
ELEMENT 1

PARTICIPATION POLICY AND PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

OKI seeks public participation as a means of developing effective solutions that can be implemented to address regional issues and needs. To develop solutions that account for the region's diversity, OKI seeks participation from a broad expanse of its geographic region and the many sectors of its population. To address EJ, OKI makes special efforts to involve Minority and Low Income population groups per Executive Order 12898 but also chooses to track three additional population groups which include the Elderly, People with Disabilities, and Zero-Car Households. Many of these special efforts are focused on areas where EJ populations are most prevalent (terms are defined in Element 2 of the Participation Plan).

In response to federal directives, this plan accounts for the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and federal requirements referenced in the FAST Act. Together, these federal initiatives have greatly enhanced the role of participation in metropolitan-level planning.

Element 1 of the Participation Plan outlines OKI's strategy and structure used to engage the public in regional planning and agency decisions which may affect their quality of life. The success of efforts to engage the public to participate 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 OKI decision-making through provisions in the agency'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 Environmental Justice (EJ) Advisory Committee. In 2000, the OKI Board established the EJ

Advisory Committee to ensure participation from and to address the needs of EJ population groups. 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 are dominated by 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 placed on OKI's website. All meetings are open to the public. Board and committee composition and major functions are summarized below.

- The **Board of Directors** governs OKI and is responsible for regional policy decision-making. Two-thirds of the members are elected officials; the other third includes representatives of local planning agencies, community groups, the private sector and individual citizens. The Board meets quarterly. The Executive Committee is drawn from its membership.
- The **Executive Committee** serves the Board by developing consensus on area-wide or multi-jurisdictional transportation policy matters. The Executive Committee can establish policy, adopt plans, and resolve issues. It can also establish additional committees for advisory purposes. Executive Committee members include an elected official from each member county's governing body; a cross-section of local governments; and representatives from state transportation agencies, regional planning commissions, and transit agencies. The Executive Committee meets monthly.
- The **Intermodal Coordinating Committee (ICC)** is the technical advisory committee that advises the Board of Directors and Executive Committee on technical issues related to transportation planning. The ICC provides technical review and input to staff and the Executive Committee. Members include local traffic engineers and representatives of transit agencies, utilities, community and environmental groups, and state agencies. The ICC meets monthly, two days prior to meetings of the Executive Committee/Board of Directors.
- The **Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJ)** was established to oversee the implementation of the agency's EJ component of the Participation Plan. The committee's on-going work includes the review of funding applications and regional EJ efforts.

Other interim groups provide additional planning support for specific issues or projects. Members may include policy-makers, planning professionals, stakeholders, or individual citizens to provide policy and/or technical input to OKI decision-making processes. A group's membership, mission and duration are determined by the need it is addressing. Interim groups have provided planning support in areas such as corridor studies, long- range plan development and bicycle planning.

RANGE OF PARTICIPATION EFFORTS

The OKI Transportation planning program includes a wide range of outreach participation efforts each with varying degrees of intensity based on the nature of planning effort, project type and federal requirements. This document outlines the approach, timing and level of intensity of the OKI participation efforts for the agency's primary planning activities.

Meaningful opportunities for participation in OKI's transportation decision-making are provided through the scheduled updates of the long-range planning and short-range programming elements of the transportation planning process and the development of corridor or special studies. The term "update" as used herein refers to a major revision where the major planning assumptions are revised to reflect new base year population, employment, travel, estimates, or other data. An "amendment" refers to adjustments made to a plan or program in the intermediate years between updates. One other mechanism permissible under federal planning guidelines available to MPO's is a "modification". Used almost exclusively for Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP) a modification allows for minor changes in project funding, timing or scope when a new air quality conformity determination is not required. A modification does not require public review or a solicitation for public comment. Figure 1-1: Public Participation and Conformity Decision Tree for Changes to Plan and TIP, which is illustrated below, is used to assist in determining the level of public involvement the agency will undertake for a given change to the TIP.

