



Policy Committee Meeting

October 10, 2025, 10 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: **Policy Committee Members**
Samuel J. Alai, Mayor, Broadview Heights
Larry Antoskiewicz, Mayor, City of North Royalton
Morris Beverage III, Commissioner, Lake County
Justin Bibb, Mayor, City of Cleveland
Annette M. Blackwell, Mayor, City of Maple Heights
Pamela Bobst, Mayor, City of Rocky River
Jack Bradley, Mayor, City of Lorain
Ben Capelle, Chief Executive Officer, Laketran
Meghan George, Mayor, City of Lakewood
David Gutheil, Interim President & CEO, Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority
Aaron M. Harrison, Commissioner, Medina County
Brian Kazy, Council Member, Ward 1, Cleveland City Council
Paul Magovac, Service Director, City of Brunswick
Calley Mersmann, Director, Planning Commission, City of Cleveland
David J. Moore, Commissioner, Lorain County
Matt Moss, Senior Strategist for Transit & Mobility, City of Cleveland
John Picuri, P.E., Deputy Director, ODOT District 12
Jeff Riddell, Commissioner, Lorain County
Chris Ronayne, County Executive, Cuyahoga County
Ralph Spidaleri, Commissioner, Geauga County
Kim Thomas, Mayor, City of Richmond Heights

FROM: Mary Cierebiej, Chair
Executive Director, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission

DATE: October 3, 2025

RE: **Policy Committee**

Attached please find materials for the Policy Committee meeting on **Friday, October 10, 2025, from 10:00 – 11:30 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
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

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

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

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4. Public Comment on Agenda Items	
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9. Old Business	
a. Resolution 2025-040: Compliance with Federal Executive Orders	
i. Equity Subcommittee Dissolution	
ii. NOACA Policy Updates	
10. New Business	
11. Adjourn	

Next Meeting: **TBD, 2026**

NOACA Offices, 1299 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio



NOACA Policy Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 11, 2025
NOACA Offices

Present: Please see the attendance record.

Ms. Mary Cierebiej, Chair of the Policy Committee, convened the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Ms. Annie Pease made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 11, 2025. Mayor Sam Alai seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

Subcommittee Updates

Economic Development Subcommittee

Director Grace Gallucci reported on the following:

- NOACA is making progress toward becoming an Economic Development District (EDD). Staff will continue to keep the Policy Committee informed of developments.
- The Economic Development Subcommittee sent letters to the region's Congressional delegation regarding the potential relocation of NASA headquarters to Cleveland.

Equity Subcommittee

Ms. Cierebiej stated that the Equity Subcommittee meeting previously scheduled for June 27, 2025, was canceled. Additional details are available in the meeting packet.

Director Gallucci stated that NOACA canceled the Equity Subcommittee meeting and has suspended the Subcommittee until further notice. Staff are addressing legal issues related to a federal Executive Order and will present the matter to the Executive Committee and then to the full Board in September.

Mr. Claypool stated that the Executive Order encompasses a broad range of topics, including environmental justice and related issues. He asked what specific actions are being taken in response to those aspects.

Director Gallucci responded that NOACA staff were looking into those areas as part of their ongoing research. She explained that staff were reviewing existing policies, the agency's website, and current programs, and would present recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding any necessary modifications. She noted that, since the Executive Order was issued, NOACA had already made changes to several programs. For example, in the Section 5310 program, the CMAQ program, and the TLCI program, staff revised the evaluation criteria by removing the environmental justice component. Director Gallucci emphasized that NOACA had

taken action where possible on programs currently underway, and that staff continued to conduct a broader review of existing policies and practices.

Mr. Claypool asked if NOACA is going to tag everything that is environmental justice and rename it.

Director Gallucci clarified that, for existing or past reports, NOACA staff would not retroactively tag or rename them. However, she emphasized the importance of revisiting those materials. Any active policies or content currently on the website referencing environmental justice will be reviewed.

Mr. Claypool stated that he would recommend that counsel review the matter to help ensure NOACA avoids any legal issues. He shared that, after doing some preliminary legal research and speaking with a few attorneys, he came across the concept of renaming programs or terminology to make them appear legally compliant. However, both the attorneys he consulted indicated that doing so could be considered fraudulent and therefore inappropriate. He noted that this raised concerns about simply renaming DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) efforts rather than making substantive changes or discontinuing the program if necessary. Mr. Claypool emphasized that he did not believe this was what NOACA was doing but mentioned that he had heard such language from others. He stated that people need to understand the legal implications of such actions and added that NOACA's counsel would be better positioned to speak to the issue in more detail.

Director Gallucci stated that anything NOACA staff had been considering in terms of renaming—such as changing "environmental justice" to "areas of persistent poverty"—was specifically based on a directive from the Federal Government.

Ms. Cierebiej asked Mayor Annette Blackwell, Chair of the Equity Subcommittee, if she wished to make any statements.

Mayor Blackwell stated that she was not surprised to be notified regarding the cancellation of the Equity Subcommittee, as she had anticipated it based on the Policy Committee's previous discussion. She affirmed her continued commitment to appropriate efforts—those that lift people out of poverty and level the playing field—and expressed that, regardless of the form those efforts take, she remains fully committed.

