs, educational videos, user dashboards, and project updates—will be hosted on the InfraShares portal.

To ensure ongoing campaign optimization, performance will be closely monitored and refined using Google Analytics, UTM tracking, SEO tools, and custom KPI dashboards to assess click-through rates, conversions, and contribution activity. These analytics will drive weekly content and advertising adjustments, maximizing engagement and return on investment for the campaign.

In summary, InfraShares' marketing strategy for the Irishtown Bend campaign integrates community-focused storytelling, user communications, and precise digital outreach. This multifaceted approach is designed not only to meet NOACA's capital-raising targets but also to build broad civic engagement, shared ownership, and enduring public trust in the project's outcomes.



TRAVEL OPTIONS FOR NOACA MEETINGS

LOCATION

NOACA is conveniently located in Cleveland's central business district at 1299 Superior Avenue, on the NW corner of Superior and E. 13th Street.

TRANSIT & BICYCLE TRAVEL TO NOACA

NOACA is accessible by transit and bike.

The NOACA office building is situated on several major and minor bus routes. You can plan your transit trip to NOACA by using trip planner tools or with information provided by the region's public transit agencies:

- [GCRTA Trip Planner](#)
- [Geauga County Transit](#)
- [Laketran Trip Planner](#)
- [Lorain County Transit service](#)
- [Medina County Transit](#)

Bikes may be stored and locked at U-racks located directly in front of the building.

PARKING (see map)

The Cathedral Plaza Garage (E. 9th St. and Rockwell Ave.) is currently unavailable due to repairs. The following map shows other parking options. Unfortunately, we are unable to offer reimbursement for these parking lots. Should you have any questions or concerns please let us know.

Parking meters are located along E. 13th Street between Superior and Rockwell Avenues. Please heed parking signs and note any time restrictions. Payment may be made at these meters with quarters, credit card, or by using the ParkMobile mobile device application.

Street parking is also available along Rockwell Avenue, east of E. 13th Street.

TRAVEL ASSISTANCE AND SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION

If you need further assistance with travel to or special accommodation for parking at NOACA, please contact Lindy Burt at 216-241-2414, x. 108.

