

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS REPORT

External Affairs Committee

April 10, 2026

ACTION REQUESTED

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

PREVIOUS ACTION

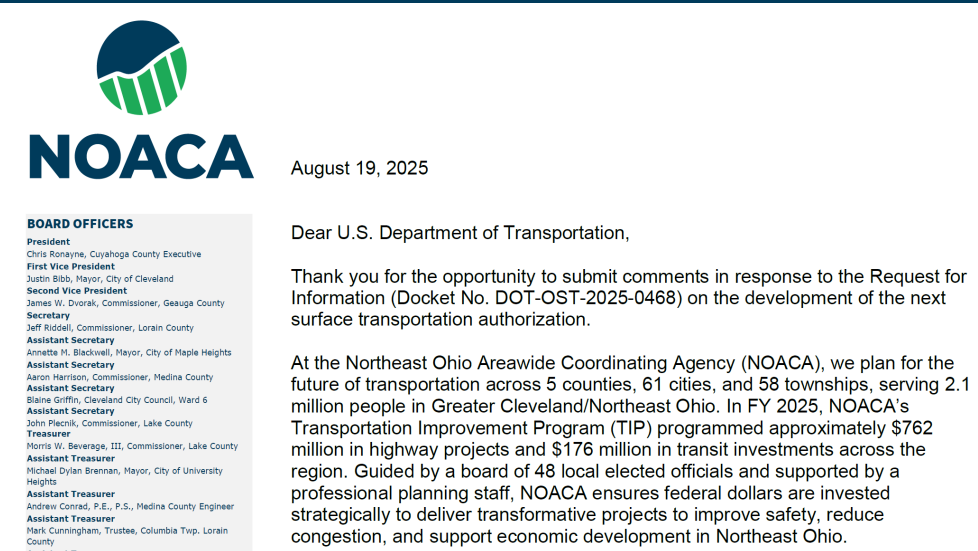
No previous action.

FEDERAL UPDATES



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

- IIJA/BIL expires September 2026 – likely extension
- Congressional hearings & discussions underway on reauthorization
- NOACA submitted priorities to U.S. DOT, congressional committee leaders, and NE Ohio delegation
- Optimistic timeline for reauthorization yielding to reality: likely 1-2 years continuation of IIJA



CRAFTING THE NEXT 5-YEAR LAW

- Congressional committees already discussing the various sections/titles, including:
 - Federal-Aid Highways (subject of today's panel discussion)
 - Rail and Public Transportation
 - Highway Safety (NHTSA)
 - Motor Carrier Safety
 - Finance & Innovation (HTF, TIFIA)

DISCUSSIONS IN CONGRESS

- “Traditional” roads & bridges bill (per House T&I Chairman Graves) or continue multimodal funding i.e. transit & active transportation, passenger rail
- Stabilizing the insolvent Highway Trust Fund (HTF) to continue “user pays” system, and maintaining the Mass Transit Account
- Reducing red tape to advance projects more quickly
- Continuing support for EV infrastructure?
- Improving safety across all modes
- Converting some competitive programs to formula to advance state, regional & local priorities

NOACA REAUTHORIZATION PRIORITIES

- Shift some discretionary funding to formula:
 - Maintain access for regions and communities without harming state DOT funding
- Stabilize Highway Trust Fund, inclusive of transit funding
- Prioritize asset management over expansion
- Safety, sustainability, and multi-modalism
- Continue funding for passenger rail
- Reduce local match requirements

NOACA-US DOT MEETING

- Met with Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs Melissa Mejias-Newton and multimodal team from Office of Governmental Affairs
- Discussion Items
 - Surface Transportation Reauthorization
 - The Role of MPOs in Federal Transportation Policy
 - Passenger Rail Opportunities in Northeast Ohio



CAPITOL HILL VISITS

Great Lakes Week: March 3-5



Rep. Marcy Kaptur



Sen. Bernie Moreno



Rep. Max Miller



Sen. Jon Husted



Rep. Bob Latta

Not pictured:
Rep. Dave Joyce
Rep. Shontel Brown

NOACA TRANSPORTATION DAY

- Last week (April 1) at Tri-C
- Attendees: Local elected officials and staff
- Purpose:
 - Discuss reauthorization of the nation's surface transportation law
 - Inform and educate local elected officials re: speaking up to protect the interests of local communities