Commissioner Jeff Riddell stated that this conversation began during the Board meeting at Lorain County Community College and has remained a recurring topic in several areas. As someone who grew up in the 1970s, he remarked that he had lived through that era and felt it was important to echo earlier comments. He noted that while the Board may have decided not to actively promote or leverage certain initiatives, it remained strongly committed—and NOACA should remain committed—to avoiding discrimination against specific demographic groups and to refrain from any actions that could be perceived as unfair. Commissioner Riddell added that, in essence, the focus had shifted from proactive promotion to ensuring no harm, and he believed the organization could still achieve its goals given its size and leadership.

In response to Commissioner Riddell, Director Gallucci noted that it was NOACA's goal. She thanked Commissioner Riddell for his comments.

Mr. Claypool stated that he fully agreed that NOACA should strive to do the appropriate thing; however, he emphasized the importance of remembering that NOACA is not a welfare organization. He noted that NOACA is fundamentally a transportation agency focused on roads and bridges. He added that the Board could confidently defend the community projects it supports

based on merit, which may include certain equity-related criteria, but the agency's primary mission remains infrastructure. Mr. Claypool stated that addressing broader social issues across the region is the responsibility of other organizations, not NOACA.

Mayor Blackwell stated that she found Mr. Claypool's comments to be offensive. She emphasized that word choice carries consequences and noted that terms such as "welfare" and "social" are provocative and do not accurately reflect the work NOACA performs. She stressed that NOACA's efforts are meaningful, impactful, and important, that they help to equalize opportunities across communities. Mayor Blackwell stated that while she believes in the value of the agency's mission, she was personally offended by Mr. Claypool's use of the term "welfare."

Public Comments on Agenda Items

No public comments were made at this meeting.

Executive Director's Report

Director Gallucci reported that NOACA has upgraded the audio equipment in the boardroom, as the previous system had reached the end of its useful life. Despite the upgrade, some technical issues persisted. She asked the Committee for patience as staff works to synchronize and fully activate all microphones.

Action Items

Cleveland-Elyria Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP)

Director Gallucci stated that the region received a \$1 million grant from the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Program because the Cleveland Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is one of the 67 largest MSAs in the country. As a result, the region was automatically awarded the grant. NOACA staff prepared the grant application in partnership with the City of Cleveland, which is the seat of the MSA. Over the past two years, significant activity has taken place under this grant. NOACA served as the lead author of the Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP), with substantial participation from the City of Cleveland and other regional partners. At this meeting, the Committee would be a discussing the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP), which is a required grant deliverable due in December.

Mr. Joe MacDonald stated that the action before the Policy Committee was to recommend the Cleveland-Elyria Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) to the Executive Committee for placement on the September 2025 Board of Directors agenda. He noted that the Policy Committee had previously reviewed the 2022 Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and approved the regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets at its meeting on October 11, 2024. The Board of Directors subsequently approved those targets at its December meeting.

Ms. Sarah O'Keeffe presented information on the following:

- Overview
 - Priority Climate Action Plan – Approved by U.S. EPA: March 7, 2024
 - Comprehensive Action Plan – Due: December 1, 2025
 - Status Report – Due: July 2027
- CCAP Key Messages
- CCAP – Building off the PCAP
- CCAP Required Elements
- 2022 GHG Emissions by Sector
- 2022 GHG Emissions by County

- GHG Emissions Projections
- Emissions Reduction Targets
- “Go Big” Strategies
- Emissions Reduction Measures
- Emissions Reductions by Sector
- Air Quality Benefits of CCAP Measures
- Authority to Implement Measures
- Workforce Planning Analysis
- CCAP Implementation Playbook

Mr. MacDonald noted there is no financial impact, as the grant was approved and the agreement was signed two years ago, in July 2023. As part of the next steps, NOACA will hold a public comment period on the CCAP from July 15 through August 29. A virtual public engagement session is scheduled for mid-August. Mr. MacDonald emphasized that this was the first time the draft CCAP was being shared publicly. He noted that the comment and review period is intentionally long, providing ample opportunity for the public to offer feedback, ask questions, and raise concerns. He stressed that the draft does not need to be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) until December 1, 2025, allowing sufficient time to consider input and make necessary revisions. The City of Cleveland and NOACA will coordinate with a design firm to produce refined, designed drafts of the CCAP and the Implementation Playbook. This process will allow time to fully polish the documents before final submission. Mr. MacDonald added that USEPA currently has the draft document and is conducting an initial review; a second review will occur prior to final submittal. Pending Board approval, NOACA and the City of Cleveland will finalize and submit the CCAP to USEPA by December 1, 2025, as required under NOACA’s agreement with the agency.

Ms. Cierebiej thanked Ms. O’Keeffe and Mr. MacDonald for preparing and sharing the information with the Committee.

Mayor Blackwell requested clarification from Ms. O’Keeffe on the meaning of no- and low-regret measures listed in the CCAP implementation playbook.

Ms. O’Keeffe explained that no- and low-regret measures are like low-hanging fruit—actions communities can take that have a positive impact without causing harm. She said a no-regret action might have no financial cost, but not all such actions are financial; they can vary in type.

Mayor Blackwell asked if it was only related to the financial impact.

Ms. O’Keeffe said no, it is not related only to the financial impact. That is just an example.

