



## **1. PROJECT HISTORY AND OVERVIEW**

The Uptown Transportation Study was conducted from November 2004 to November 2006 in order to develop a comprehensive transportation plan for the Uptown area that serves the needs of the area's diverse population and visitors, responds to transportation deficiencies, and supports continuing growth, development, and economic vitality. The Uptown study area includes the Cincinnati neighborhoods of Avondale, Clifton, Corryville, East Walnut Hills, Evanston, Mt. Auburn, North Avondale, Walnut Hills and Clifton Heights, University Heights and Fairview (CUF). It includes a number of major institutions including the University of Cincinnati, the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, Cincinnati Children's Hospital, University Hospital, and Good Samaritan Hospital.

The Uptown Transportation Study is divided into two elements; Part A and Part B. Part A is a comprehensive review of all elements of the transportation system within the Uptown area including:

- Local street operations
- Internal and regional transit service
- On-street and off-street parking
- Pedestrian and bicycle circulation
- Signage and wayfinding

Part B is specifically focused on evaluating access between the Uptown area and I-71 and making recommendations for potential access improvements. Recommended alternatives for improved interstate access have been developed with the intent to serve as the basis for a formal Interchange Modification/Justification Study conducted in accordance with the Ohio Department of Transportation Location and Design Manual, Volume 1, Section 500, including, if applicable, submittal of an access point request document to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in accordance with FHWA Policy - *Additional Interchanges to the Interstate System (Federal Register: February 11, 1998, Volume 63, Number 28)*.

Both Part A and Part B elements are interrelated to some degree and were conducted concurrently and generally follow Steps 1 through 4 of the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT's) Major Project Development Process. Distinct study areas have been established for the Part A and Part B elements of the study. The Part B Study area is oriented north-south to parallel I-71 and extends south to Liberty Street and North to Dana Avenue. See Section 1.2 for a complete description of the Part B Study area.

The recommendations for both Parts A and B are intended to work in concert to address the project goals stated above. Part B recommendations for I-71 access improvements build upon recommendations of the Part A elements that seek to maximize the utilization and efficiency of the existing street, pedestrian, and transit networks, as well as identify new or expanded facilities.



### 1.1. Project History

The initial planning process for I-71 included full interchanges at Victory Parkway and at WH Taft Road (planned as a limited access expressway connecting Columbia Parkway [US-50] to the Western Hills Viaduct). Approximately 0.6 mile of the WH Taft Expressway was to be constructed concurrently with I-71. Neither interchange was fully implemented, thus WH Taft Road and McMillan Street were converted to a one-way pair to serve the partial interchange on I-71. The segment of I-71 within the study area was opened to traffic during December 1974. The present configuration of I-71 and I-471 in the southern portion of the study area was fully opened to traffic in September of 1985.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the City of Cincinnati recognized the lack of accessibility to the Uptown area and initiated a study of the feasibility of constructing a new full service interchange at ML King Drive.

I-71 within the study area was rehabilitated during 1995-1997 including repaving, safety upgrades to the barriers, and medians as well as replacement of pavement markings, signage, and roadway lighting. At this same time, OKI initiated a Major Investment Study of the I-71 Corridor from Florence, Kentucky to Mason, Ohio. The locally preferred alternative for addressing congestion and accessibility concerns from that study was a proposed light rail transit system generally paralleling I-71 from Northern Kentucky through the Uptown area to Blue, Ash Ohio.

The I-71 Corridor Transportation study resulted in a sub-corridor study that recommended the reconfiguration of I-71/US-50 (Fort Washington Way). During 1998-2001, I-71 south of the study area was reconfigured and a new exit from southbound I-71 to Third Street in the central business district was created. During a public referendum in November 2002, Hamilton County voters defeated a proposed increase in the county sales tax that would have funded the local share for construction of light rail transit in the I-71 corridor.

