PROSPECTUS

The prospectus establishes a multi-year framework for the urban transportation planning process by addressing a series of comprehensive issues affecting the urban area and the process itself.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF OKI MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE

The OKI region is a unique area embracing 2,636 square miles, with a population of 1,886,650 (2000) in Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren Counties in the State of Ohio; Boone, Campbell and Kenton Counties in the Commonwealth of Kentucky; and Dearborn County in the State of Indiana.

OKI is governed by a Board of Trustees and an Executive Committee. The Board of Trustees is empowered to control all activities. The constituency of elected officials of the Board must represent 75 percent of the aggregate population of the region, and at least two-thirds of the trustees must be officials elected by the residents of the region.

The Executive Committee has all the powers necessary to act in the name of the Board of Trustees and governs OKI operations through its monthly meetings. The Board of Trustees and/or the Executive Committee establishes all policy and is the decision making body. The Board of Trustees and/or the Executive Committee may create any committee they deem appropriate and necessary to carry out a specific activity. Typically the Executive Committee appoints an advisory committee to advise the staff in the preparation of a plan. After the process has been completed the advisory committee makes a recommendation to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee then makes the final decision regarding adoption of the plan. The OKI Intermodal Coordinating Committee is an example of an advisory body, in this case a standing committee, making recommendations to the Executive Committee.

SUMMARY OF THE PLANNING PROGRAM & KEY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Transportation planning is broadly defined as all of the activities that precede implementation of transportation projects or policies. Specifically, it is the process that leads to decisions on transportation policies and programs. This process can be broad, dealing with questions such as how to raise and allocate transportation revenues, or can be quite specific, such as providing forecasts of traffic volumes that can be used in designing a particular facility.

In addition, there is a wide range of issues that must be dealt with in transportation planning -- cost and other economic issues, operating authority, levels of service to be provided, and how to allocate limited fiscal resources among competing priorities and objectives.

It should also be noted that transportation planning is just one area of comprehensive functional planning, like land use, housing and environmental, and that all functional plans fit together into a comprehensive plan designed to promote the general well-being of the total region.

The OKI Executive Committee is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO is the entity responsible for carrying out the Urban Transportation Planning Process to continue the region's federal transportation funding eligibility. The planning elements involved can be generally grouped and defined as follows:

**Short-Range Planning** -- The process whereby the projects developed under short-range planning activities become merged with selected elements of the adopted long-range plan into one coordinated, fundable and implementable program of transportation improvements. This also
includes extensive analysis of individual projects including air quality issues, other social, economic and environmental impacts, project-level alternatives analysis within the TSM framework, and regional prioritization issues.

**Surveillance** – The maintenance of basic data files essential to the monitoring of transportation assumptions underlying the basic planning process. This activity includes the maintenance of current data files employed in the preparation of the short-range and long-range plans for the OKI region.

**Long Range Planning** -- The systematic sequence of activities that continuously evaluate and update the current long range transportation plan with respect to actual and forecasted area development. A review of the adopted transportation plan is conducted that takes into account development changes and/or forecasts and policies identified through the surveillance element. Every three years the transportation plans are subjected to a major review and/or reevaluation to set forward the target year to maintain a 20-year horizon. The modeling techniques are adjusted and updated as needed to reflect transportation issues and emphasis which have a significant impact on the resulting plan process. As necessary, a new database is periodically developed to determine the temporal stability of trends and underlying assumptions essential to long-range transportation planning. This review and reappraisal must also consider changes in legislation and technology in the provision of transportation services.

**Services** --The provision of planning data within OKI's guidelines to those responsible for plan implementation which include not only governmental participants, but all public and private sectors (to the extent possible) involved in community development and implementation programs.

Within these generalized groupings, the important or major urban transportation issues and opportunities facing the OKI region can be addressed. These issues include:

- Addressing the requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA).
- Taking advantage of the provisions of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in reorienting the transportation planning process to address air quality issues.
- Continuing the development of an aggressive TSM process and project prioritization to assure efficient use of the existing system.
- Continuing efforts to improve public awareness, including environmental justice requirements, and input to all stages of the transportation planning process.
- Refining the new long-range transportation plan to make it truly intermodal in nature.
- Coordinating OKI's regional transportation planning with statewide transportation planning.
- Refining the travel model to generate usable project level travel information.
- Increasing awareness of the need for transportation energy conservation.
A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE STATUS, ANTICIPATED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE OF EACH SPECIFIED ELEMENTS

Provide for the consideration of socio-economic and environmental effects in support of the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 109(h), and Sections 5(h)(2) and 14 of the UMTA Act (49 U.S.C. 1604(h)(2) and 1610).