Mayor Blackwell referred to one of the charts showing cost savings related to asthma and asked how those numbers were calculated. She then asked Ms. O’Keeffe to explain the concept of no- and low-regret measures and how it fits into that context.

Ms. O’Keeffe stated that page 76 of the draft plan provides an overview of emissions reductions and includes information about implementation costs. She explained that the analysis is more closely tied to the cost of implementation, the authority to act, available funding, and the timeframe. For example, if a few low-cost measures could have a positive impact on asthma rates, it would be considered a low-regret action.

Ms. O’Keeffe said she would be happy to follow up individually to explain further and walk through the details.

Mr. Claypool asked Mr. MacDonald to clarify the funding. He noted that Mr. MacDonald had mentioned the funding was already allocated and that NOACA was currently spending the funds. Mr. Claypool asked whether NOACA was requesting additional funding or if the current action involved only the use of previously allocated funds.

Mr. MacDonald responded that the funding had already been allocated through Phase I of the USEPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program. He explained that NOACA received a \$1 million planning grant, along with approximately 70 other metropolitan statistical areas, as well as various states and tribal agencies. He confirmed that NOACA was not requesting any additional funding.

Mr. Claypool asked whether NOACA's submission of the package would constitute a request for additional funding.

Mr. MacDonald said no.

Mr. Claypool asked how the work would be funded.

Mr. MacDonald stated that the funding had already been allocated and that the work was a required deliverable under NOACA's signed agreement with the USEPA. He explained that NOACA is obligated to submit the deliverable to USEPA to fulfill the terms of the grant.

Mr. Claypool stated that on page one of the document, there is a reference to environmental justice—a term that is currently not permitted. He suggested that NOACA may want to modify the document to ensure compliance with current rules and laws. Mr. Claypool added that he would not be voting in favor of the item, citing that issue among other reasons, and recommended that NOACA review and adjust its documentation accordingly.

Mr. Tom Jordan made a motion to recommend the Cleveland-Elyria Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) to the Executive Committee for placement on the September 2025 Board of Directors agenda. Mayor Kim Thomas seconded the motion.

Mr. Matt Moss spoke on behalf of the City of Cleveland, emphasizing the importance of this plan—not just for the city but for the entire region. He reminded the Committee that during the first week of astronomical summer, on June 20, a heatwave caused extreme temperatures and energy demand that pushed the region's infrastructure to the point of failure. A substation went down due to the excessive load, forcing the closure of City Hall for a day and disrupting services. He also noted several other power outages in the region resulting from the same strain. Mr. Moss stressed that adopting this plan and moving forward with its strategies is critical—not only for environmental and climate reasons, but also for public health and economic stability. He pointed out that many families in Cleveland live on a median income of about \$34,000. When the power goes out, they may lose groceries and lack the resources to replace them. Events like this will become more frequent if action is delayed, putting further strain on families who are already struggling. He strongly urged the Policy Committee to adopt the plan.

Mr. Claypool thanked Mr. Moss for his comments. Mr. Claypool remarked that heat waves and freezing waves have always existed, and that weather and climate have been changing throughout history. He expressed skepticism about taking local action based on what he described as questionable data, questionable practices, and questionable projected benefits. According to Mr. Claypool, even if Cleveland were to reach net zero emissions today, it would have no impact on the global environment. He stated that while he has concerns with the broader

climate change initiatives, he does not oppose certain environmental practices, acknowledging that some are beneficial. However, he criticized the idea that local actions could significantly alter the environment in Cleveland. Mr. Claypool also voiced opposition to wind turbines in the lake, arguing that they generate very little electricity, are costly to build and maintain, and would damage the beauty of the lake. He concluded by stating that he would be voting no on the matter.

Ms. Pease noted that Mr. MacDonald and Ms. O’Keeffe had mentioned including public comment on the upcoming Plan, which encompasses the five counties. She stated that Cuyahoga County is working on a climate action plan, and the City of Cleveland also has a climate action plan. Ms. Pease strongly encouraged that public messaging around such a large and potentially overwhelming topic should clarify how these plans work together—how the actions relevant to NOACA relate to, but may differ from, those of an individual county or the actions (or inactions) of a city. She emphasized the importance of messaging and encouraging public engagement with the content of the plan.

Mayor Blackwell stated that she spent 12 years working for a pulmonary doctor at University Hospitals, where she dealt with conditions such as COPD, sarcoidosis, asthma, bronchiectasis, lung cancer, and emphysema. She emphasized that the data referenced in the presentations such as avoided asthma cases, lost work and school days, and premature deaths is measurable and verifiable. Hospitals, insurance companies, emergency rooms, and academic institutions like Case Western Reserve maintain this type of data. She added that in Maple Heights, where she serves as mayor, Black maternal and infant mortality rates are among the highest in the region, comparable to those in developing countries. Organizations such as Birthing Beautiful Communities are documenting these outcomes, and she regularly advocates for families who have lost infants. She noted that ambulance run reports from Maple Heights EMS frequently show asthma exacerbations, especially during extreme heat events. Residents on continuous oxygen are at high risk when power is lost, and that information is also documented through EMS and fire department calls. Mayor Blackwell stressed that this is not speculative information. It is data she sees and manages regularly as a city executive, including planning for EMT staffing, benefit plans, and equipment needs due to rising health-related demands. She noted that NOACA and the City of Cleveland should be applauded for their work and emphasized that board members have a responsibility to act on this data. If the Committee is unwilling to acknowledge or respond to these measurable, life-impacting realities, she said she cannot and will not continue to serve. She concluded that she is committed to being a champion for change and improving outcomes for the communities NOACA represents.

