



**NOACA Air Quality Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2025
NOACA Offices**

Present: Please see the attached attendance record.

Ms. Maribeth Feke, Chair of the Air Quality Subcommittee, convened the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

Introduction of New Members

Mr. Ben Capelle introduced himself as a new member of the Air Quality Subcommittee.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. John Gall made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 20, 2024. Mr. Sam Rubens seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

Public Comments

No public comments were made at this meeting.

Executive Director's Report

Director Grace Gallucci made the following announcement regarding t2025 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program Applications

- Purpose of CMAQ Program is to improve air quality and relieve congestion
- Applications available at noaca.org/cmaq
 - due May 2, 2025
- Eligible Projects
 - Vehicle/Machinery Updates
 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
 - Traffic Signal Timing/Connection Hardware
- Applicant Webinar
 - April 9, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
 - Email projects@mpo.noaca.org to register

Ms. Feke asked if bikes were still eligible projects.

Director Gallucci confirmed that bikes are still eligible projects and NOACA had not received official notification otherwise.

Action Items

No action items were presented at this meeting.

Presentation/Discussion Items

CY2025 Subcommittee Focus Areas

Mr. Joe MacDonald stated that the Planning and Programming Committee approved the focus areas for the Air Quality Subcommittee at its meeting in January 2025, so no action was required.

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the Subcommittee purpose, functions, 2024 focus areas, and the following 2025 focus areas:

2025 Focus Areas	Status
Regional Climate Action Planning	Ongoing
Gohio Commute Employer Engagement	Ongoing
Air Quality Education and Outreach Program Implementation	Ongoing
Mobile Emissions Reduction Efforts (Gohio Commute & Vanpool, Air Quality Awareness Programs)	Ongoing
2025 CMAQ Applications	Ongoing

Mr. MacDonald stated that meeting agendas and materials will be crafted to accomplish the identified focus areas for the Subcommittee.

Mr. Gall asked about the impact of President Trump's recent Executive Order on Climate Action Planning at NOACA. He inquired about NOACA staff's time and effort to address these changes and their potential effects on future federal funding.

Mr. MacDonald stated that NOACA has a signed contract with the US EPA for a Phase I Planning Grant under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Program. He provided the following updates on the status of the contract and project:

- No changes have been made to the contract or its funding.
- NOACA will continue fulfilling the contract terms unless directed otherwise.
- The contract was reaffirmed in a March 10 meeting with the US EPA Region 5 coordinators.
- NOACA remains on schedule, with the award period extending through 2027.
- The next major deliverable, the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP), is due December 1.
- NOACA's final status report is due at the end of the award period in Summer 2027.

Air Quality Public Education and Outreach

Ms. Kate Moening presented information on the following:

- Air Quality Advisory Days
 - Public communications by method from December 2024 through February 2025
 - No Advisory Day communications
 - AQ Advisory emails sent to subscribers as needed
 - Sign up for advisories on the NOACA Air Quality Advisories webpage
 - Daily air quality status at www.airnow.gov
- Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Engagement
 - In partnership with the City of Cleveland
 - NOACA engagement in Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties
 - Focus on Low Income and Disadvantaged Communities (LIDACs)
 - Geauga County engagement session in the planning process
- Outreach and Engagement
 - Air Quality/Gohio Commute Media Messaging
 - Radio and Channel 3 (WKYC) media campaign messaging reflects Air Quality and Rideshare programs
 - Gohio Commute Radio Advertising
 - Gohio Commute WKYC

- Social Media (Facebook, X)
- Gohio Commute Challenge Events
 - February Transit Challenge – February 1-28, 2025
 - Social Media Presence on Facebook, X/Twitter
 - Prize Winners:
 - 1st Place Paris Barnett
 - 2nd Place Jonathan Steirer
 - 3rd Place Shirley Murrell
 - Lake County: Peter Maurath
- Events and Presentations
 - January 15, 2025: Cleveland Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) presentation
 - Interested audiences, communities or businesses, should contact kmoening@mpo.noaca.org.
- NOACA's 11th Annual NEO Commuter Choice Awards (CCA) Program
 - Winners: Ohio City Bicycle Co-Op, North Water Productions, University Circle Inc., Cleveland Public Library, and Case Western Reserve University
 - Partner Sponsors: Bike Cleveland, GCRTA, Laketran, and Cuyahoga County
 - The awards were given out at NOACA's Board meeting on January 24, 2025
- Upcoming Events
 - Air Quality Trends Report Announcement
 - Air Quality Awareness Week – May 5-9, 2025
 - May: CAR(bon) Free – Bicycle Safety Month
 - 2025 Commuter Choice Awards
 - No-Idle Resources and Campaign

Ms. Moening stated that NOACA will provide quarterly updates to the Air Quality Subcommittee.

