Chapter 4
Strategies to Improve Transportation for Target Populations

4.1 The Context for Strategy Development

As a metropolitan planning agency, OKI is responsible for long range transportation planning as well as for developing a coordinated plan for transportation services to target populations, and work on both plans was undertaken during the same time period. While the purpose of the OKI 2040 Regional Transportation Plan is to improve the transportation system for the entire population of the region, and the focus of the OKI Coordinated Plan is to improve transportation for target populations in the region, the broad goals of the OKI 2040 Plan were also considered as this Plan was developed. As additional strategies to improve specialized transportation are identified, they should be consistent with these regional transportation goals:

Figure 4-1: OKI 2040 Regional Transportation Plan Goals

- **Economic vitality**
- **Safety**
- **Security**
- **Accessibility and mobility options**
- **Environmental protection, energy conservation and sustainable development**
- **System integration and connectivity**
- **Efficient system management and operations**
- **Preservation of the existing system**

Economic Vitality

The transportation network can support the economic vitality of the region by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency as shown through the plan's emphasis on ideas that address this issue.

Safety

The transportation system should provide for reducing the risk of crashes that cause death or injuries.

Security

A regional security strategy relates to sustainable prevention, detection, response and recovery efforts to protect regional transportation systems' critical infrastructure from terrorism and natural disasters.

Accessibility and Mobility Options

To enable people and commodities to have greater accessibility and to be moved with greater speed and safety, major investments are needed to improve the transportation system and reduce congestion. Improvements are needed both for expanding the present system and improving its efficiency. Improvements should be sensitive to differences in development

patterns and community needs with special consideration given to safe use of the transportation system by the region's older population.

Environmental Protection, Energy Conservation, Sustainable Development
Air quality is a major environmental issue in the OKI region. Much progress has been made in reducing mobile source emissions, but the impact of travel growth on total emissions could threaten the region's ability to maintain federal clean air standards. Emission reductions are needed to protect air quality. Strategies that promote the effective and efficient use of natural resources would reduce mobile source emissions and would also have a beneficial effect on other environmental issues and quality of life.

System Integration and Connectivity
A functional transportation system is one that allows people and goods to travel efficiently between their desired destinations.

Efficient System Management and Operations
The Congestion Management Program (CMP) is a systematic process for managing congestion that provides information on transportation system performance and on alternative strategies for alleviating congestion and enhancing the mobility of persons and goods to levels that meet state and local needs.

Preservation of the Existing System
Financial resources are needed to maintain the region's transportation system and address its deficiencies. In light of limited federal and state resources, there is a real need to generate funds from within the region for transportation improvements. New funding sources are needed, particularly for capital formation, and strategies to use funds prudently.

4.2 Developing Strategies to Address Gaps and Needs
Strategies for improving transportation for target populations in the OKI region should address the service gaps and user needs identified in Chapter 3 if they are to be effective. As described previously, these gaps and needs were based on information obtained from geographic analysis, the attendees participating in the public meeting, responses to the public survey and responses to the survey of agencies operating transportation services or social services for the target populations.

OKI developed strategies to address the gaps and needs with guidance from the 5310 Oversight Team, and by considering the 5310 Specialized Transportation Program, the primary federal funding program available to support Plan implementation. In addition to other eligible activities, the Specialized Transportation program provides federal funds for the purchase of equipment to support transportation services for the elderly and people with disabilities where existing transportation is unavailable, inappropriate, or insufficient.

Not all strategies are activities specifically eligible for funding under the existing programs, nor is it expected that sufficient funding will be available to achieve every strategy identified. In

addition, regional stakeholders will need to provide support and commit to pursuing the strategies if they are to be accomplished. Nonetheless, these strategies have been tailored to seven primary gaps and needs identified in the OKI Region, as described below.

Identified Need #1:
To expand transportation availability to target populations throughout the region

Strategies:

- o Prioritize funding requests that expand existing providers' capabilities by increasing areas of affordable service and capacities to serve more individuals

- o Identify obstacles to increasing service

- o Identify options for addressing obstacles to increasing service

- o Seek consensus among transportation providers and funding entities on options which can be pursued realistically

Identified Need #2:
To improve transportation service to target populations through more coordination among providers

Strategies:

- o Establish a regional mobility management system to improve user access to services of transportation providers

- o Establish a forum for transportation and social service providers and funding entities to network with one another, to share information about relevant programs and policies, and to identify opportunities for coordination

- o Identify the means by which a forum among service providers and funding entities can be scheduled and hosted on a regular basis

- o Establish a coordinated and sustained resource for users to learn about opportunities/programs that could serve their needs

- o Convene transportation providers to pursue connections between individual providers and separate service areas

- o Ensure coordination of projects/programs by requiring funding applicants to:
  - ▪ identify any other agencies in the service area for the proposed project and demonstrate an attempt to coordinate;
  - ▪ compare service hours and areas of nearby agencies with those that are being proposed in the application;
  - ▪ review and describe any impediments to coordination, such as funding or agency restrictions; and
  - ▪ document any coordination efforts

Identified Need #3:

To better serve people who use wheelchairs or who need physical assistance to travel

Strategies:

- o Prioritize funding for new vehicles capable of transporting an individual in a wheelchair

- o Prioritize training programs for those serving disabled individuals (drivers, traveler's aides, etc.)

- o Prioritize projects including amenities at transit stops or vehicle pick-up areas for disabled individuals

- o Improve connectivity to transit stops through surrounding communities and neighborhoods

Identified Need #4:

To operate transportation services for target populations on a schedule that is more reliable and more frequent than currently available, during late nights and weekends, and coordinated with work shifts

Strategies:

- o Support incentives for transportation providers who increase travel options for target populations during late nights and weekends

- o Support incentives for transportation providers who increase travel options coordinated with second and third shift employment

Identified Need #5:

To increase the types of destinations offered to target populations

Strategies:

- o   Prioritize funding for providers offering multiple destination types

- o   Prioritize funding for providers who offer multiple destination types on a single trip

Identified Need #6:

To make fares more affordable for target populations

Strategies:

- o   Support programs providing fare subsidies or vouchers to users

- o   Leverage resources and partnerships that enable more affordable services

Identified Need #7:

To better serve target populations for travel to/from jobs and job-related destinations (such as training programs)

Strategies:

- o   Prioritize programs that offer affordable fares to/from employment and job-training sites

- o   Prioritize funding for projects/programs that provide transportation for second and third shift employment

- o   Prioritize funding for projects/programs that provide transportation for weekend employment

- o   Prioritize funding for projects/programs that improve transportation to areas of concentrated employment and job centers

Implementing these strategies should be considered a dynamic process subject to ongoing review by the Oversight Team and responsive both to new opportunities for funding and collaboration and to the development of new organizations and technologies.