

September 11, 2015

NOACA URBAN CORE COMMUNITIES POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency's (NOACA) Urban Core Communities Policy seeks to foster reinvestment in defined urban core areas while minimizing a currently increasing regional infrastructure cost burden given stagnant regional population growth and outstanding needs within areas of existing infrastructure. The policy designates Urban Core Communities based on community characteristics that shape the urban qualities of a place and develops specific programs, for these communities.

AUTHORITY

United States Code, Title 23, Section §134
United States Code, 49 CFR Part 21

PURPOSE

This policy is a revision to the Urban Core Communities Policy adopted by the NOACA Board in 1999 as contained in NOACA's *Framework for Action 2025* long range transportation plan. The policy was created to foster reinvestment in defined urban core areas in the region, with the intent that these communities would receive special consideration for federal assistance through NOACA attributable funding programs. The policy is updated herein to reflect the current fiscal environment, updated Agency goals and priorities, recent data including the 2010 Census, and potential uses of the policy for designated communities.

The Policy allows for NOACA to support reinvestment in the urban core areas. Through the designation of specific communities as Urban Core Communities, specific programs may be developed and targeted to support these communities and to ensure that these communities are not negatively impacted by transportation projects.

CRITERIA

The Urban Core Communities (UCC) designation considers the urban form, physical aspects and character of a community. As such, six criteria shall be applied to each community, and a community must meet all criteria to obtain the UCC designation. The intent of the criteria is to measure the extent to which the current infrastructure network serves the population at a cost-effective density supporting a sustainable multi-modal network. The criteria and current thresholds are as follows:

Category	Criteria	Current Threshold
Urbanization of population	Minimum percentage of population living in an urbanized area as defined by the US Census Bureau	100%
Street density	Minimum number of streets per square mile	10
Population density	Minimum population density at or above the regional density of communities that are at least 50% urbanized* by population. The land area used in the calculation is exclusive of airfields and other protected areas (e.g., parks, cemeteries, and flood plains).	2,175
Age of housing stock	Median year of housing structures built is on or prior to the year that the region's population peaked. Data used for this criterion, if survey-based, shall incorporate the margin of error for each community.	1970
Intersection density (Walkability)	Minimum number of intersections per square mile at or above the regional intersection density of communities that are at least 50% urbanized* by population. The land area used in the calculation is exclusive of airfields and other protected areas (e.g., parks, cemeteries, and flood plains).	100
Property value per capita	Maximum per capita value of all real estate at or below the regional average of communities that by area are at least 50% urbanized*.	\$95,488

*as defined by federal regulations

Upon analyzing each community against the established criteria, a list of designated Urban Core Communities shall be established.

USES

Designated Urban Core Communities are eligible for special programs, as follows:

- The Urban Core Preliminary Engineering Program, through which communities are eligible to apply for financial assistance for preliminary engineering for their transportation projects.
- The Urban Core Right-of-Way Program, through which communities may apply for federal funds for right-of-way acquisition, less the initial \$50,000 right of way investment typically required.
- The use of toll credits to reduce local match requirements (pending the adoption of NOACA's toll credits policy): projects sponsored by, and located within, designated communities are eligible for 90% NOACA funding participation, utilizing 10% funding from Toll Credits.
- Other programs that may be conceived of in the future.

FUTURE UPDATES OF DESIGNATED COMMUNITIES

The list of designated Urban Core Communities shall be updated, as necessary, following each decennial census.