



**NOACA Air Quality Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes**
December 19, 2025
NOACA Offices
1299 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio

Present: Please see the attached attendance record.

Ms. Maribeth Feke, Chair of Air Quality Subcommittee, convened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Ms. Feke acknowledged the passing of former NOACA Chairperson Hunter Morrison and requested a moment of silence from the Subcommittee.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. John Gall made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 19, 2025. Mr. Dave Schroedel seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

Public Comment

No public comment was made at this meeting.

Executive Director's Report

Director Grace Gallucci noted that she did not have a specific report but wanted to thank the Subcommittee for their participation and engagement, which are essential to NOACA's work. She expressed appreciation for members' time, preparation, and contributions, wished them a wonderful rest of the year, and looked forward to a great new year.

Action Items

No action items were presented at this meeting.

Presentation /Discussion Items

Air Quality Public Education and Outreach

Ms. Sarah Mulligan presented information on the following:

- Air Quality Advisory Communications from September 2025 through December 9, 2025
- Public Engagement and Outreach
 - Media Messaging
 - Lake Erie Challenge October 1-31, 2025

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

Gohio Commute Update and Performance Measures

Ms. Ashleigh Dennis presented information on the following:

- Background on Gohio Commute
- Four performance measure categories
 - User Metrics
 - Systemwide Performance Metrics
 - Outreach and Promotion Metrics
 - Platform Administration and Enhancement Metrics
- User and Systemwide Metrics
 - Users: 8,206/34%
 - Non-SOV Trips: 181,770/56%
 - VMT Avoided: 1,858,649/58%
 - CO₂ Avoided (t): 737/64%
 - \$ Saved: \$1,207,362/67%
 - 671 Acres – 1,661 Times
 - 2025 Vanpool Metrics Per Month Per Person
 - 2025 Vanpool Metrics through November
- Platform Administration and Enhancement Metrics
 - Ohio Commuter Challenge
 - Lake Erie Challenge
- Outreach and Promotion Metrics
 - Gohio Commute Office Hours

Ms. Dennis reported that the financial impact includes NOACA's annual \$10,000 budget for the GoOhio Commute platform. She added that staff will provide quarterly updates to the Subcommittee on platform performance metrics.

Mr. David Hearne asked what measures are being taken to establish new or replacement vanpools as existing vanpools sunset.

Ms. Dennis explained that NOACA's Programming Division works with Commute with Enterprise to conduct outreach for the NOACA Vanpool Program. She noted that although 17 vanpools had ended, the program was started in 2022 and many of those vanpools reached their three-year sunset period in 2025. Outreach is conducted jointly by NOACA staff and Commute with Enterprise.

Director Gallucci clarified that the vanpool subsidy is structured as a three-year program, so some vanpools are expected to sunset. While outreach is included in the contract with Commute with Enterprise, staff are also evaluating ways to strengthen direct business outreach and recruitment.

Mr. Hearne asked whether the funding source also sunsets.

Director Gallucci responded that funding sunsets for individual vanpools after three years, but remains available to support new vanpools.

Mr. Hearne asked whether the development of new vanpools is actively being pursued.

Director Gallucci stated that NOACA already has funding for new vanpools through the CMAQ program.

Ms. Feke asked whether the 17 sunset vanpools were through the Veterans Administration (VA) and requested that a list of sunset vanpools be provided to the Subcommittee.

Ms. Dennis responded that most of the sunset vanpools are through the VA, with a few from other organizations. She offered to provide a list to the Air Quality Subcommittee. She added that the Programming Division provides updates on the Vanpool Program and vehicles to other NOACA committees and councils, including the BAC, CAC, and RAC.

Ms. Feke asked Mr. Hearne if the information would be valuable.

Mr. Hearne said it would be helpful.

Ohio EPA Serious Nonattainment Redesignation Request

Mr. Kirk Kallenborn presented information on the following:

- O₃ NAAQS History
- 2023-2025 O₃ Design Values
- Exceptional Events (EE) Demonstration
- Exceptional Events Requirements
- 2023-2025 Design Values
- O₃ Redesignation Request Overview
- Redesignation Request Criteria
- Sierra Club v. U.S. EPA
 - Effects on Redesignation Criteria
- Emission Inventory Related Requirements
- Source Emissions
- Tables of Emissions Inventory Totals
- Average May-September Temperatures at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport and Fourth High Daily Maximum 8-Hour Ozone (MDA8) Levels at the Eastlake Monitor (2004-2026)
- Contingency Plans

Mr. Kallenborn stated that staff will continue to monitor the approval status of the EE Demonstration, Redesignation Request, Maintenance Plan, and Attainment Demonstration, noting that all are required for redesignation. He also said staff will monitor RACT submittals, track ozone levels in Northeast Ohio, and provide updates to the Air Quality Subcommittee following final area designations.