Mr. Claypool remarked that correlation does not mean causation and that having strong data does not necessarily prove anything. He expressed concern that nothing has been clearly proven and noted that committee members have not been asking questions about the data being presented. He said it is the committee’s duty, as representatives of the public, to ask questions and ensure that the actions being taken and the use of tax dollars are based on real information and outcomes.

Ms. Cierebiej noted that a draft document is available and encouraged everyone to become familiar with it. She stated that if the plan is approved at this meeting, it will move forward to the Board. Referring to points raised by Mr. Moss and Mr. Claypool, she said that if nothing is done, nothing will change. She emphasized that while there are global issues, there are also local concerns—such as ozone action days—that result from emissions produced within the region.

Commissioner Riddell inquired about the procedure and timing related to the draft document. He noted that the public comment period was still two weeks away and would last for six weeks. He asked whether the Committee was being asked to pass the current draft with the understanding that it may be amended following public feedback and requested clarification on how that process would work. He acknowledged the procedural requirement to send the draft to the Executive Committee before it proceeds to the Board in September but pointed out that the current version may not be the final document that emerges from the process.

Director Gallucci stated that the document may still change. She explained that the committee is being asked to recommend that the document move forward in the process.

The Committee voted. Mr. Claypool voted no. The motion passed by voice vote.

Transportation for Safer Communities Initiative (TSCI)

Director Gallucci stated that this is a new opportunity for NOACA to use its transportation funding to support safer communities. Modeled after NOACA's TLCI and TEDI programs, staff is proposing a new initiative called TSCI—a commitment to a safer, multimodal transportation system for all users. NOACA staff has presented this initiative to other councils, subcommittees, and committees to discuss safety improvements and the importance of prioritizing safety in transportation planning. She explained that this is an opportunity to respond to the feedback received from members and communities by demonstrating that NOACA has heard their concerns and is taking action. The goal is to provide funding to communities to help implement identified safety countermeasures based on the work NOACA has already done.

Ms. Kessa Turnbull presented information on the following:

- Safety performance measure targets
 - Equal Annual Fatality Reduction
 - Vision Zero Decennial Safety Targets
- NOACA Community Safety Reports
 - 2022, 2024-2025
- Nonmotorized Countermeasures
- Motorized Countermeasures
- Cost and Impact Assessment
- Cost-Benefit Ratio Regional Overview
- Why Do Crashes Happen?
- Human Error & Infrastructure Failure
 - 2024 Regional Crashes
- Funding Bridge
- Northeast Ohio Safety Funds
- Project Grouping Strategies
- New Initiative Proposal
- Proposal Details

Ms. Turnbull stated that the fund would receive at least \$1 million annually from the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Ohio Consolidated Planning Grant (OCPG), with a 20% non-federal match. However, strategies are being explored to waive the match for communities with financial constraints, as cost should not hinder efforts to save lives. NOACA staff have been actively gathering feedback across the organization to ensure the program effectively meets community needs and improves roadway safety. She requested that the initiative and proposed policy be recommended to the Executive Committee for Board action in September, with implementation targeted for 2026.

Ms. Cierebiej stated that if the Policy Committee approves the item and changes are made, the revised version would be forwarded to the Board. She noted that the presentation included helpful information about anticipated annual funding and the local match, which did not appear to be included in the packet. She suggested that, if staff are making updates, it would be helpful to include that information in the document.

Mr. Moss made a motion to recommend the TSCI to the Executive Committee for placement on the September 2025 Board of Directors agenda. Mr. Jordan seconded the motion.

Mr. Moss thanked NOACA staff for the presentation and expressed enthusiasm, along with others, about seeing the TSCI move forward. He noted that Ms. Turnbull emphasized the focus on low-cost infrastructure projects. He added that in his community—and conversations with others in the NOACA region—this initiative could be a helpful tool for bridging the gap to ODOT safety funding, particularly the Abbreviated Safety Funding Program for projects under \$600,000, and even the Formal Safety Program, which can fund projects up to \$6 million. He asked whether the TSCI program could assist communities in completing applications and reviews to be more competitive for ODOT funding, and whether that could be a focus of the program.

Ms. Turnbull responded yes and reiterated that one of the primary goals of the program is to help communities become eligible for the larger ODOT safety program.

Mr. Moss said that would be great and added that he would like to see this reflected as a specific focus area as the program moves forward, noting that a clearer statement of intent would help communicate its value to communities seeking ODOT safety funding.

In response to Mr. Moss's comment, Director Gallucci stated that the funding strategy NOACA has developed addresses his point. She explained that the OCPG funds—NOACA's planning funds—would be used to help communities develop plans to submit to ODOT, while the STBG funds—NOACA's implementation funds—would be used to carry out the projects.

Mr. Moss thanked Director Gallucci for the clarification.

