ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ASSESSMENT
OF OKI’S 2030 LONG-RANGE PLAN UPDATE

In September 2001, OKI’s Board adopted the OKI 2030 Regional Transportation Plan. This plan update includes an EJ assessment, as described in the plan’s Chapter 16, entitled “Community Impact Assessment,” and in the Executive Summary (September 2001).

The plan update’s EJ assessment was conducted in conjunction with the development of OKI’s EJ Assessment Policy but preceded the policy’s finalization. Because of this timing, the plan update’s EJ assessment was conducted through a process that generally but not entirely corresponds to OKI policy. The outcomes of the plan update’s EJ assessment are summarized below, followed by a summary comparison of the EJ assessment process as conducted in the plan update and as prescribed in OKI’s EJ Assessment Policy.

SUMMARY RESULTS OF THE PLAN UPDATE’S EJ ASSESSMENT

The plan update’s EJ assessment supports the conclusion that transportation impacts are fairly distributed in the OKI region, as indicated below (page 16-13):

“This OKI 2030 Regional Transportation Plan addresses the transportation needs of the regional population, including target EJ populations. In fact, the improvements recommended directly provide increased transit opportunities to most of the target areas.

Highway spending for both the TIP and the recommended plan is more than equitable as evidenced by the charts above. These projects provide positive impacts for all segments of the population in terms of travel-time savings, emissions reductions, congestion relief and accessibility.

Additional assessment for Minority, Low Income, and other EJ target groups is provided in sections of the plan that discuss mobility, congestion, and accessibility (pages 16-6 through 16-11) and also in discussions of qualitative measures that are not included in OKI’s EJ Assessment Policy.

SUMMARY COMPARISON OF EJ ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

The process used for the plan update’s EJ assessment corresponds to OKI’s EJ Assessment Policy in terms of the data developed for use in the assessment and differs in terms of the data selected for the assessment. The conclusions of the
plan update’s EJ assessment are not affected by including additional data that was developed but not selected for use in the plan update’s EJ assessment.

The data used in the plan update’s EJ assessment was developed through the process described in OKI’s EJ Assessment Policy. Of the 28 impact measures for which data was developed, the plan update’s EJ assessment as presented in Chapter 16 together with the Executive Summary, focused on ten measures drawn from the three impact categories: travel time, congested vehicle-miles-of-travel (VMT), and job/service opportunity. Table C-1 identifies the EJ impact measures assessed in the plan update.

In the plan update’s EJ assessment, the data for all of the impact measures considered includes data for the Minority and Low Income target areas for all three transportation scenarios, which is consistent with OKI’s EJ Policy. For some measures, the data for the Minority and Low Income target areas is compared with corresponding non-target areas, which is consistent with OKI’s EJ Policy, and for some measures it is not. For some measures, data is presented for target and non-target areas in addition to Minority and Low Income.

The conclusions reached in the plan update’s EJ assessment are similar to the conclusions that would be reached by assessing all of the impact measures for Minority and Low Income target and non-target areas. This assessment, which addresses OKI’s EJ Assessment Policy, indicates that differences in transportation benefits between the Minority and Low Income target areas in comparison to non-target areas are related to differences in the land use patterns and street and transit networks in urban areas, where the Minority and Low Income target areas are most concentrated, compared to the outlying areas. These differences in transportation benefits involve the Minority and Low Income target areas having shorter travel times for all trip purposes by auto or transit; more congested VMT; higher proportions of population in close travel proximity to hospitals, universities, and the Cincinnati CBD; and lower numbers of jobs in close proximity than the corresponding non-target areas. As stated in the plan update EJ assessment for congestion (page 16-7 of the long-range plan), populations in Minority and Low Income target areas will benefit from the congestion-reducing facets of the long-range plan.