Mr. Tim Fischer inquired about the number of people subscribed to receive the Air Quality Advisory emails.

Mr. MacDonald stated that NOACA maintains a Constant Contact mailing distribution list with approximately 1,200 recipients, including media sources, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), various organizations, agencies, and individuals who have expressed interest.

Mr. Gall stated that the reports that NOACA staff send out make their way into the media. He said he reads them in the press.

Regarding the Gohio Commute Challenge Events in February, Mr. Gall noted that people love prizes and incentives. He asked how NOACA would recommend people in Geauga, Medina, and Lorain counties use the system to be competitive.

Ms. Moening stated that, while NOACA was focusing on transit as the mode for Ohio Loves Transit Month, all multimodal transportation options that impact air quality are eligible to earn points and win prizes, including carpooling, vanpooling, biking, walking, and telework.

Ms. Feke noted that ViaLC operates the demand response in the cities of Lorain and Elyria. She suggested getting the word out to Lorain County Community College.

Mr. Gall highlighted that many students use ViaLC. He noted that people should be aware that the program may end without support from grants.

Gohio Commute Update and Performance Measures

Ms. Ashleigh Dennis presented information on the following:

- Background on Gohio Commute and Performance Measures
 - Gohio Commute launched in April 201
 - Staff engage businesses, universities, local government agencies, and other organizations to create subsites.
 - Subsites enable organizations to create targeted incentives for employees and to track involvement of employees
 - Staff created performance measures to track progress of Gohio Commute
 - Four (4) Categories
 - User Metrics
 - Systemwide Performance Metrics
 - Outreach and Promotion Metrics
 - Platform Administration and Enhancement Metrics
- User and Systemwide Metrics
 - NOACA Region
 - Total Users: 8,048
 - Total Trips: 192,638
 - Total Non-SOV Trips: 170,893
 - Total VMT Avoided: 1,780,524
 - Total Calories Burned: 19,546,561
 - Statewide
 - Total Users: 22,434
 - Total Trips: 321,739
 - Total Non-SOV Trips: 289,320
 - Total VMT Avoided: 2,968,985
 - Total Calories Burned: 29,139,366
 - 2024 CO₂ Savings (Chart)
 - 2024 Vanpool Metrics
 - Miles Avoided: 3,695,964 miles
 - CO₂ Avoided: 1,221 tons
 - Commuter Savings: \$3,000-14,000 per year
 - Vanpool Growth: 35% increase in 2024; January: 40; December: 54
 - CO₂ savings from using alternative transportation between January and December 2024 are equivalent to the amount of CO₂ that 1,154 acres of U.S. forests would remove from the atmosphere in a single year.
- Outreach and Promotion Metrics
 - 79 organizations have created subsites on Gohio Commute
 - 121 total subsites/networks on the platform
 - Some organizations created multiple subnetworks for locations, buildings, etc.
 - Gohio Commute Engagement Survey Timeline
 - Online Survey: Aug. 28 to Oct. 31, 2024
 - Analyze responses: Nov. 1 to Dec. 31, 2024
 - Program Updates: Jan. 1 to Mar. 31, 2025
 - Gohio Commute Engagement Survey Next Steps
 - Gohio Commute Office Hours
 - Quarterly updates on new topics related to Gohio Commute
 - Notifications through email
- Platform Administration and Enhancement Metrics
 - March 2017 – February 2025
 - 44 Total Challenges
 - 57 Employer/Organization Incentives

- 182 Events
- Community Perks
 - Membership-based perks program
 - Combining Commute Perks with other incentives provides ongoing engagement for more users
 - Unlimited premium local and national perks and discounts
- Rideshare App Update
 - Beta testing; tentatively available May 1
 - Content update

Ms. Dennis stated that staff will provide quarterly updates on platform performance metrics to the Subcommittee.

Loh asked the name of the app.

Ms. Dennis stated that the name of the platform is Gohio. She noted that users can also find the app by searching for "Gohio Commute" online.

CY2025 Air Quality Forecast Accuracy (through February 28)

Mr. MacDonald stated that NOACA forecasts daily peak eight-hour ground-level ozone concentrations and fine particulate matter concentrations. In 2025, daily forecasts for ozone began March 1 and will conclude October 31. Daily forecasts for fine particulate matter are year-round. NOACA posts daily air quality forecasts through AirNowTech, in affiliation with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA).

Mr. MacDonald presented information on the following items:

- Meteorological variables and model guidance used by NOACA
- PM_{2.5} Good/Moderate Threshold (12 µg/m³)
 - Correct = 81%
- PM_{2.5} Moderate/Unhealthy Threshold (35 µg/m³)
 - Correct = 100%

Mr. MacDonald mentioned that he issued a forecast for potential exceedance for fine particulate matter on December 25 for December 26. No communication was sent out because of the holiday. He noted that there ultimately was no exceedance on that day.