NOACA TRANSPORTATION DAY



NOACA TRANSPORTATION DAY

Special guest: Congresswoman Shontel Brown



NOACA TRANSPORTATION DAY

Featured Panel: Local Officials in Transportation (LOT) Coalition

- Leeann Sinpatanasakul, National Association of Regional Councils (NARC)
- Katie Economou, Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO)
- Ben Gilsdorf, National Association of Counties (NACO)
- Brittney Kohler, National League of Cities (NLC)

NOACA TRANSPORTATION DAY



LOT COALITION PRIORITIES

NOACA's priorities align with LOT Coalition (Local Officials for Transportation) priorities:

“Congress created Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations to ensure regional coordination and accountability in federal investment. The next reauthorization should reaffirm that purpose by giving local and regional governments greater authority over the federal funds that support their responsibilities and the assets they manage” – 11/4/25



The BASICS Act

1. Puts every level of government to work - local, regional, state and federal - and expect results.
2. Connects ownership of the federal-aid system to the formula programs which delivers the majority of funding.
3. Balances systematic formula funding - including planning - with strategic infusions from competitive grants.

(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To improve Federal transportation programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. McDONALD RIVET introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To improve Federal transportation programs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**
4 This Act may be cited as the “Bridges And Safety
5 Infrastructure for Community Success Act” or the “BA-
6 SICS Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**
8 In this Act:

Investing in the BASICS

The **BASICS (Bridges And Safety Infrastructure for Community Success) Act (H.R. 7437)** makes targeted updates to existing federal transportation programs to strengthen safety, fix poor condition bridges, improve accountability, and speed delivery of local and regional projects.

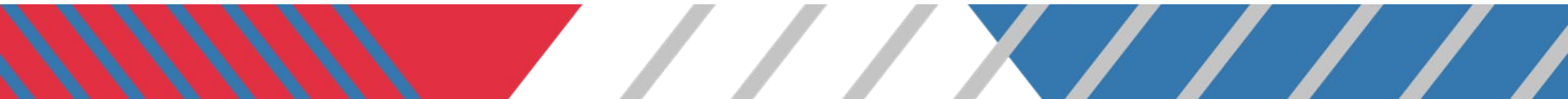
What the Bill Does:

- Delivers local and regional priority projects faster
- Fixes bridges based on condition and ownership
- Targets safety dollars to high-risk roads
- Strengthens accountability and local project selection
- Builds planning capacity to deliver better projects faster
- Provides support for rural transportation planning organizations
- Protects local and regional dollars from being transferred away

Who Benefits from the BASICS Act?

Communities who own and maintain bridges benefit.

- The bill updates the Bridge Formula Program by dividing funding among states based on poor bridge condition.
- Guarantees that 25% of funding is spent on projects that appear in an MPO's regional Transportation Improvement Plan, or for areas under a 50,000 population, by consultation with local governments and state municipal/county associations.
 - Does not allow this 25% of funding to be transferred away.



VIEW PRESENTATION ON NOACA WEBSITE

The screenshot shows the NOACA website homepage. At the top left is the NOACA logo with the tagline "Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency". To the right of the logo are links for "Calendar", "Jobs", "Contact Us", "Nondiscrimination", and "Translate", along with social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. A search bar is located on the right side of the header. Below the header is a navigation menu with five items: "About", "Regional Planning", "Tools & Resources", "Community Assistance Center", and "Board & Committees". The main content area features a large banner for "2026 NOACA Transportation Day" with a "Click HERE to view the presentation." button. To the right of the banner is a "Thank You!" message from NOACA, the Cuyahoga County Mayors & City Managers Association, and two award logos: "50th Anniversary Best Services Consortium" and "OHIO MCGMA". At the bottom of the page is a carousel of five service icons: "NEO TRAVEL SURVEY", "GIS PORTAL", "WORKFORCE MOBILITY TOOL", "TODAY'S AIR QUALITY", and "GOHIO COMMUTE".

NEXT STEPS

- NOACA Board resolution regarding BASICS Act?
 - To share with NE Ohio congressional delegation and committee leaders
 - Draft could be shared for next External Affairs Committee meeting in July, for Board approval in September
 - Or draft could be circulated next week to EA Committee via email for input/approval -- June Board approval

PASSENGER RAIL ADVOCACY

- **NOACA considering new Corridor ID application when the NOFO opens next year – to improve east-west service through NE Ohio**
- **Meetings ongoing with FRA, Amtrak, business community, advocacy groups, & neighboring states**
- **Creating a coalition to support passenger rail initiatives – especially improvements to east-west service through NE Ohio, and Ohio’s study corridors:**
 - **Cleveland-Columbus-Dayton-Cincinnati**
 - **Cleveland-Toledo-Detroit**

NEW DRAFT: INITIATIVES FOR ACTION

NOACA's 2026 Federal Initiatives For Action

Background: The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is set to expire on September 30, 2026. NOACA will work with federal officials to shape the next surface transportation law consistent with NOACA's 2026 Legislative Agenda and Long Range Plan, and support federal initiatives and funding to improve the economy and quality of life in Northeast Ohio.

