

Chapter 1

BICYCLE USE IN THE CONTEXT OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

The vision of this program is the creation of a changed transportation system that offers not only choices among travel modes for specific trips, but more importantly presents these options in a way that they are real choices that meet the needs of individuals and society as a whole.

FHWA Guidance – Bicycle and Pedestrian Provisions of Federal Transportation Legislation

Regional transportation planning has undergone changes in several respects that have favorably influenced bicycle use for transportation.

One aspect has been increased concern about the relationship between travel and the distribution of activities to be connected (land use). Development patterns, resulting from reliance on automobile travel, have spread out residential, work and commercial activities causing excess consumption of land, connecting infrastructure and the energy needed to travel between activities. A consequential transportation issue being dealt with is the degradation of the region's air quality to the extent caused by motor vehicle emissions.

Another change has been the ability to handle increasingly more data to analyze travel demand and the impact of alternative solutions within the constraints of system capacity, air quality standards and potential funding.

A result of both of these changes is a greater inclusiveness in the modes of travel considered in the regional transportation process of moving people and goods. Notably, greater consideration is being focused on non-motorized modes of travel, including bicycling and walking. Walking has always been a component at either end of most vehicular trips as a link between the vehicle and the desired activity location. This component of vehicular trips, and trips made solely by walking, are not included in most travel demand modeling.

Bicycling trips are similarly left out of travel demand modeling in part because of the small share of trips made by bike, the exclusion of bicycles from vehicle counts and because many bike trips now occur on pathways that are not part of the roadway system.

It is the vision of this Regional Bicycle Plan that vehicular travel by bicycle become an integral mode of travel both by its inclusion in OKI's regional transportation planning process, as well as by its consideration as a choice for trip-making by residents of the OKI region.

This plan represents an incremental step towards this vision. It represents an update of the plan prepared in 2001 as well as a continuation of bicycle-specific planning begun by OKI in 1976. This report is also the source of those recommendations for bicycle transportation included in the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan update occurring as this report is prepared.

The plan documents progress made towards past goals for the region and progress made in the practice of bicycle facility planning (although not necessarily incorporated locally as yet). It considers the following:

- Bicycle use by trip purpose: recreation vs. transportation (work/school, shopping, errands and social visits)
- Characteristics of cyclists for planning purposes
- Current guidelines and standards for selecting bicycle facilities
- Roadway characteristics conducive to bicycle safety and use
- Comments of the users and providers of the region's bicycle facilities
- National, state and local policies mandating consideration of bicycle facilities
- Funding resources for bicycle facilities and related services
- Bicycle use in relationship to transit
- Bicycle use as a contribution to achieving regional air quality standards
- Resources for encouraging bicycle use for transportation trips
- Resources for educating motorists and cyclists in safe roadsharing

The past decade has seen remarkable progress towards accepting and encouraging bicycle use in the OKI region. The success of the Little Miami Scenic Trail, a rail-trail conversion project of national significance, has gotten people on bikes and increased local demand for more and safer cycling conditions. Simultaneously, national transportation policies (SAFETEA-LU) have provided a mandate and funding to follow through with the means for integrating bicycling as a component of the regional transportation system. The OKI planning region includes the following tri-state counties as shown below: Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren Counties in Ohio; Boone, Campbell and Kenton Counties in Kentucky; and Dearborn County, Indiana.

