



## INTRODUCTION

OKI is committed to the goal of securing active and representative participation from all segments of the community in its transportation planning and decision making process. In accordance with the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) guidelines, all OKI public participation activities include an Environmental Justice (EJ) component, where appropriate, which is designed to involve EJ communities in a meaningful way. Environmental Justice communities include minority, low income, disabled and elderly population groups, and zero car households. The purpose of EJ efforts is to analyze the environmental and social effects of proposed actions to ensure that these groups have adequate access to public information related to locally preferred alternatives developed, to provide opportunities for participation in the process and to ensure that federal funds are used fairly and without discrimination. Alternatives are reviewed in such a way that adverse impacts are minimized to every extent possible.

The success of efforts to engage the public to participate in transportation planning efforts depends upon the methods employed to publicize opportunities for participation, access to information for education or comment, type and format of information provided, timing of participation in terms of frequency and correlation to final decision making, opportunities for dialogue and comment, consideration given to public comments and discussion, and incorporation of public participation.

## OKI'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Independent of OKI's Participation Plan, the public is involved in decision making through provisions in OKI's organizational structure. This structure is related to OKI's establishment as a public, non-profit organization under the Ohio Revised Code. Agency structure, responsibilities and authority are described in the OKI Articles of Agreement.

The structure of OKI includes four standing committees that involve public officials and others in the development of plans, programs and policy adoption. These committees are the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, the Intermodal Coordinating Committee (ICC) and the EJ Advisory Committee. Additional opportunities for direct participation are provided by interim groups such as task forces, stakeholder groups or subcommittees, which are established for specific purposes of short duration.

As legally required, OKI's policy level committees consist of public officials that represent local governments and major transportation and planning agencies. Other public organizations as well as individual citizens also serve on these committees. The times and agendas of committee meetings are made available in advance by notification through direct mail, electronic mail and OKI's website ([www.oki.org](http://www.oki.org)). All meetings are open to the public.

### FOCUS OF PARTICIPATION EFFORTS

In addition to the public's participation or representation through OKI's organizational structure, opportunities for participation are provided as part of the transportation planning program. Meaningful opportunities for participation in transportation decision making are provided through the scheduled updates of the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), corridor or special studies, and this plan.

### OKI 2040 Regional Transportation Plan Update Process

This plan addresses the region's transportation needs for a minimum 20 year period. The public is provided opportunities for participation in the update of the plan, which occurs every four years. To support public participation in the plan update process, OKI has made a concentrated, ongoing effort to identify deficiencies in the existing transportation system's ability to meet year 2040 travel demand, present the range of issues and concerns to be addressed through transportation planning, introduce potential transportation improvement strategies and projects for public review and debate, provide adequate opportunities for public discussion of the plan's financial implications, integrate public preferences into the transportation plan update, and consult, as appropriate, with state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation in developing long range transportation plans.

To meet these objectives, OKI applied a combination of techniques to provide information and obtain input from both transportation stakeholders and the general public (Appendix C). The key elements of the public participation program for the plan update involved OKI working with members from its standing committees throughout the process, conducting presentations to interested organizations, hosting two series of interactive public open houses, providing displays of information at libraries centrally located in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana, conducting two surveys and making accessible all information and data on the OKI website.

### ICC, Board and Executive Committee

Staff presented key components of the plan update on a monthly basis to the OKI ICC and Board of Directors or Executive Committee beginning in August 2011. The presentations were posted each month to the OKI website. Written updates and information were also included in monthly mailings for these committees.

### Presentations

OKI staff took the opportunity to share information on the plan update during activities with jurisdictions and agencies throughout the region including the Cincinnati Cycle Club, OKI Air Quality Interagency Consultation Conference Call and Regional Planning Forum.

### Public Open Houses

Public participation included two rounds of interactive public open houses which were used to communicate with the region's residents about transportation issues and issues of special concern in particular geographic areas within the region. The open houses provided participants with opportunities to obtain and review information, ask questions and express their opinions. Comments were recorded and reported to the ICC and Board/Executive Committee for their consideration and kept on file at OKI. Public comments included not only the statements made at the open houses, but also public comments shared with OKI via phone, email, regular mail, twitter, facebook and fax. Comments received also included those from local, regional and state transportation agencies. Public open houses were held at central locations easily accessible by EJ populations. Notice of the open houses was provided via OKI's website, announcements at committee meetings, during meetings of various civic groups, area community councils, neighborhood associations meetings and newsletters, telephone calls, direct mailings, twitter, facebook and emails. In addition, press releases were sent to major regional media sources and minority oriented newspapers.