Recommendations for Advocacy: Northeast Ohio's Congressional Delegation and the Administration

■ **Advocate for a reauthorized federal surface transportation law that strengthens local control of core transportation programs**

Ask Congress to consider making metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) direct recipients for core planning programs like STBG, CMAQ, TAP, and CRP. Support additional reforms to support local decision-making: shift some discretionary funding to MPO-directed formula funding to advance projects prioritized in regional Long Range Plans, increase MPO planning funds, reduce local match for federal transportation programs in low-income communities, and streamline environmental reviews without compromising environmental protection.

■ **Support efforts to stabilize and grow the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) and encourage the search for new revenue sources**

Urge lawmakers to stabilize and grow the HTF to provide long-term predictable funding for the nation's transportation programs with an updated "user pays" system to replace the increasingly outdated federal gas tax. Ensure that any new funding mechanisms will continue to support public transit.

■ **Encourage federal support for making Greater Cleveland a significant hub on the national passenger rail network**

Collaborate with the FRA, Amtrak, and others to elevate Greater Cleveland on the national passenger rail system, improve passenger and freight service, and create economic opportunity. Seek federal support for service and infrastructure improvements to existing Amtrak east-west long distance routes through the region, and proposals for new Ohio corridors: 3C+D and Cleveland-Toledo-Detroit. Support extension of the CVSR north to Cleveland.

■ **Support federal actions that promote economic development and environmental stewardship in the Great Lakes megaregion**

Support implementation of the Great Lakes Authority and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) to protect fresh water resources, create new education and job opportunities, and collaborate on infrastructure investments.

■ **Pursue initiatives and funding to implement NOACA's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**

Support policies and funding that align with NOACA's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the recently reauthorized Economic Development Administration (EDA) to improve economic opportunity and jobs in the region.

■ **Urge Congress to continue support for U.S. DOT's NETT Council to advance hyperloop technology and projects like Great Lakes Hyperloop**

Ask Congress to fund the U.S. DOT Non-Traditional and Emerging Transportation Technology (NETT) Council, to provide a regulatory framework and funding to advance emerging technologies, like hyperloop, which have potential to transform and decarbonize the nation's transportation network.

■ **Support proposals to advance Transportation Oriented Development (TOD) initiatives in local communities**

Improve local communities' access to federal financing tools to support the creation of housing and economic development initiatives near public transit services.

NOACA's 2026 State Initiatives for Action

Background: In early 2027, the Ohio Governor and the General Assembly will consider and enact the 2028-2029 Biennial Transportation Budget. NOACA will continue to advocate for policies and funding to enhance Northeast Ohio's multimodal transportation network, increase travel options, improve transportation safety, and support regional collaboration through metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs).

Recommendations for Advocacy: Northeast Ohio's Statehouse Delegation and Governor

■ **Oppose any suspension of Ohio's 2019 gas tax increase**

NOACA supported Ohio's 2019 user fee increase on gasoline and diesel fuel, and will continue to oppose efforts to reduce these fees, which are vitally important to ODOT and local governments for roadway maintenance. NOACA will support efforts to improve the state's ability to adequately fund Ohio's transportation system.

■ **Advocate for increased and predictable funding for transit in Ohio**

Ohio continues to lag behind most states in per capita transit dollars, and historical disinvestment has left GCRTA and other Ohio transit systems in financial straits. NOACA supports a dedicated, long-term source of transit funding to improve local economies, attract new employers, connect workers to jobs, and improve air quality.

■ **Encourage state support for passenger rail improvement and expansion in Ohio**

Advocate for improved and expanded passenger rail service in the region, including Amtrak's existing east-west long distance routes across Northeast Ohio, and proposals for new service: 3C+D, and Cleveland-Toledo-Detroit. Encourage state funding to advance these routes. Support extension of the CVSR north to Cleveland.