Mr. Gall asked Mr. Kallenborn to display the slide on contingency plans and requested additional details on potential future controls for architectural industrial maintenance coatings and automobile refinishing shops.

Mr. Kallenborn responded that these controls had not yet been specifically identified, as they represent potential future issues, and it is unclear what may be required. He offered to provide further information at a future meeting.

Ms. Feke asked Mr. Kallenborn whether he was referring to the EPA when he used the term “they,” and he confirmed that he was.

In response to Mr. Gall’s inquiry, Mr. Tim Fischer added that such sources would be subject to Reasonably Available Control Technology (RACT), which involves evaluating available control technologies. He noted that studies on controls for body shops and similar facilities have not

previously been conducted, aside from particulates. Mr. Fischer also complimented Mr. Kallenborn on the presentation, calling it timely and informative on a complex topic.

Ms. Feke congratulated Mr. Kallenborn, noting that December 5th was very recent.

CY2025 Air Quality Forecast Accuracy (through November 30)

Mr. Kallenborn presented information on the following:

- O₃ NAAQS Timeline
- PM_{2.5} NAAQS Timeline
- Three-year Rolling Averages for Annual PM_{2.5} in NE Ohio Counties
- Air Quality Monitor Locations in Northeast Ohio
- O₃ Monitoring Locations
- PM₂ Monitoring Locations
- Air Quality Forecasts in Northeast Ohio
- NOACA and NOAA 2025 Forecast Performance: O₃
- Exceedance Days for 2025 (O₃)
- NOAA Versus NOACA Exceedance Forecast Performance (O₃)
- Exceedance Stations
- Exceedance Stations: Successful Predictions (2020-2025)
- Range of Observed Max Eight-Hour Average O₃ Values
- Daily Range of Observed Max Eight-Hour O₃ Values - 2025
- Daily Range of Observed Max Eight-Hour O₃ Values - 2024
- O₃ Exceedance Day: June 19, 2024
- O₃ Exceedance Day: June 20, 2024
- O₃ Exceedance Day: June 21, 2024
- O₃ Exceedance Day: June 12, 2025
- O₃ Exceedance Day: July 23, 2025
- NOACA and NOAA 2025 Forecast Performance: PM_{2.5}
- Exceedance Days for 2025: PM_{2.5}
- PM_{2.5} Monitor Performance 2024: Mean Absolute Value Difference
- PM_{2.5} Monitor Performance 2025: Mean Absolute Value Difference
- PM_{2.5} Monitor Performance 2024: Mean Raw Value Difference
- PM_{2.5} Monitor Performance 2025: Mean Raw Value Difference
- PM_{2.5} Monitor Performance 2024: Monthly Mean Raw Value Difference
- PM_{2.5} Monitor Performance 2025: Monthly Mean Raw Value Difference

Mr. Kallenborn reported that NOAA models forecasted ozone concentrations around the exceedance threshold less accurately in 2025 than in 2024. While there were fewer exceedance events overall, one widespread event on July 15 was completely missed by the 12Z bias-corrected forecast.

Mr. Kallenborn stated that staff will track the forecast performance of NOACA and NOAA for ozone and fine particulate matter, provide an update to the Air Quality Subcommittee in March 2025, and collaborate with NOAA personnel to report model performance in Northeast Ohio.

Mr. Fischer asked how much relative humidity plays into forecasting ozone exceedances.

Mr. Kallenborn responded that he expects daily forecasts to become his responsibility in the future but are not currently and he will gather that information for the next subcommittee meeting.

Mr. Fischer thanked Mr. Kallenborn for the information.

Mr. Gall asked whether NOACA staff anticipate that forecast accuracy will decline further next year, or if this year represents the worst-case scenario. Mr. Kallenborn explained that for PM_{2.5}, models performed worse this year. For ozone, NOACA has only been providing data to NOAA for the past two years, so trends are uncertain. He noted that the differences between observed and forecasted values this year likely represent an anomaly.