Notices of public participation activities and time established for public review of and comments on the TIP shall satisfy the Program of Projects (POP) requirements for the Butler County Regional Transit Authority, Clermont Transportation Connection, City of Middletown Transit System, Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority, Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky and Warren County Transit System for all projects funded through the Federal Transit Administration.

AMENDMENT

Amendment applies to a revision made to the Plan and the TIP. The type of change that can trigger an amendment includes major changes to:

- project cost,
- project phase initiation dates,
- design scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes), the
- addition or deletion of a project, or
- a major change that triggers the need for a new regional emissions analysis for transportation conformity per 40 CFR Part 93

An amendment is a revision that **does** require:

- public review and comment,
- re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, and a

- new transportation conformity determination (in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas).

Definition and Function of the Interagency Consultation Group (IAC)

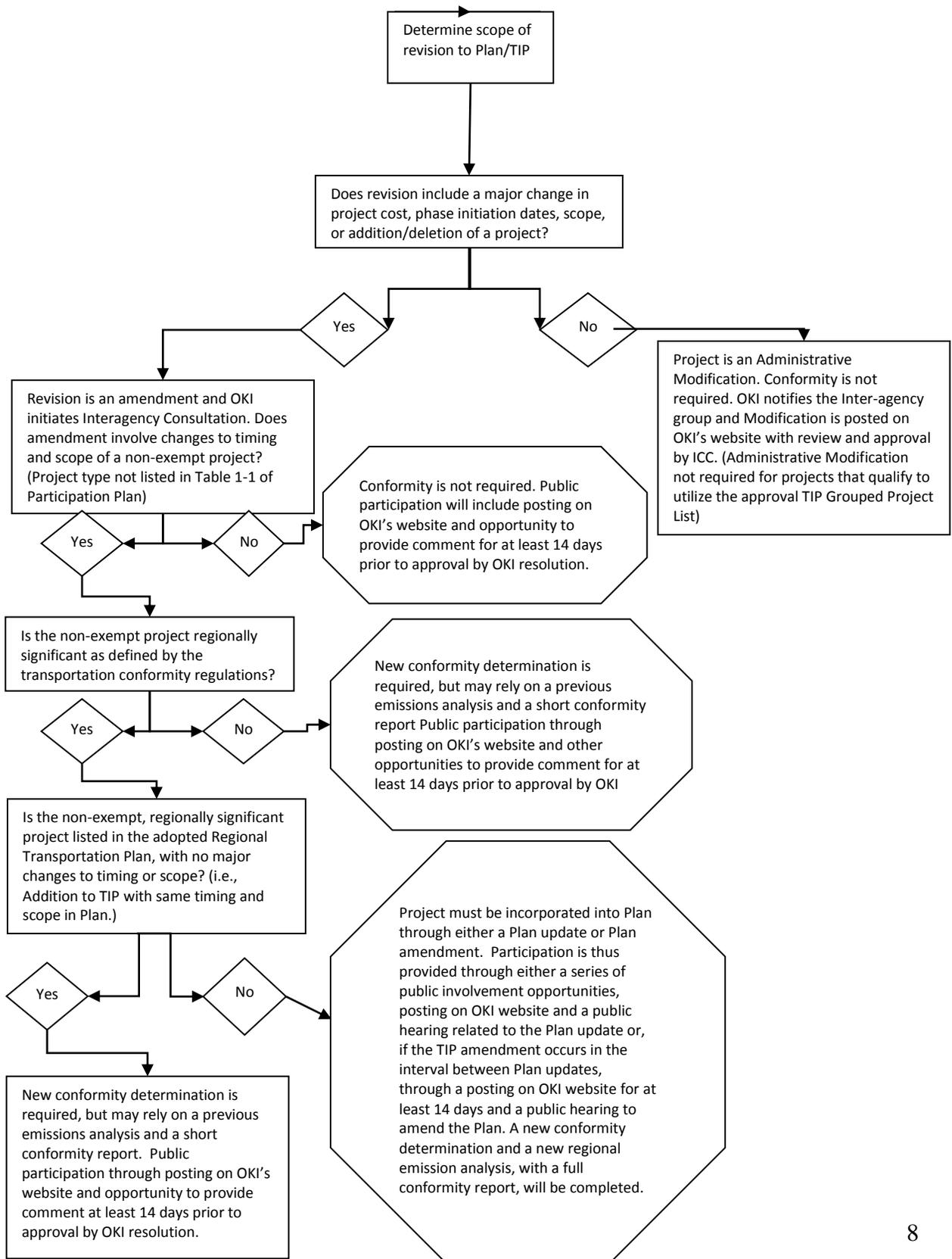
OKI initiates review and discussion by local, state and federal agencies. IAC will review the proposed changes to the Plan and TIP and begin an air quality conformity review, if needed. In cases where an air quality conformity determination is needed, the interagency agency process must be undertaken in accordance with OKI's Transportation Conformity Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as adopted by the OKI Board of Directors. The Conformity MOU sets forth policy, criteria, and procedures for demonstrating and assuring conformity of such activities applicable to implementation plans developed according to Part A, Section 110 and Part D of the Clean Air Act.