Director Gallucci stated that a non-federal match of 20% is required for STBG funds but not for OCPG funds. She suggested that the Committee give serious consideration to eliminating the local match requirement for this program. She noted that NOACA staff has already applied a similar policy to the TLCI program when needed, and she recommended doing the same for TSCI. She added that NOACA's current TEDI project—the only pilot project—has no local match because it is funded with OCPG dollars. Even if STBG funds are used, she explained that toll credit mechanisms can be used to waive the 20% match. She encouraged the Policy Committee to give this option strong consideration.

Mr. Moss asked whether an amendment to the motion would be needed if the Committee wished to incorporate that change.

Director Gallucci responded that she did not believe an amendment would be necessary.

Ms. Cierebiej added that, in the current draft policy, there is no mention of these specific funds. She suggested that it would be important to include this feedback and provide a clearer explanation of the funding sources, what is required for each, and what the thresholds might be.

Mr. Claypool asked Director Gallucci to clarify a few points. He stated that he supports many of the projects being discussed and believes they are worthwhile. However, his question focused on funding. He explained that, at the federal level, taxpayers pay 18.4 cents per gallon in gas tax, which is intended to support federal or federally funded infrastructure. In Ohio, residents pay 38 cents per gallon to fund state infrastructure. Locally, in Geauga County, townships and the county rely on levies, and approximately 99% of infrastructure is funded with local dollars. He asked whether the federal gas tax—specifically the 18.4 cents per gallon—is being applied to the TSCI program, and what gives NOACA the authority to do so. He pointed out that Ohio has a State Safety Fund, funded by the 38-cent-per-gallon gas tax, which should be available for safety projects. Mr. Claypool said he was unsure if an ODOT representative was present at the meeting, but he wanted clarification on whether the funding approach is appropriate and whether the money is being drawn from the correct sources.

Director Gallucci stated that NOACA receives a share of the federal gas tax but does not receive any portion of the state gas tax. She explained that the federal gas tax funds NOACA receives are applied only to projects connected to federal-aid routes. These funds are not used for residential roads unless a residential road happens to be classified as a federal-aid route. She noted that the projects identified in NOACA's Community Safety Plan are all located on eligible federal-aid routes.

Mr. Claypool asked whether ODOT was providing support for the types of projects identified in NOACA's Community Safety Plan.

Director Gallucci stated that ODOT has a very robust safety program, with approximately \$100 million available each year. While that funding can come from various sources, to her knowledge, it has primarily come from federal sources. She added that ODOT is also directed to improve safety on federal-aid routes and has the flexibility to use either state or federal funds to support those improvements.

Mr. Claypool stated that many of the tactics and approaches used by the state, such as illuminated crosswalks, are already being implemented on state roads.

Director Gallucci noted that an ODOT representative was present at the meeting and invited them to add any additional information.

Mr. Matt Walter confirmed that Director Gallucci was correct—ODOT's safety funds come from both federal and state sources. Based on the discussion, he noted that NOACA's TSCI program would be eligible for funding for projects located on federal-aid routes.

Mr. Jordan congratulated NOACA on the TSCI program and asked whether a portion of the grant could be allocated specifically for the design of countermeasures or other safety improvements.

Ms. Cierebiej asked Mr. Jordan if he was referring to funding beyond planning but before construction.

Mr. Jordan clarified that he was referring to the actual design of the improvements.

Director Gallucci responded that typically NOACA does not fund the design phase, but she was not sure if staff had discussed this specific opportunity. She noted that this could be a topic for the Policy Committee to consider.

Mr. Jordan stated that one challenge is that many cities do not have engineers on staff and must hire them. This becomes a barrier to implementing improvements. While communities may recognize a problem intersection and have some anecdotal ideas for solutions, these communities need technical expertise to reach effective design solutions.

Mr. Ali Makarachi stated that NOACA staff included this work in the Community Safety Reports. He explained that the TSCI program is not intended to support large-scale projects, but rather small, low-cost safety measures that do not require major design or engineering work. However, he noted that NOACA is prepared to assist communities with developing design components as part of the overall package. He emphasized that design will not be a major focus of the program; instead, the primary goal is implementation—installing equipment or features that help reduce crashes in the community.

Director Gallucci stated that NOACA's policy has typically been not to fund design work, as the FHWA expects a local commitment when NOACA provides funding for implementation and construction. She noted that staff could discuss the possibility of creating a design-build package with the Policy Committee. She then asked Mr. Ed May to confirm whether there are any federal restrictions on including design as part of the TSCI program.

Mr. May stated that preliminary engineering (PE), right-of-way, and construction are all eligible for federal aid. How NOACA chooses to fund PE or right-of-way is at its discretion, typically based on a request from the community and whether the project is in an urban core or disadvantaged community. He explained that many of the proposed countermeasures—such as crosswalks, bike lanes, sharrows, or pavement markings—are low-cost improvements that can often be incorporated into larger roadway rehabilitation projects. He noted that for projects around \$100,000, the amount is generally too small for ODOT to justify the administrative effort and investment of time and resources. In such cases, the design component is likely best handled through local funding. Mr. May added that staff has not yet determined the specific process for addressing design within the TSCI program but indicated that it could be included if the Committee recommends doing so.