Mr. Sokolowski added that the mild ozone year made forecasting more difficult. When exceedances occur at only one or two sites and barely exceed the threshold, they are easier to miss. In contrast, high exceedances across multiple monitors are easier to forecast. He noted that, in this sense, the mild year was somewhat beneficial despite lower model performance.

Ms. Feke asked whether the NOACA staff would discuss the variance among individual stations with NOAA, given the differences of 30–40 points. Mr. Kallenborn said that the wide range makes it difficult to predict which stations will exceed, but staff will raise this issue at the NOAA workshop.

Mr. Gall requested that Mr. Kallenborn bring up the slide showing 2025 ozone exceedance days, noting that the October 4th exceedance was missing. Mr. Kallenborn confirmed that the exceedance was not included in the presentation but had been mentioned.

Mr. Gall commented that the October 4th exceedance occurred under weather conditions of 86°F, 1–6 mph winds, partly sunny skies, 38% humidity, and 30.19 bar pressure, which seemed like a late-season ozone event. Mr. Sokolowski observed that no one anticipated it, noting that Southwest Ohio exceeded almost every day that week, in contrast to NOACA's mild year.

Mr. Sokolowski asked Mr. Fischer if he recalled the meteorological conditions that week.

Mr. Fischer confirmed that it was the October week and noted that the Cleveland exceedance coincided with a Guardians playoff day, with afternoon traffic from Detroit contributing. He added that this was the first October exceedance ever and could not have been prevented unless the game had not occurred.

Commissioner Dvorak requested that Mr. Kallenborn display the slide showing the June 19, 2025, O₃ exceedance and monitor locations. He explained that the Notre Dame Cathedral Latin School monitor is located directly above a bus garage, with diesel fumes beneath it. He stated that if the monitor were moved approximately 100 yards east, readings would likely be significantly lower. He noted that for decades, state legislators have attempted to relocate or remove the Geauga County monitor, expressing concern that its placement affects accuracy.

Director Gallucci responded that this issue has been raised multiple times. The Ohio EPA has indicated that the monitor cannot be moved due to the loss of year-to-year data continuity and comparison challenges. She stated that NOACA could raise the issue again with the Ohio EPA.

Mr. Gall asked whether future NOACA annual reports to EPA could include a note identifying that monitor readings may be skewed due to site conditions.

Director Gallucci stated that NOACA could include such language, though it has not been done annually. She added that NOACA and elected officials from Geauga County have discussed the issue with the Ohio EPA multiple times.

Mr. Sokolowski clarified that bus garages do not emit ozone directly, as ozone forms regionally in the atmosphere over time. He noted that while NOx emissions may contribute to the downwind, the Notre Dame site is no longer a nonattainment area. Historically, Mayfield and Notre Dame were problem sites, but in recent years, ozone concerns have shifted to the districts in Eastlake and Painesville.

Mr. Gall discussed the Lorain County Sheffield monitor, noting its proximity to former steel mill operations and nearby construction and concrete facilities. He stated that the location captures emissions from multiple sources.

Mr. Fischer explained that monitors are often placed in industrial areas to capture emissions. He noted that while many particulate monitors have been removed, the Sheffield ozone monitor remains, for that reason, distinguishing it from the bus garage situation.

Mr. Gall added that steel mill operations in Sheffield have been largely eliminated, though future redevelopment remains possible, which could increase readings. He stated that overall air quality is currently in good shape, while acknowledging the job losses associated with the mill closure.

Future of Commuter Choice Program

Ms. Dennis presented information on the following:

- Background on the Commuter Recognition Program
- Trends: Number of Organizations Participating in Commuter Choice Awards by Year
- Outreach
 - Gohio Commute Engagement Survey
- Proposed Framework: Future of the Commuter Choice Program
 - Revitalize the program by removing access to barriers and providing incentives
 - Redesign the program as a tiered structured award system
 - Sunset the program and shift focus to providing transportation demand management support for regional organizations

Ms. Dennis asked members for their input on the future of the Commuter Choice Program and requested that they select one of four options: Revitalize, Redesign, Sunset, or New Ideas.