There are three basic elements which are part of transportation planning in the OKI region and which influence the way in which social, economic and environmental effects (SEE effects) are considered.

First, planning is comprehensive, continuous and coordinated. It progresses from regional systems planning to regional program planning to local project planning. At each stage, alternatives are considered and the social, economic and environmental impacts are described and studied in more detail. For example, at the systems level, it may be possible to anticipate that implementation will require the relocation of some persons. At the program level, the number of projects in each county that are likely to involve relocation may be estimated. At the project level, it may be possible to identify how many persons need to be relocated, who they are, and in general terms, when they would be relocated.

The second basic element of planning in the OKI region is the utilization of a systematic, interdisciplinary approach to planning. This is accomplished, in part, through a professional staff with a variety of education, training and experience in the behavioral, natural and environmental sciences.

In addition to the professional staff, resource persons from a variety of disciplines are represented on the Executive Committee, Intermodal Coordinating Committee, and other committees. Consulting firms are hired to provide additional expertise when required.

The third basic element of planning in the OKI region is the early involvement of public officials, citizens, and other agencies. This involvement is accomplished at the project level through the project teams and public meetings.

Early involvement enables significant social, economic and environmental impacts to be identified and considered at the appropriate planning stages. It brings to attention the kinds of impacts for which data gathering and analysis need to be done.

These three basic elements -- 1) the conduct of a three stage planning process which is comprehensive, continuing and coordinated; 2) the utilization of an interdisciplinary staff; and 3) the early involvement of citizens, public officials and other agencies -- are an ubiquitous influence in transportation planning in the OKI region. They all contribute to the manner in which social, economic and environmental effects are taken into consideration.

In addition to the three basic elements, social, economic and environmental effects are considered in more specific ways in long-range, short-range and project level transportation planning activities.

Long-Range Transportation Planning -- A year 2030 transportation plan was adopted in 2001. In the process of developing the plan, the social, economic and environmental effects were the major criteria considered in the evaluation of alternative transportation plans. It is anticipated that
impacts of concern will be considered in the evaluation of the adopted plan in the review and reappraisal activities.

Short-Range Transportation Planning -- Short-range transportation planning (or program planning) activities are being conducted according to the process outlined in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Intermodal Coordinating Committee and the OKI staff work together to perform the various short-range planning activities.

As a result of the TSM process, a broader range of alternatives is available for evaluation when addressing a transportation problem. The social, economic and environmental effects of the alternatives are identified at the appropriate level of detail. This level of detail is expected to vary depending upon the needs of the situation. More specifically, the consideration of social, economic and environmental effects is included as a step in the TSM evaluation process.

The OKI Transportation Improvement Program takes into consideration social, economic and environmental effects of alternatives presented. This will occur at a level of detail appropriate to the type and purpose of the study.

Project Level Transportation Planning -- OKI takes into consideration the social, economic and environmental effects of transportation and other federally funded projects by means of two main activities: 1) review of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS); and 2) participation in project study teams.

OKI continues to review and comment on Environmental Impact Statements submitted to this agency. In addition, OKI reviews other environmental assessments related to transportation projects in the region.

OKI continues to participate as a member of project study teams in the OKI region. This includes planning and conducting public meetings when requested to do so, as well as the provision of technical information and review of project recommendations. Study teams and public meetings provide opportunities for the consideration of social, economic and environmental effects of various transportation projects. OKI’s responsibilities in this context include the facilitation of citizen involvement in the environmental assessment process.

Be coordinated with air quality planning conducted pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1857 (Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990).

The activities in the area of air quality coordination have included OKI’s preparation of mobile source emission estimates for revisions to the State Implementation Plans (SIPs) for the States of Ohio and Kentucky, and the preparation of transportation conformity determinations for the region’s transportation plans and programs. Pursuant to provisions of the CAAA of 1990, EPA designated a seven county area in the OKI region as a moderate nonattainment area for ozone under the one-hour ozone standard. The nonattainment area included Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren Counties in Southwest Ohio, and Boone, Campbell and Kenton Counties in Northern Kentucky. In 1999, OKI completed the mobile source emission estimates for a redesignation request, and submitted by Ohio and Kentucky as SIP revisions. On July 5, 2000, the U.S. EPA determined that the Cincinnati-Hamilton area had attained the 1-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard. The attainment determination was based on 3 years of (1996-1998) ambient air
monitoring data that demonstrate that the area had attained the NAAQS. The area has also attained for the most recent 3-year period (1998-2000).