*We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry,
and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry
are equal in value no matter what their color.*

Maya Angelou

Figure 1-1 Public Participation and Conformity Decision Tree for Changes to Plan and TIP



ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION

Participation Process for Administrative Modifications to the TIP

Minor changes to a transportation project may be accomplished through an Administrative Modification rather than an Amendment if certain conditions are met. These conditions were approved by the OKI Board of Directors in January, 2014 and are based on the following guidance provided by ODOT:

1. Revise a project description without significant change to the project scope or conflict with the environmental document;
2. Revise a project's fiscal year within the current TIP;
3. Change the source of funds (from federal to state funds, state to federal funds, federal to local funds, local to federal funds, state to local funds or local to state funds);
4. Split or combine individually listed projects in the current TIP without causing significant change to the project scope, or environmental document;
5. Change funding types for individual statewide line items;
6. Change in the project lead agency;
7. Revise the ALI code, project name, number of vehicles, or type of vehicles;
8. Revise the project phase funding amount listed in the TIP within the following limits for highway projects:

| Current Project Phase Cost | Change in Project Phase Cost |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| \$1 - \$2,999,999 | over 50% of the project/phase cost |
| \$3,000,000 - \$9,999,999 | over 30% of the project/phase cost |
| \$10,000,000 and above | over 20% of the project/phase cost |

9. Revise the project phase funding amount listed in the TIP within the following limits for transit projects:

| Current Project Phase Cost | Change in Project Cost |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| \$1 - \$999,999 | over 50% of the project/phase cost |
| \$1,000,000 - \$4,999,999 | over 30% of the project/phase cost |
| \$5,000,000 and above | over 20% of the project/phase cost |

If the change to the project fits within one or more of the definitions listed above, the change may be accomplished through an Administrative Modification. The Administrative Modification is posted on the OKI website, with review and approval by the Intermodal Coordinating Committee.

- The **OKI Regional Transportation Plan (Plan)**, which is the long-range programming element of OKI's transportation planning process, addresses the region's transportation needs for a minimum of 20 years. The public is provided opportunities for participation throughout the entire Plan update process which occurs every four years.

Transportation projects must be consistent with the adopted Plan to be eligible for federal funding. Projects that add capacity to the transportation system must be listed in the adopted Plan. The Plan's adoption by OKI's Board of Directors is the final step in the update process. Plan recommendations focus on improving the function and integration of major roadway, transit, freight, bicycle, pedestrian and intermodal facilities. The recommendations are developed to address current transportation problems, future travel conditions (based on projections of travel demand), and federal requirements for mitigating congestion, meeting financial constraints, and addressing air quality and other environmental, social, and financial issues.

- The **Transportation Improvement Program, (TIP)**, which is the short-range programming element of OKI's transportation planning process, schedules transportation projects for funding and implementation over a four-year period. The opportunity for participation is provided when the TIP is updated, which is every two years. Project amendments can occur routinely in the interim between updates. Notices of public participation activities and time established for public review of and comments on the TIP shall also satisfy the Program of Projects (POP) requirements for the Butler County Regional Transit Authority, Clermont Transportation Connection, City of Middletown Transit System, Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority, Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky and Warren County Transit System for all projects funded through the Federal Transit Administration.