During the past five years, the City of Cincinnati, along with other stakeholders, has sought funding to revisit the issues of accessibility to the Uptown area. In 2004, OKI initiated this project with the goal of addressing a myriad of long-term transportation issues in the Uptown area.

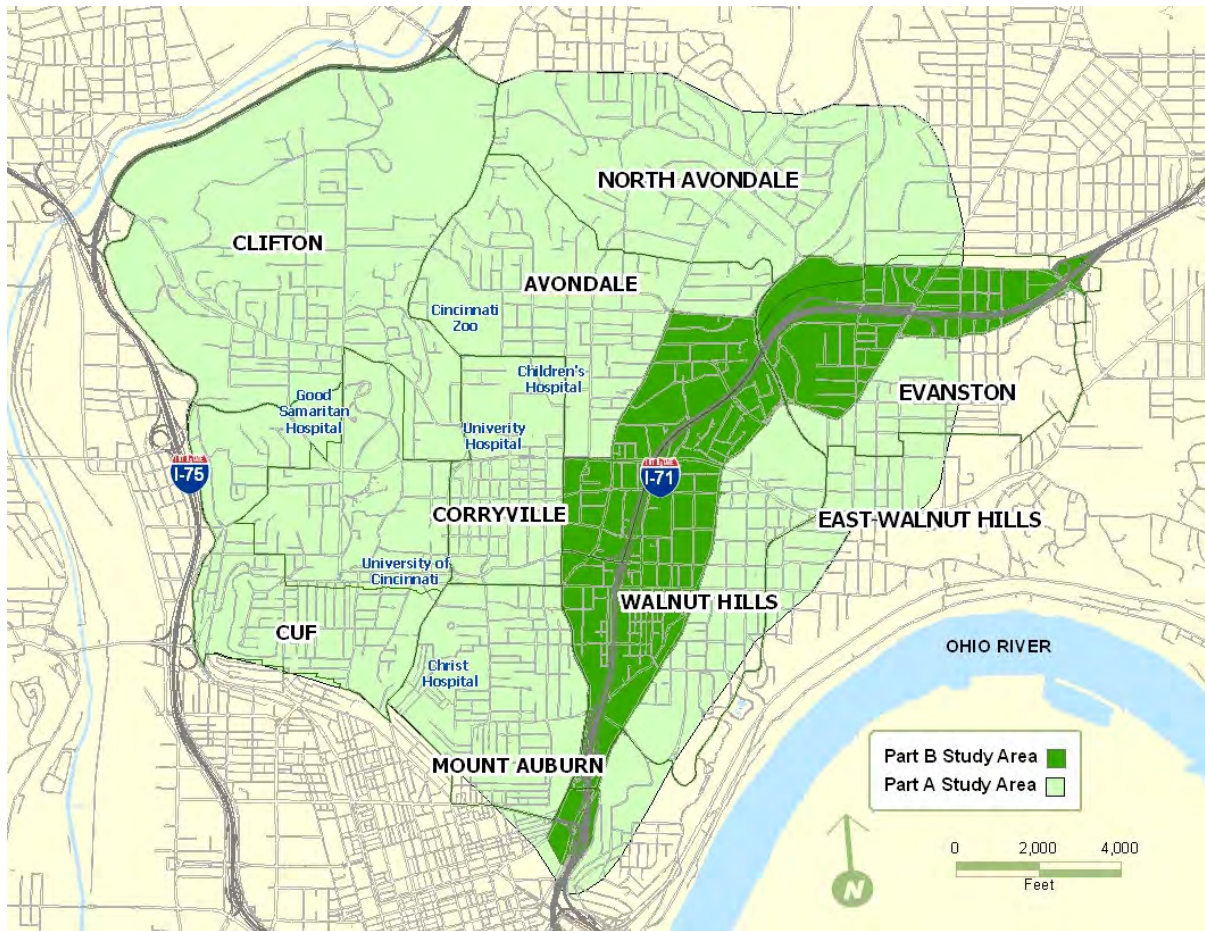
### 1.2. Study Area

The Uptown Transportation Study is organized into two separate but related components; Parts A and B. The Part B Study area is, by and large, a subset of the larger Part A Study area with some extensions to the north and south to incorporate adjacent interchange areas. Part B is focused on improving access on I-71 in the Uptown area. The Part B Study area includes the portion of I-71 from Liberty Street (milepost 2.0) to Dana Avenue (milepost 6.0) and is bounded on the east and west by US-22 and US-42, respectively.