EPA's Transportation Conformity Rule (40 CFR Part 93) requires transportation plans and programs to demonstrate consistency with the applicable State Implementation Plan's (SIP's) motor vehicle emissions budget for VOC and NOx by performing a regional emissions analysis. OKI has most recently completed regional emissions analyses for the 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the FY 2000-2003 Transportation Improvement Program.

Both the SIP and transportation conformity process involve an extensive level of coordination among local, state, and federal agencies, and public participation and information sharing with local elected officials.

*Include provisions to ensure involvement of the public.*

The goal of OKI's public involvement policy is to secure an active and representative participation from all segments of the community in planning and decision-making about regional issues, goals, problems, alternatives and solutions. Through various means such as written and verbal notices, the agency attempts to reach as many citizens and citizens’ groups as possible to inform them of upcoming workshops and meetings where citizen input is being sought. To ensure that all citizens are aware of projects that OKI sponsors, the agency formed an Environmental Justice (EJ) Task Force in 2001. This task force is in the process of establishing policy for the agency concerning the meaningful involvement of minority and low-income groups, the elderly, disabled and zero car households. The policy will also include an assessment of transportation investments in terms of their burdens and benefits to the minority and low-income groups.

*Be consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each state under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794 which ensure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or physical handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program receiving federal assistance from the Department of Transportation.*

OKI's techniques are not designed to communicate with any one specific segment of the population, but rather to obtain maximum dissemination of information to the region as a whole, as well as to sub-regional areas for each type of planning activity.

*Include special efforts to plan public mass transportation facilities and services that can effectively be utilized by elderly and handicapped persons pursuant to Section 16 of the UMTA Act (49 U.S.C. 1612) and Section 165(b) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973, as amended.*

Special efforts relative to the planning, programming and implementation of elderly and handicapped transportation services have been an ongoing activity in the OKI region for some time. These activities include programs oriented specifically to the seven transit systems in the region, as well as broader-based functions and services involving social service agencies, transportation providers, local units of government, and elderly and handicapped individuals in rural and small urban areas not served by the public transit systems.

The passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act mandated that all transit operators reevaluate the provision of service to the handicapped in their respective service area. In the OKI region a coordinated approach between the transit operators and OKI was undertaken to prepare the initial submittal and the first annual update.
OKI has been managing the Specialized Transportation Program (Section 5310) for ODOT in Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren counties for many years. The program assists private, nonprofit organizations in providing transportation to elderly and people with disabilities in areas where existing transportation does not meet these needs. Through the competitive grant program, qualified agencies receive vehicles at twenty percent of their cost, the remaining eighty percent being covered by the grant.

*Provide for the consideration of energy conservation.*

OKI continues its high level of activity in promoting energy conservation goals and objectives in an effort to reduce the consumption of energy resources available to the traveling public. Carpool/vanpool efforts are continually promoted through the utilization of the matching programs and continuing support by the comprehensive OKI ridesharing program. In addition, one of the basic objectives of the transportation planning process is to reduce vehicle miles of travel in the region by the implementation of recommended transportation improvements. Long-range transportation planning can be analyzed objectively in terms of reduced travel and analysis of this type can serve as a basis for establishing criteria in selecting plans that conserve energy resources to the maximum extent possible.

TSM activities, while directed toward the efficient utilization of existing transportation facilities, also provide effective methods of reducing energy consumption. The most recognizable multi-purpose improvements are the right-turn on red provision and the traffic signal night flashing phase which also reduce not only energy consumption but air pollution as well.

*Include consideration of existing private mass transportation services.*

OKI continues to consider existing private mass transportation services to determine where such services can provide a more effective, efficient and economical way of satisfying transportation needs. Where applicable, OKI will encourage cooperation among providers of such services. OKI will coordinate with the various public transit operators to assure that the FTA policy of Private Enterprise Participation is adhered to and that timely and fair consideration is given to the comments and proposals of interested private enterprise entities in order to achieve maximum feasible private participation. In addition, OKI will allow private operators an opportunity to participate in and have their views considered in the development of the TIP.