Mr. MacDonald continued his presentation explaining how NOACA's forecasting model compares to NOAA using the following table:

	<u>12 µg/m³</u>	<u>35 µg/m³</u>
NOACA	81%	100%
NOAA 6Z (M/B)	(83/80)%	(100/100)%
NOAA 12Z (M/B)	(83/80)%	(100/100)%

Mr. MacDonald stated that NOACA staff will do the following:

- Track forecast performance of NOACA and NOAA for ozone and fine particulate matter
- Update Air Quality Subcommittee in June 2025
- Collaborate with NOAA personnel to report model performance in Northeast Ohio

Mr. Rubens stated that Mr. MacDonald referenced the 24-hour standard that dropped from 12 to 9 last year.

Mr. MacDonald clarified that he was presenting information on daily numbers, whereas Mr. Rubens was referring to a change in the annual standard. He explained that NOACA's daily forecasting remains unchanged, but the annual standard did change.

Mr. Gall asked Mr. MacDonald to clarify when he issued an exceedance in December 2024.

Mr. MacDonald said he issued an exceedance for December 26, 2024.

Mr. Gall asked if the exceedance issued on December 26 had anything to do with the demolition of the Avon Lake Power Plant on December 19.

Mr. MacDonald said no. He explained that the NOAA model's resolution would not have picked up that activity. He issued an advisory based on NOAA's regional air quality forecast for Northeast Ohio, specifically concerning fine particulate matter concentration. Since no exceedance occurred, the event did not affect regional air quality levels, and it would not have prompted him to issue an advisory.

Mr. MacDonald asked Mr. Gall what happened.

Mr. Gall explained that Avon Lake decommissioned its power plant. Demolition began on December 19, with completion expected by Spring 2025.

Mr. MacDonald stated that a lot of the region's challenges for air pollutant concentrations are focused on stations in the eastern and northern parts of the region because of prevailing southwest winds. Pollutants generated within and outside of the NOACA region are generally carried southwest to northeast. He reminded the Subcommittee that he gave a presentation in the past where he talked about how a lake breeze can set up and create a damming effect when there are winds out of the southwest, especially light winds, which tend to trap pollutants that are generated by any industry in the valley. The region is a fairly large consolidated metropolitan statistical area that extends from Sandusky to Ashtabula to Canton. The pollutants generated by mobile sources are carried to the northeast, and they become concentrated in those stations northeast of Downtown Cleveland. Generally, Lorain County does not see exceedance because areas southwest in the region are primarily agricultural, and do not have the same level of emissions sources.

Mr. Bryan Sokolowski stated that Mr. MacDonald handles forecasting for potential exceedance. Mr. Sokolowski stated that the implosion referenced by Mr. Gall could have caused a hyperlocal exceedance, an increase of emissions in that area. However, the nearest stationary monitoring sites are far from that area, with the closest one at St. Theodosius in Tremont.

Mr. Gall stated that Avon Lake released a statement on its website that it has an independent group monitoring the demolition. However, the group has not said anything about it.

Mr. MacDonald announced that \$300,000 is available through the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program for organizations in Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties. The funding supports planning and engagement proposals related to climate action and climate pollution reduction. The application deadline is April 14. NOACA hosted a webinar on March 13 to answer questions and assist applicants with the process.

Mr. MacDonald stated that interested parties should contact him for additional information, as NOACA is coordinating information through its contract with the USEPA.

Ms. Feke thanked Mr. MacDonald for the reminder.

Reports/Updates

No reports or updates were made at this meeting.

Old Business

No old business was discussed at this meeting.

New Business

No new business was discussed at this meeting.

Adjournment

Mr. Rubens made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 a.m. Mr. David Hearne seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

The next regular Air Quality Subcommittee meeting will be held at the NOACA offices on June 20, 2025, 9:00-10:30 a.m.

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



**Air Quality Subcommittee
2025 Attendance Record**

Meeting Dates	3/21/25	6/20/25	9/19/25	12/19/25
ALAI , Samuel J. (David Schroedel, Alternate)				
CAPELLE , Ben (Brian J. Falkowski, Alternate)	X			
FEKE , Maribeth (Samantha Metcalf, Alternate)	X			
FISCHER , Tim (Corey Kurjian, Alternate)	X			
GORRIS , Nick J. (James Dvorak, Alternate)	X			
HARRISON , Aaron M. (Stephen D. Hambley, Alternate)				
HEARNE , David G. (Christina Yoka, Alternate)	X			
MECHENBIER , Bert (Alternate TBD)				
RIDDELL , Jeff (John Gall, Alternate)	A			
RUBENS , Sam (Julie Brown, Alternate)	X			
SOKOLOWSKI , Bryan (David Salem, Alternate)	X			
SORGE , Thomas (Corey Czinger, Alternate)	X			

X = Member A = Alternate