Ms. Dennis noted that each potential outcome could have different financial impacts for NOACA. She added that NOACA staff will review the feedback from the Air Quality Subcommittee to determine the program's future direction.

Mr. Gall asked Ms. Dennis to display the slide showing the proposed framework so everyone could see the options.

Ms. Dennis clarified that the ideas for revitalizing, redesigning, or sunsetting the program were not set in stone. They were simply concepts, and staff welcomed feedback from the subcommittee.

Mr. Gall said that given the declining numbers and participation shown in the graph, he does not believe redesign is an option NOACA should pursue. While a low-cost, low-effort attempt might spark interest, investing significant time and effort is unlikely to change outcomes. In his view, redesign should not move forward.

Ms. Feke said she does not think revitalization would be effective. She expressed interest in a hybrid approach, combining redesign with a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) focus. She noted the region's diversity and the expansion of trail projects. She suggested tailoring a TDM-focused approach to individual communities, such as highlighting new trails in Painesville in Lake County.

Ms. Feke noted there were no votes in favor of revitalization and asked Mr. Gall whether he supported sunseting or simply opposed redesign.

Mr. Gall stated that he does not support redesign. He questioned the energy source and the feasibility of revitalization. He suggested that sunseting may require less effort and better align with current data, proposing a final year for the program followed by exploration of alternative community transportation options.

Ms. Feke acknowledged some growth, citing RTA's statistics showing increased biking, walking, and first/last-mile trips, particularly in Cuyahoga County. However, she noted uncertainty about regional trends and pointed out that vanpool and Commuter Choice participation are declining. She said she would not want NOACA to completely exit this space.

Mr. Sokolowski asked whether survey feedback indicated that companies lacked personnel to administer the program.

Ms. Dennis confirmed that staffing capacity was an issue for some organizations. She added that very small businesses often did not participate because they did not use sustainable or multimodal transportation themselves and felt the program was not relevant. Staff did not want participants to feel excluded from the awards.

Mr. Sokolowski said this aligns with his expectations, noting that many organizations are doing more with fewer staff. He stated that such programs are often cut to conserve time and personnel, and that participation is unlikely to rebound without funding support.

Director Gallucci said that, based on observing the program since its inception, a key issue is that many participating companies never win. Location- and challenge-based criteria disadvantage some employers, leading to the same organizations winning repeatedly. This raises questions about the program's structure and whether NOACA is truly incentivizing change or simply recognizing a narrow number of companies that can meet the criteria.

Ms. Feke asked Ms. Dennis whether the Subcommittee's feedback provided enough guidance to move forward.

Ms. Dennis said yes and thanked members for their input.

Director Gallucci said she appreciated the feedback and wanted to discuss sunseting further, noting that staff had already considered it internally. She emphasized the need to ensure that choosing sunseting would not create unintended issues.

Mr. Sokolowski asked whether sunseting would allow funds to be redirected toward more focused, targeted outreach.

Ms. Feke asked whether the funding would be repurposed or eliminated.

Ms. Dennis said reallocating the funds was one of the ideas under consideration.

Mr. Sokolowski suggested targeting outreach to specific communities, noting that messages resonate differently in Summit County versus Cuyahoga County. He believed community-specific messaging would be more effective.

Ms. Feke said that the approach feels like a redesign focused on targeted messaging rather than fully eliminating the program's intent.

Mr. Sokolowski clarified that the Commuter Choice Awards themselves would go away.

Director Gallucci confirmed that Mr. Sokolowski was correct.

Mr. Sokolowski said NOACA would discontinue the awards and instead use the funding to support local community initiatives.

Ms. Feke noted that the funds could be used for first/last-mile initiatives, biking events, or similar activities.

Mr. Gall added that the funds could also support external affairs and broader messaging.

Director Gallucci said the focus would be on region-wide messaging, with some targeted to specific communities, while the awards program would be discontinued.

Ms. Feke suggested integrating this approach with the trails program, such as providing technical assistance to businesses and communities near newly funded trails to encourage trail commuting. She noted that some members expressed support for sunsetting the program while preserving its underlying intent.

Reports/Updates

No reports/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 Dvorak made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 a.m. Mr. Sokolowski seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

The Air Quality Subcommittee will hold its next meeting on Friday, March 20, 2026, at 9:00 – 10:30 a.m., at the NOACA Offices.

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

X = Member present

A = Alternate present