The open house formats featured stations where participants viewed information which was most frequently presented in map form. Open house attendees talked one-on-one with staff to ask questions and share input.



Held in September 2011, the first round consisted of four open houses at which OKI shared information on base data, projections and the alternatives to be considered in addressing year 2040 travel needs. Public comments from the first round of open houses related to defining what the region's existing and future transportation concerns were or would be. Public perspectives on transportation issues provided direction for the plan's development.



Held in April 2012, the second round consisted of eight open houses held in each of the region's member counties.



Public comments from the second round of open houses provided feedback to better refine the draft list of fiscally constrained plan improvement projects. Second round comments were also considered in the final draft of plan projects.

### Surveys

At each of the two rounds of public open houses, participants were asked to complete a survey. The surveys sought perceptions of the overall quality of the region's transportation system, invited suggestions for specific multimodal transportation improvements and asked respondents to rate the importance of various types of transportation improvements. Space was also provided for general comments. An online survey was also available on the OKI website throughout the entire plan update process.

### Visualization Techniques

Throughout this plan's update, OKI strove to engage active public participation by making transportation planning information more accessible and easier to understand through the use of multiple visualization techniques such as artist renderings, audio-visual slide/PowerPoint presentations, 3D computer imaging, traffic simulation, drawings, flowcharts, interactive geographic information systems, online surveys, websites, maps, models, photo manipulation, animation, scenario planning tools, simulated photos, sketches, videos and visual preference surveys.

A special 2040 Plan Facebook page was established to take advantage of its 24/7 social media benefits. Several public open house attendees listed Facebook as how they "heard" about the event.



The plan also had its own dedicated page on oki.org. The same information was posted online, so that attendance in person at meetings and open houses was not a necessity and people could access information any time – day or night throughout the entire update process.



### Draft Plan Update

Draft chapters of the plan were posted on the OKI website as they became available. The entire final draft plan was posted electronically on oki.org by May 29, 2012. The program distributed to everyone who attended the second round of public open houses included notice that the final draft plan would be available at oki.org by this date. By this same date, a physical copy of the final draft plan was made available in the main public libraries of each of OKI's eight member counties and in the OKI lobby for public review and comments. May 29, 2012 was also the date in which physical copies of the final draft plan were received via mail at the Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana departments of transportation.

### Public Hearing

A public hearing was held on Monday, June 11, 2012 at 5:00 pm in the OKI Board room. There were 19 people in attendance. There was a request to edit the description of Project 314 (I-75/Galbraith Road Interchange Improvement) "retain northbound access" be added to the description. On Project 330 (Eastern Corridor/Relocated 32) during the past week over 175 emails have been received from citizens voicing concern in regard to this project and that all messages were identical in all emails received and have been accepted into the record. The statements received were recorded and shared with the OKI Intermodal Coordinating Committee and Board of Directors for their consideration at their respective June meetings prior to plan adoption.

### Executive Summary and Adoption

Each ICC and Board member received an executive summary of the plan for review purposes in their June 2012 mailings. Printed, full copies of the plan were provided to members upon request. The June 11, 2012 public hearing served as the conclusion for all public comments on the draft plan update. All final editing necessitated by public comment was made to the draft plan update, posted to the oki.org website and presented in the final staff presentation made to the OKI Board of Directors on June 21, 2012. The plan update was presented to the ICC for recommendation to the Board of Directors at their June 21, 2012 meeting. With recommendation from the ICC, the 2040 OKI Regional Transportation Plan 2012 Update was formally adopted by the Board of Directors on Thursday, June 21, 2012.

### SUMMARY

The OKI Participation Plan describes in detail, the process for collecting public input on regional studies, initiatives, and other documents. The Participation Plan's public involvement process has been summarized in this chapter. In addition, the public participation used during the update of this plan has been presented and shows OKI's commitment to the goal of securing active and representative participation from all segments of the community in its transportation planning process and decision making activities. Further discussion of the special social and economic considerations are presented in Chapter 16 along with the environmental factors and impacts of this plan.