■ **Support efforts to remediate contamination and protect air and water quality**

Support policies to remediate and repurpose brownfields and seek funding for the NOACA/Vibrant NEO Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund to spur new economic investment. Support legislation to revitalize the Clean Ohio Fund. Protect air and water quality to improve public health, economic vitality, and quality of life in the region.

■ **Support proposals to increase transportation safety and reduce distracted driving**

Work with state and local partners to increase transportation safety -- focusing on programs and legislation to reduce distracted driving, establish safe speed limits, and improve network design to protect drivers and passengers, roadway workers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and all users of the region's transportation system.

■ **Advocate for an equitable return of state transportation dollars to Northeast Ohio**

Advocate for transportation funding formulas that send user fee dollars back to the regions and communities where they were collected, in the true spirit of a "user fee," to correct inequities that shortchange the NOACA region. As Ohio analyzes new revenue models to collect transportation user fees, we should also consider formulas to equitably return these dollars to the places where they were collected.

■ **Encourage comprehensive and equitable maintenance of National Highway System (NHS) routes in Ohio**

Raise awareness of the need for comprehensive and equitable maintenance of National Highway System (NHS) routes -- including those outside the interstate system, for which the state receives federal funds. This will reduce the maintenance burden on local communities.

■ **Support the federally established role of metropolitan planning organizations to ensure regional collaboration and cooperation among local governments**

Support legislation to uphold the important work of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) like NOACA. Continue to empower local elected officials, working through their respective MPO boards, to conduct regional transportation and environmental planning and make decisions that directly impact their communities while reaching national goals through a "continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C)" process.

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

- Last EA Committee meeting: Discussion re: tracking and educating legislators on HUBS Act to promote TOD
- New item drafted for NOACA's Federal Initiatives for Action -- for Committee approval
- Would make it easier for communities to access these financing programs to develop housing & mixed-use projects near transit, in alignment with MPO transportation planning

NEW FEDERAL INITIATIVE FOR ACTION

■ **Support proposals to advance Transit Oriented Development (TOD) initiatives in local communities**

Improve local communities' access to federal financing tools to support the creation of housing and economic development initiatives near public transit services.

GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE

- GLRI reauthorized in U.S. House last week
- Bipartisan, sponsored by Rep. Dave Joyce, with co-sponsors Reps. Shontel Brown, Emilia Sykes, Marcy Kaptur, etc.
- Reauthorizes funds for Great Lakes conservation for another 5 years through FY 2031
- Also passed in House: Beaches Environmental Assessment & Coastal Health (BEACH) Act reauthorization
- Now moves to Senate

OPEN FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- SS4A: planning, demonstration, & implementation grants to reduce injuries & fatalities for all modes of transportation
- All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP): to upgrade accessibility of legacy rail transit systems for people with disabilities (FTA, due 5/1/26)
- FY '27 Congressional earmark applications; committee requests closed 3/27 in House & 4/20 in Senate

FY 2026 THUD “EARMARKS”: U.S. DOT

THUD 2026 CPF/CDS APPROPRIATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

PROJECT	FUNDING AWARD	PROJECT SPONSOR	MEMBER OF CONGRESS	NOACA SUPPORT
Royalton Road Reconstruction Phase II	\$4,000,000	City of North Royalton	Rep. Miller	✓
Diverging Diamond Project	\$2,000,000	City of Solon	Rep. Miller	✓
DREAM 66/E. 66th Street Complete Street	\$1,850,000	City of Cleveland	Rep. Brown	✓
Irishtown Bend Stabilization Project	\$1,200,000	Port of Cleveland	Rep. Brown, Sen. Moreno	✓
Beulah Park-Euclid Beach Lakefront Connector Trail	\$850,000	Cuyahoga County	Rep. Brown	✓
Light Rail Track Reconstruction Project	\$250,000	GCRTA	Rep. Brown	✓

FY 2026 THUD “EARMARKS”: HUD

THUD 2026 CPF/CDS APPROPRIATIONS FOR HUD COMMUNITY PROJECTS

PROJECT	FUNDING AWARD	PROJECT SPONSOR	MEMBER OF CONGRESS
Building & Infrastructure Improvements	\$3,938,000	Chester Township	Rep. Joyce
Field House Construction	\$500,000	City of Sheffield Lake	Rep. Latta
Parma Heights Rehabilitation Project	\$1,000,000	City of Parma Heights	Rep. Miller
Shore Cultural Center Historic Preservation Project	\$850,000	City of Euclid	Rep. Brown
Ward 10 Economic Revitalization Recovery Develop	\$1,000,000	Cleveland City Council Ward 10	Rep. Brown
Center for Entrepreneurs Equipment & Retrofitting	\$500,000	Cuyahoga Comm. College District	Rep. Brown