The study area is highly urbanized with a broad mix of land uses. Nearly the entire area exceeds OKI's defined thresholds for environmental justice populations. The study area is forecast to experience a moderate population loss and minor employment gain through the 2030 plan year. The Uptown area has experienced targeted efforts at economic revitalization and mixed use/residential development. Institutions comprising the Uptown

Consortium and others have invested significant funds in capital improvements over the past 10 years.

**Figure 1: Project Study Area**



The study area includes I-71 from Mile Post 2.0 to 6.0, lying wholly within the municipal corporation limits of the City of Cincinnati in Hamilton County. It includes the Cincinnati neighborhoods of Walnut Hills, Avondale, Mount Auburn, and Evanston. The project study area lies within the OKI transportation planning region.



### 1.3. Organizational Structure

The Uptown Transportation Study is sponsored by OKI and a group of funding partners referred to as the Implementation Partners (IP). The organizations represented in the IP group are:

- OKI
- ODOT\*
- Hamilton County Engineer’s Office\*
- City of Cincinnati
- SORTA
- The AMOS Project
- Uptown Consortium, which represents the University of Cincinnati, Tri-Health, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, and the Health Alliance

The representatives for the IP are as follows:

**Table 1: Uptown Transportation Study Implementation Partners**

<b><u>Agency</u></b>	<b><u>Representative</u></b>	<b><u>Alternate</u></b>
Uptown Consortium	Tony Brown Ron Kull	David Anderson Kathy Schwab Jack Huelsman
City of Cincinnati	John Cranley Eileen Enabnit	Martha Kelly Reggie Victor
SORTA	Stephan Louis Tim Reynolds	Lamont Taylor Nancy Core
ODOT*	Tom Arnold	Diana Martin
Hamilton Co. Engineer*	Bill Brayshaw	Tim Gilday
AMOS	Joyce Kinley	Sr. Carren Herring



Additionally, a broad group of Uptown stakeholders has been assembled to serve as members on an advisory committee to the IP and OKI. The Advisory Committee (AC) members are as follows:

**Table 2: Uptown Transportation Study  
Advisory Committee Members**

MEMBERS	MEMBERS	MEMBERS
African American Chamber of Commerce	Corryville Community Council	ODOT, District 8
Alliance for Regional Transit	Corryville Community Development Corp.	SORTA
AMOS Project	Corryville Economic Development Corp.	State Representative Catherine Barrett
Avondale Community Council	CUF Neighborhood Association	US Congressman Steve Chabot's Office
Baptist Minister's Conference	Environmental Protection Agency	US Senator George V. Voinovich's Office
Central Clinic	Evanston Community Council	
Cincinnati Association for the Blind	Federal Transit Administration	University Heights Community Urban Redevelopment Corp.
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center	Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services	University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati Park Board	Hamilton County Engineer	University of Cincinnati Student Government
Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber	Heights Community Council	Uptown Consortium
Citizens for Civic Renewal	Hispanic Chamber of Commerce	Uptown Crossings Community Urban Redevelopment Corp.
City of Cincinnati	League of Women Voters	Urban League of Greater Cincinnati
Clifton Heights Business Association	Local Initiatives Support Corporation	Walnut Hills Area Council
Clifton Heights Community Urban Redevelopment Corp.	Mt. Auburn Community Council	Walnut Hills Business Association
Clifton Town Meeting	NAACP	Xavier University
Community Redevelopment Group	North Avondale Neighborhood Association	