Mr. Moss stated that this was partly why he asked his original question. He explained that in reviewing the agenda in the meeting packet, under Item 4a, it states, "*any planning and engineering activities that are required.*" To him, as someone who applies for these funds and works on projects locally for the City of Cleveland and others, that language suggests the inclusion of design. He added that it would be helpful to explicitly clarify that, especially given his earlier point about the importance of supporting communities to be competitive for ODOT funding. In his view, the word "*any*" implies that design should be covered.

Mr. May stated that a community may request that the Board fund the design element of a proposed project. He noted that NOACA does not automatically include design funding—it depends on the specific request and the evaluation and recommendation of the appropriate committees.

Director Gallucci stated that, based on NOACA's policies, this funding option is not available to every community. It is limited to those previously identified as environmental justice, urban core, or disadvantaged communities. She added that NOACA will be revisiting these policies in light of recent Executive Orders regarding environmental justice.

Director Gallucci stated that staff and the Committee should consider whether NOACA should allow design to be included in the TSCI program for all communities. Under this approach,

communities would not need to submit a separate request for design funding but could still choose to fund design on their own if they wish.

Mr. Makarachi stated that at this point, it is difficult to determine whether a project will require design or not, as it depends on the specific project. For example, a pedestrian refuge island may require only minimal design, whereas a two-mile corridor with new pedestrian crossings would necessitate more extensive design. Changes such as adjusting traffic signals typically do not need major design work. Ultimately, the design requirements depend on the applicant and the scope of the project. He emphasized that design and engineering must be considered before implementation.

Mr. Ben Capelle stated that if the goal is to make this program easy to access with no local match required, it would make sense to include design costs when design is necessary. He said it does not make sense to say there is no local match but then require communities to cover design expenses separately. Even if design costs are small, allowing design as an eligible cost would help keep the program's low barrier to entry.

Ms. Cierebiej suggested that the motion include the phrase “draft proposed policy,” as the document will continue to be updated before it is presented to the Board. She asked how best to reflect that in the motion.

Director Gallucci stated that staff could revise the policy and bring it back to the Committee for further discussion, which would delay the proposal by approximately three months. She said staff was willing to do so and appreciated the valuable comments made during the meeting, noting that some aspects required additional work. She added that, if the Policy Committee wanted the item to proceed to the September Board meeting, staff could incorporate the feedback from the discussion into an updated document. Director Gallucci also noted that Mr. Capelle made the point clearly—that NOACA should consider funding design if communities want it and waive the local match for all communities if the Committee supports that approach.

Mr. Jordan added that funding for design should be available if communities feel it is needed.

Director Gallucci stated that some design would be needed because the project sponsor must still complete the permitting process. Even if it is just a stamped sketch, they will need some form of design documentation.

Mr. Jordan stated that having sample specifications for a crosswalk not included in a larger project would be helpful.

Ms. Cierebiej stated that ODOT’s safety measures include some recommendations that have already defined and outlined. While she was unsure if these were at the specification level, she noted that tools were available for implementation.

Mr. Walter stated that for any Local Public Agency (LPA) project, the sponsor must comply with ODOT’s specifications or provide an equivalent set. He noted that ODOT has standard specifications for smaller items like crosswalks, which may be sufficient for the types of projects mentioned at this meeting. Mr. Walter agreed with Mr. May’s point that a million dollars does not stretch very far anymore and said that to get a lot of bang for your buck, it is best to add a small project onto an existing one.

Director Gallucci stated that, as Mr. May alluded to, the administrative burden is high when dealing with federal grants. For smaller grants, the burden is often disproportionate to the funds received, so combining projects and adding smaller grants to larger ones is the most efficient approach.

Ms. Pease stated that the draft program was more detailed than the last version the Committee saw. She noted that seeing the program again with additional detail was helpful. Ms. Pease emphasized the importance of clarifying the distinction between design and engineering. She also suggested including information on the anticipated introduction and outlining the committee process through NOACA's procedures, leading up to when funds would be available to applying communities. This pathway would help Board and Executive Committee members understand how the program can be used. She added that she still found it somewhat difficult to understand how a community would use the program.

Director Gallucci stated that Ms. Pease made a good point. After the Policy Committee adopts the policy, it must go to the Planning and Programming Committee and then to the Finance and Audit Committee for fund allocation. She explained that if this occurs midyear, the process differs. However, if incorporated as part of the upcoming 2027 budget, there would be sufficient time to complete the steps. She noted that several additional steps must take place before funds become available.

Ms. Cierebiej asked Ms. Barlik if the motion on the floor should be amended.

Ms. Barlik said it could be amended if the Committee wanted to be more specific about what should be included in the motion.

Mr. Moss stated that he found the process clarification helpful, as he had not fully understood it previously. He summarized that, following the Policy Committee's action, the item would move to the Planning and Programming Committee, where any questions raised by the Policy Committee could be addressed. He asked if his understanding was correct.

Director Gallucci said no. She stated that questions raised at this meeting regarding the local match and design should be addressed by the Policy Committee. She added that the next step would be to allocate funds so that NOACA could begin the program.

Mr. Moss said it sounded to him like this item should come back to the Policy Committee with answers to the questions asked before it is advanced.