NOACA'S FUNDING RESOURCES WEBPAGE



- Check regularly for updates
- Link for LOS requests
- Link to IJA Strategy

A screenshot of the NOACA website's 'Funding Resources' page. The page has a blue header with the NOACA logo and navigation links: Calendar, Jobs, Contact Us, Nondiscrimination, Translate, and social media icons. A search bar is on the right. Below the header is a navigation menu with 'About', 'Regional Planning', 'Tools & Resources' (highlighted), 'Community Assistance Center', and 'Board & Committees'. The main content area is titled 'Funding Resources' and includes a list of funding programs with expandable arrows. A sidebar on the left lists various resources like 'Getting Around the Region', 'Street Design Flexibility Guidelines', and 'Funding Resources' (which is highlighted).

NOACA
Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency

Calendar Jobs Contact Us Nondiscrimination Translate

About Regional Planning **Tools & Resources** Community Assistance Center Board & Committees

- Resources

- Getting Around the Region
- Street Design Flexibility Guidelines
- Trail Crossing Typology
- Traffic Counts
- Facts & Data on Northeast Ohio
- Major Employment Hubs in the Cleveland Region
- Vibrant NEO 2040 County Reports
- Funding Resources**
- + Maps
- + Recent Studies

Tools & Resources > Resources >

Funding Resources

Font Size: [A] [A+] [A-] [A-] Share & Bookmark Feedback Print

Below is a list of funding programs available to entities within the NOACA region that are related to NOACA's core planning areas – transportation, infrastructure, environment, climate, and economic development. Please note that NOACA is not the main contact for some of these programs, and questions should be directed to the agency who is responsible for managing each program. If you see errors or know of additional programs, please contact us at govaffairs@mpo.noaca.org or 216-241-2414 ext. 275.

Funding Sources

- NOACA programs for Northeast Ohio Communities >
- Federal Economic Development Assistance - continuously available >
- State Funding Programs >
- Currently Available Funding Opportunities >

NOACA Regional Strategy to Coordinate Funding Opportunities: Bringing IJA Transportation Grant Dollars to Northeast Ohio

Investment and Jobs Act (IJA)/Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) reauthorized the nation's

FY '27 FEDERAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

- Decreases US DOT by 6.2% – but adds funding for FAA modernization/facilities/ATC
- Eliminates FRA's Federal-State Partnership program, but increases CRISI funding; makes cuts to Amtrak, including the national network
- Cuts Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program for transit
- Eliminates some EV infrastructure funding
- Ratifies changes to grant funding program criteria
- Increases maritime transportation funding

U.S. EPA ANNOUNCES NE OHIO MEETS CAA OZONE STANDARD

- April 8 U.S. EPA proposes reclassifying NE Ohio to “attainment” for ground-level ozone
- Gov. Mike DeWine, Sen. Bernie Moreno, Rep. Dave Joyce, EPA Region V Admin. Anne Vogel, and NOACA’s Grace Gallucci spoke Wednesday at Edgewater Park
- Proposal open for 30-day public comment



STATE UPDATES



UPDATE ON MPO LEGISLATION

HB 455 introduced in Ohio Legislature by Rep. Mike Dovilla (Berea) and Rep. Brian Stewart (Ashville)

- Prevents any single county from holding a voting majority on an MPO board
- Allows Governor to redesignate a county's MPO affiliation
- Clarifies that MPOs may not issue policies that conflict with state or federal law
- Prohibits a chief executive of an MPO from being simultaneously employed outside Ohio

No recent activity; NOACA working with OARC partners to monitor.

STATE “INITIATIVES” LANGUAGE RE: MPO ROLE

■ Support the federally established role of metropolitan planning organizations to ensure regional collaboration and cooperation among local governments

Support legislation to uphold the important work of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) like NOACA. Continue to empower local elected officials, working through their respective MPO boards, to conduct regional transportation and environmental planning and make decisions that directly impact their communities while reaching national goals through a "continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C)" process.

NOACA'S 9TH ANNUAL MEET & GREET



GOV. DEWINE'S STATE OF THE STATE

- Gov. DeWine delivered his final State of the State address on March 10
- Reiterated support for primary seat belt law
- Similar to his previous successful initiative re: distracted driving law



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.