*Include the following technical activities to the degree appropriate:*

a) *Analysis of existing conditions of travel, transportation facilities and systems management*

A primary function of the surveillance element in the transportation planning process is to identify the existing transportation system capabilities and capacities. To that end, the characteristics of the highway system which affect capacity-- namely, number of traffic lanes, pavement width, functional classification, vehicle mix, green time ratios at intersections, etc.-- have been inventoried. This inventory file is updated as needed to ensure the information contained is current. Similarly, the characteristics of the transit systems in operation within the OKI region are also inventoried as to their location of routes, frequency of service during various periods of the day, and operating speeds. These data permit the determination of levels of service of the two subelements of the transportation system serving the region. In addition, the trip making patterns are simulated by a travel demand model. The model provides the information on trips by purpose, trip interchanges, trips by mode and trips by highway route/transit route. The model is calibrated based on trip origin-destination survey data. During 1995/1997, six surveys (household trip, transit on-board trips, park-and-ride lot trip, Greater Cincinnati trip and external station trip surveys) were...
conducted. Those data were used to calibrate the current travel demand model. When applied to existing socioeconomic data and transportation conditions, the model produces the existing conditions of travel for analysis.

The transportation system utilization is also maintained on an annual basis as part of the surveillance element. Traffic count records collected and maintained by the counting agencies within the region are collated by OKI and adjusted for seasonal variation to reflect annual average daily traffic. A directory is prepared annually for internal utilization and published for wide distribution to those interested in assessing changes in traffic flows. Transit ridership is similarly maintained on an annual basis for each of the systems providing service within the region. By comparing the system utilization and system capacities, the current transportation system level of service expressed in volume to capacity ratio provides a further definition of corridors and spot intersections with severe congestion problems. This information, coupled with accident data, provides a sound data base to initiate short-range planning activities, particularly in the transportation system management area. These files provide a direct input to the prioritization of projects for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program.

b) An evaluation of alternative transportation system management improvements to make more efficient use of existing transportation resources and the development of the transportation system management element of the transportation plan.

In an era of dwindling resources, the proper functioning of the region’s transportation systems is becoming increasingly important. The philosophy of Transportation System Management (TSM) calls for the analysis of transportation problems from the perspective of fine-tuning the existing system, by means of small scale low cost improvements, to achieve maximum efficiency. Multi-modal actions of this nature may obviate the need for expensive full scale replacement or parallel facilities.

The OKI TSM Subcommittee, before its incorporation into the TIP Subcommittee, had defined a two-pronged process for dealing with short-range transportation problems. First, development of a surveillance program will enable identification of areas and corridors deficient in transportation service. Establishment of individual local task forces to deal with the problem areas will bring a TSM approach to problem solution from the inception. With guidance from the staff, the task forces will be able to evaluate potential solutions and select the best alternate.

The second portion of the overall TSM process deals with projects already contemplated or underway. Local jurisdictions, responding to local need, develop solutions to transportation problems without the benefit of a TSM task force approach. The chosen solution may represent the best choice from a limited range of potential solutions considered. In this case, when the local jurisdiction requests that the project be included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Intermodal Coordinating Committee, in their review of the project, may recommend that the range of solutions considered be expanded with TSM strategies and that the problem be reevaluated. On the other hand, a local jurisdiction may have properly evaluated a full range of TSM solutions in their selection. In this case, the Intermodal Coordinating Committee may be satisfied that the approach and selection were valid from a TSM standpoint and recommend that the project be included in the TIP as proposed.
c) Projections of urban area economic, demographic and land use activities consistent with urban development and the development of potential transportation demands based on these levels of activity.

The surveillance activities include the maintenance of the regional data base of population and characteristics of population by small area. The activities include the monitoring of components of population and employment, and extension of both long- and short-term trends in these components for preparation of long-range forecasts. The demographic forecasts prepared include numbers of households, workers per household, population per household, automobiles per household, and employment by place of work. These variables comprise the basic elements of input to the travel demand forecasting model. The surveillance activity also includes the preparation of forecasts of these variables on a small area basis to the year 2030. These forecasts are then employed in the travel demand forecasting model to permit allocation of travel demands in the region. The capability of the region to finance the existing transportation system is also maintained and monitored under the surveillance activity and forecasts prepared to permit scaling the implementation strategy of the long range transportation plan to the fiscal capability of the member units of government to construct and maintain transportation system services.

d) Analysis of alternative transportation investments to meet areawide needs for new transportation facilities and the development of the long-range element of the transportation plan;

e) Refinement of the transportation plan through the conduct of corridor transit technology and staging studies, and subarea, feasibility, location, legislative, fiscal, functional classification and institutional studies.

On October 28, 1993 the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration jointly released new statewide planning and metropolitan planning rules (23CFR Part 450 & 49CFR Part 613) to govern the development of transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas. These rules provide for the development of transportation plans and transportation improvement programs (TIPs) and for the selection of projects to be funded under Title 23, U.S.C. and the Federal Transit Act in metropolitan areas and states. The process for both the analysis of alternative transportation investments and conduct of corridor transit technology studies have been revised and pre-prescribed by the new planning regulations and as such all such efforts will be conducted in conformance with them.

f) Monitoring and reporting of urban development and transportation indicators and a regular program of reappraisal of the transportation plan.

