

# 2026 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

External Affairs Committee

October 10, 2025

# ED/CEO INTRODUCTION

- Each year, the External Affairs Committee provides input to the Board regarding legislative priorities for the upcoming year.
- For 2026, staff is requesting input on updates to the federal priorities.
- The Committee's input will be incorporated into the draft provided to the Board for approval in December.

# **ACTION REQUESTED**

**Recommend this item to the Executive Committee for placement on the December 2025 Board of Directors agenda:**

- **2026 Legislative Agenda**

## **PREVIOUS ACTION**

**Board of Directors Resolution No. 2024-051, which adopted the 2025 Legislative Agenda**

# UPDATING NOACA'S LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR 2026

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## 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.

# STATE PRIORITIES

## State Priorities

1

### **Improve the region's rate of return from state allocated funds to meet regional asset management needs**

NOACA advocates that the Ohio General Assembly review and amend the state funding formula such that the NOACA region would receive an equitable amount of State gas tax dollars as compared to what is contributed by gas tax payers from the NOACA region.

The NOACA Board advocates a redress of this condition through the creation of State programs that would allocate more funding to priorities that are the sole responsibility of MPOs and local communities.

Formation of new programs or supplementing existing programs that contribute funding to local and regional planning priorities such as asset management programs would help create a more equitable rate of return.

2

### **Advocate for the inclusion of multimodal transportation within state programs & funding**

NOACA advocates that the Ohio General Assembly provide sufficient funding for both capital and operating costs to support the development and preservation of non-automobile transportation, particularly public transit – which should be funded in a manner that reflects and enhances local and regional investments.

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

3

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



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# STATE PRIORITIES

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# FEDERAL PRIORITIES

## Federal Priorities

1

### Strengthen the MPO's local control of core transportation programs

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

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

2

### Promote asset management as a funding priority

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

3

### Incorporate safety, sustainability, multimodalism in planning & funding

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

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

### Working to Achieve NOACA's Vision:

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

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# POTENTIAL EDITS

## Ask Congress to:

- 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 MPO LRPs?
- Reduce local match for federal transportation programs?
- Streamline environmental review and permitting to accelerate delivery without compromising environmental protection?
- Stabilize Highway Trust Fund (inclusive of transit)?

# DISCUSSION





# NOACA

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency

NOACA will **strengthen** regional cohesion, **preserve** existing infrastructure, and **build** a sustainable multimodal transportation system to **support** economic development and **enhance** quality of life in Northeast Ohio.