Director Gallucci said that was one option. However, if the Policy Committee feels confident that everyone agrees on this path forward, the Committee can direct staff to waive the local match and include design. Staff would then modify the document based on that motion.

Mr. Jordan indicated that the motion should be amended related to the local match and to allow design to be included as part of the grant program, so that the Policy Committee can resolve it at this meeting.

Mr. Moss amended his motion to revise the policy related to the local match to allow design to be included as part of the grant program, and that the Policy Committee should resolve it at this meeting. Mr. Claypool seconded the motion.

The Committee voted and the motion passed by voice vote.

Ms. Cierebiej requested that staff share the revised document with the Policy Committee before it is included in the Board packet, so that everyone is comfortable with it.

Director Gallucci stated that staff would revise the document to reflect the input from this meeting. The updated version will be shared with the Policy Committee to ensure everyone is comfortable with it before it is forwarded to the Executive Committee in August.

Presentation/Discussion Items

No presentation/discussion items were presented at this meeting.

Reports/Updates

No reports/updates were presented at this meeting.

Old Business

Compliance with Executive Order 14173

Director Gallucci reminded the Committee that this item was tabled at the last meeting. She explained that the Committee now has the option to take it off the table and resume discussion, or to leave it on the table. If the Committee chooses to take it back up for discussion, staff would recommend voting no, as the matter has effectively been transferred to the Executive Committee and the full Board. Legal counsel is currently working on the issue. That decision was made at the last Board meeting in June, and staff are continuing to move forward accordingly. All items discussed by this Committee at the last meeting have been forwarded to the Executive Committee and will subsequently go to the full Board. Therefore, while the Committee has the option to act, Director Gallucci recommended that the item not be addressed by the Committee at this time.

Mr. Claypool reminded the Committee that he had made the original motion at the last meeting. He asked whether it would be possible to simply set the motion aside and remove it from consideration.

Director Gallucci said yes.

Mr. Claypool clarified that this would not require a vote, as he could rescind the motion himself.

Ms. Barlik stated that the item did not need to be taken off the table. She noted that it could simply remain on the table, where it would die if not acted on at this meeting.

Ms. Cierebiej stated that when Mr. Claypool made the motion at the last Policy Committee meeting, work with legal counsel and the Executive Committee had not yet begun. Since then, it has become the Executive Committee's purview.

Mr. Claypool stated that, from a procedural standpoint, it seemed unusual that the Executive Committee, which is subordinate to the Board, took action before the Board received all relevant documentation. He noted that the Executive Order, the letter from USDOT, and other related materials were not provided to the Board. Despite this, the Executive Committee proceeded with the matter and then planned to bring it back to the Board. Mr. Claypool questioned whether this process was appropriate and expressed concern about potential risks or liabilities. He suggested that such decisions should begin with a Board discussion, with the Board formally directing the Executive Committee to develop recommendations. He deferred to legal counsel to determine if any liability exists. In conclusion, Mr. Claypool emphasized that he did not want the Board or Executive Committee to be at risk and raised the issue to ensure any procedural concerns could be addressed and corrected if needed.

New Business

No new business was discussed at this meeting.

Adjournment

Mr. Jordan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:35 a.m. Mr. Ben Capelle seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

The next Policy Committee meeting will be Friday, October 10, 2025, at 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



2025 Policy Committee Attendance Record

Meeting Dates	1/31//25	4/11/25	7/11/25	10/10/25
ALAI , Samuel J. David Schroedel, Alternate	X	X	X	
ANTOSKIEWICZ , Larry Thomas Jordan, Alternate	X	X	A	
BEVERAGE III , Morris Morgan McIntosh, Alternate Richard Regovich, Alternate on 1/31/25 and 4/11/25 Robert Fiala, Alternate on 7/11/25	A	A	A	
BIBB , Justin Bonnie Teeuwen, Alternate Mike Culp, Alternate on 7/11/25	A	A	A	
BLACKWELL , Annette M. Geoff Englebrecht, Alternate	X	X	X	
BOBST , Pamela Bill Schneider, Alternate	A		A	
BRADLEY , Jack Dale Vandersommen, Alternate	X	A	X	
CAPELLE , Ben Brian J. Falkowski, Alternate	X	X	X	
CIEREBIEJ , Mary Annie Pease, Alternate	X	X	X	
FIELDS , Marka Tom McNair, Alternate	X			
MERSMANN , Calley Tom McNair, Alternate Sarah O'Keeffe, Alternate on 7/11/25		X	A	
GEORGE , Meghan Angela Byington, Alternate	A			
GUTHEIL , David Linda Sternheimer, Alternate	A	A		
HARRISON , Aaron Stephen D. Hambley, Alternate John Kalas, Alternate on 4/11/25		A		
KAZY , Brian Kris Harsh, Alternate	X	X		
MAGOVAC , Paul Matt Hiscock, Alternate	X	X		