The surveillance activity maintains a current estimate of the transportation system characteristics, particularly those which affect the capacity of the system and the utilization of the system. Urban development within the region is also monitored through the Tiger File Program, wherein the address matching capability of the agency is expanded by increasing the coverage area and updating the file of acceptable addresses to reflect current development, particularly new subdivisions, within the region. All of these activities permit the development of an extensive regional data base which is then used to review and reappraise the adopted transportation plan.

g) Implementation programming which merges the results of the long-range element and the improvements recommended in the transportation system management system element of the transportation plan to produce a transportation improvement program.
Prioritization refers to that process by which active transportation projects are evaluated and ranked in order of importance to the region. The role of prioritization fall most naturally to the Metropolitan Planning Organization since this activity, of necessity, requires a regional forum for cooperative decision-making. Given the limited nature of federal funding and the scarcity of local matching capability, it is incumbent upon local governments, acting together, to identify those projects and programs that will be the most beneficial to the region.

In the OKI region, the responsibility of prioritizing is executed by the Intermodal Coordinating Committee. It is the responsibility of this group, acting with staff assistance, to evaluate projects emerging from the TSM Element and the Long-Range Element and, in a formalized process, merge these projects to form the TIP. This action is in the form of a recommendation to the Executive Committee.

Several criteria are used in the setting of priorities. The Intermodal Coordinating Committee's evaluation of the source of the project, whether from the TSM Element or the Long-Range Element, is an important determinant, as is the project's expected impact on air quality. The final major criterion is the project's ease of implementation. This criterion is made up of several subcriteria such as community support, shortness of time until contract letting, and freedom from environmental complications. For transit projects, an important consideration is the project's benefit to elderly and handicapped patrons as well as additional persons served with the proposed transit project.

FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Various public/semi-public and private agencies participate in the transportation planning process conducted by OKI. These "governmental" agencies are in addition to the various citizen groups which also provide functional assistance. The functional responsibilities of each of the major participants are described below, which is in addition to their regular participation in the Intermodal Coordinating Committee.

FTA/FHWA/ODOT/KYTC -- These major participants in the OKI planning process continually interact as the major implementer in transportation improvements in the OKI region. They also provide guidance as to the planning and programming activities to assure compliance with the appropriate state and federal regulations.

TRANSIT OPERATORS – The seven transit operators serving the region are key participants in the transportation planning process, having the legislative responsibility for implementation of public transportation projects within the area. These operating agencies rely heavily on the various studies prepared by OKI in the preparation of multi-modal transportation improvement programs, short-range implementation studies, and maintain surveillance over performance of the transit system.

AIR DIVISION OF THE HAMILTON COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT -- The Air Division of the Hamilton County Environmental Services Department is by contract, the monitoring, data collecting and enforcement arm of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency for air pollution control in the four Ohio counties (in the Kentucky portion of the OKI region, the Kentucky Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet has similar responsibility), and as such is a partner in the air quality efforts undertaken by OKI. This agency also participates regularly in the other technical activities of OKI.
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also participates to provide guidance in the environmental aspects and air quality activities of transportation planning.

SUB-REGIONAL AND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSIONS -- The respective planning commissions of the OKI region provide a valued resource in the development of various transportation plans due to their local understanding of the needs and problems. These planning commissions also participate in the Intermodal Coordinating Committee.

SUMMARIZATION OF AIR QUALITY AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

OKI's air quality and transportation planning activities have been integrated in a single planning process to permit air quality analysis of transportation plan alternatives. Each alternative plan is evaluated with respect to the total emissions generated by the mobile sources contained in that plan and scaled against the estimated emissions allowable, referred to as the "emissions budget". These activities then permit the identification of projects in the long range plan which have strong potential for reductions in emissions so as to offset growth in travel. The growth in Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) in the OKI region has occurred despite a relatively stable population. (There was less than one percent growth per year between 1990 and 2000). There are several reasons contributing to this increase, including: increasing motor vehicle registrations per person, increasing use of private vehicles (reduced use of transit and ridesharing), and increasing distance between home and place of work. In addition, OKI has examined its analytical tools and procedures and taken certain initiatives to enhance its modeling capabilities. These initiatives will enable OKI to more accurately test various transportation control measures and/or projects for their air quality benefits. Taken together, the equilibrium between future mobility and air quality will be closely monitored and controlled.