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OKI Pioneers Use of Benefit-Cost Analysis **Case Study Released by the FHWA**

Cincinnati, Ohio – The Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) has been recognized by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for its pioneering efforts in incorporating benefit-cost analysis into transportation planning. The FHWA recently released an in-depth case study of OKI's ground breaking work.

"As our transportation needs continue to grow and available funds are more in demand, OKI recognizes the importance of using benefit-cost analysis when weighing all the information and options," said Christine Maticic, president of OKI. "FHWA's recognition of OKI's hard work only further emphasizes the national importance of this tool."

Benefit-cost analysis compares savings in travel time, costs and safety as well as emissions to the construction and maintenance costs of a transportation project. If the benefits of the project outweigh the costs, then the project becomes more valuable economically. The integration of this analysis into OKI's evaluation and prioritization of transportation projects will help guide the allocation of scarce resources. OKI plans to implement the analysis in its upcoming regional transportation plan update which provides a blueprint for transportation in the region for the next 25 years.

"It's been exciting to be on the forefront of the use of benefit-cost analysis in transportation planning," said Mary Luebbers, OKI Senior Planner. "I look forward to implementing the process in all of our major projects and programs."

For its analysis, OKI developed the data and programming required for use of a sophisticated computerized benefit-cost tool known as the Surface Transportation Efficiency Analysis Model (STEAM). STEAM, created by the Federal Highway Administration, estimates the time, cost, safety and emissions impacts of both transit and highway modes of transportation. It is most suited for evaluation of large scale projects and transportation programs.

Few, if any, metropolitan planning organizations incorporate complex benefit-cost analysis into their evaluations of proposed transportation projects or programs. OKI's selection as a case study allows its work to serve as a model to similar agencies across the nation. OKI's work on benefit-cost analysis was also recognized by the National Association of Regional Councils with a Special Achievement Award at its national convention this summer.

The case study has been posted on the FHWA Web site at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/asstmgmt/casestudies.cfm> and can also be found on OKI's Web site at www.oki.org.

OKI is a council of local governments, business organizations and community groups committed to developing collaborative strategies, plans and programs to improve the quality of life and the economic development potential of the Tri-State.

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