Meeting Dates	1/31//25	4/11/25	7/11/25	10/10/25
MERSMANN , Calley Sarah O'Keeffe, Alternate	X			
MOSS , Matt Sarah O'Keeffe, Alternate		X	X	
MOORE , David J. Thomas Patrick III, Alternate	A	A		
PICURI , John Bob Weaver, Alternate Matt Walter, Alternate on 7/11/25	X	X	A	
RIDDELL , Jeff John Gall, Alternate	A	A	X	
RONAYNE , Chris Debbie Berry, Alternate Annie Pease, Alternate on 4/11/25	A	A	A	
SPIDALIERI , Ralph Walter "Skip" Claypool, Alternate		A	A	
THOMAS , Kim Bayyinah Brooks, Alternate	X		X	
Subcommittee Chairs (Ex-Officio Members)				
BLACKWELL , Annette Chair of Equity Subcommittee Aria Johnson, Vice Chair		X	X	
HARRISON , Aaron Chair of Economic Development Subcommittee Joe Cimperman, Vice Chair				

X = Member A = Alternate



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

TO: NOACA Policy Committee
FROM: Grace Gallucci, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
DATE: October 3, 2025
RE: **Subcommittee Update**

ACTION REQUESTED

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

BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION FOR CURRENT ACTION

The Economic Development Subcommittee provides advice and policy recommendations to the Policy Committee to support economic growth and enhance the quality of life. Below is a summary of the September 26, 2025, Economic Development Subcommittee meeting:

Economic Development Subcommittee

Ms. Valarie McCall chaired the Economic Development Subcommittee meeting Friday, September 26, 2025.

Under presentation/discussion items, the Subcommittee was provided with information on Performance Measures Data and Analysis Review

In Reports/Updates, the Economic Development Subcommittee was updated on the status of the Economic Development District (EDD).

The Subcommittee was informed that the EDA has ended the University Center program nationwide, which also included funding cuts to three technical assistance programs. While the Center for Economic Development at Cleveland State did not rely solely on the University Center program, it was a significant source of support. Despite this loss, the Center remains active and will continue providing research and technical assistance to the community. This decision was made before the current congressional budget discussions and is unrelated to future appropriations.

The next Economic Development Subcommittee meeting will be Friday, December 5, 2025, 8:30-10 a.m.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact.

CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS

Updates of the Subcommittee meetings will continue to be provided to the Policy Committee.

GG:eb:bw



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

TO: NOACA Policy Committee
FROM: Grace Gallucci, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
DATE: October 3, 2025
RE: **Transportation for Safer Communities Initiative (TSCI)**

ACTION REQUESTED

No action is requested. This presentation is to solicit feedback on NOACA's reimagining of the philosophy behind this initiative in light of comments received after the last meeting.

BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION FOR CURRENT ACTION

NOACA is committed to enhancing regional transportation safety and reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries. A 2024 analysis shows that over half of regional crashes are linked to infrastructure deficiencies. NOACA staff have also examined community safety issues and produced Community Safety Reports (CSRs) for several years. The most recent biennial updates, featuring expanded information, are [now available](#).

NOACA groups and members of the public have expressed strong support for NOACA to focus on transportation safety. Thus, in alignment with our long-term vision for a safer and more accessible transportation network for all users, and in response to the clearly articulated concerns of our members, we proposed the creation of the new Transportation for Safer Communities Initiative, or TSCI, to support local safety improvements across the region.

This initiative, along with its accompanying fund, would serve as a bridge between planning and implementation, focusing on the installation of low-cost, small-scale safety measures. The NOACA CSRs identify priority segments and intersections for enhancing road safety based on crash data and prediction models. The implementation of safety countermeasures in communities requires them to procure some level of engineering studies to select the appropriate tools from the safety countermeasure toolbox. This toolbox includes measures such as Pedestrian Refuge Islands, Leading Pedestrian Intervals, Bicycle Lanes and Delineators, Backplates with Retroreflective Borders, and Shoulder Rumble Strips, among many others.

After receiving detailed input from the Policy Committee following the submission of the revised draft policy last quarter, NOACA staff has determined that a new philosophy is necessary for the initiative to move forward. In particular a different approach is required to administer the implementation. For example, instead of an application-based model like TLCI, TSCI could be a regionally sponsored program in which communities would opt in to have a suite of countermeasures installed within their communities.

As an illustration, NOACA would dedicate one funding round to leading pedestrian intervals or shoulder rumble strips. At that point, an invitation would be sent to communities (along with potential, though not

exclusive, locations) to join the round. Once enough communities joined to reach the minimum threshold, NOACA would hire a consultant(s) to design, engineer, and install the specified countermeasure at all the locations across the region. If more communities sign up than are needed to reach the minimum threshold, they will continue to be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis until the annual funds are expended. If fewer communities sign up than is needed to reach the minimum threshold, the program would not be completed that year. In this way, the focus shifts from small scale individual projects to larger scale regional projects, with an emphasis on coordination between communities and with NOACA to ensure all experience the benefits.

Although the study component of the initiative could proceed as planned, because this implementation model represents a significant change from the previous proposal, it requires more discussion and input. It could be worthwhile to consider a few pilot or demonstration projects before finalizing the TSCI policy.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

NOACA's allocated Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and/or Ohio Consolidated Planning Grant (OCPG) funds are proposed as funding sources and will be finalized through the appropriate funding allocation processes. A minimum allocation of \$1 million annually would be required to sustain the initiative as a program.

CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS

Staff will incorporate any feedback on the proposed safety initiative and its associated fund before presenting the recreated policy in 2026.

GG:EB:KT



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.