The TIP includes a variety of projects, but capacity-expansion projects recommended in the Plan must be included in the TIP in order to be eligible for federal funding. These projects are selected and prioritized in coordination with local governments and the ICC. Prioritization is based on criteria that reflect the regional transportation goals found in the Plan, such as increasing safety, reducing congestion and improving economic vitality.

- **Corridor and Special Studies** focus on specific areas within the region or specific transportation issues. They are not conducted on a scheduled basis. The study recommendations are reviewed and adopted by the Board of Directors and incorporated into the Plan. Public participation is defined at the on-set of each study and provided for throughout the study's development.

Corridor and Special studies are conducted for issues requiring detailed study. For Corridor Studies, the participation process is geared toward developing consensus for a solution among those who are most affected. For Special Studies, participation is most often designed to obtain technical or specialized input (such as in a bike plan or freight study). The participation opportunities provided during these studies tend to generate greater

numbers of participants and more intense interest than other transportation planning processes, but the participants tend to be drawn from a relatively small geographic area or interest group.

PARTICIPATION POLICY

OKI'S Participation Plan is designed to secure active and representative involvement from all segments of the community in planning and decision-making about regional planning issues, goals, problems, alternatives, and solutions. To accomplish this purpose, OKI commits to the following goals:

- **Enable** an early and active role for the public in the development of transportation plans and programs;
- **Identify** and invite a broad range of potentially affected and interested persons, with special efforts to identify EJ populations;
- **Tailor** techniques to meet the diverse needs of the public and the variety of planning activities;
- **Make** special efforts to secure participation and input from EJ populations, including the use of facilities and outreach methods that facilitate their participation;
- **Consult** the public about participation methods as well as planning issues;
- **Evaluate** participation processes and procedures periodically so that adjustments can be made for maximum effectiveness; and
- **Coordinate** with Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana statewide participation plans.

PARTICIPATION PROCESS

General Provisions for Public Meetings

Public meetings will be convened as forums for interactive discussion on a variety of planning studies in order to receive input from community residents.

To encourage meaningful participation by the public, OKI arrangements for public meetings will provide for the following:

- **Timing** so that public comment can be considered as part of the planning process prior to final decision-making;
- **Promotion** to reach a broad and diverse public;
- **Facility** locations that are accessible to people with physical disabilities and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); accessible to public transit, if available and appropriate to the particular study or project; geographically convenient and accessible to the majority of potentially impacted and interested stakeholders; and
- **Develop** strategies that promote participation and facilitate discussion by providing relevant information for public review and a viable opportunity for public comment and discussion.

The information or proposals for which public comment is sought may be presented in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, display boards, 3D models, handouts and audio visual presentations. OKI will present information in a form and style to be generally understood by the public. Terms commonly used only in the transportation planning field will be avoided or explained. Qualified personnel will be available for discussing the information and for answering questions from the public. The meetings will include some format for requesting and obtaining public input including, but not limited to, a question-and-answer session, survey or comment form. OKI will continue to utilize social media platforms as appropriate.

OKI will strive to accommodate persons with special needs. In addition to ensuring that the facility for public meetings and public hearings is ADA compliant, OKI will provide translation services upon request at no cost to the recipient and will participate in hearing relay services for individuals with hearing impairments. OKI is required to conduct a public meeting on a biennial basis, at a minimum, for its transportation planning process. The meeting will be held at OKI and may be conducted in conjunction with an ICC Meeting.

Notification Process for Public Meetings

OKI will use a variety of ways to attract the general public, elected officials and representatives of agencies and organizations to attend public meetings. At a minimum, these methods will include:

1. Legal notices placed in general circulating newspapers and major minority newspaper(s) in their native language at least fourteen days in advance of the meetings;
2. Post a notice on OKI's website at least fourteen days in advance of the meetings;
3. Submit press releases to major newspapers and community papers;
4. Notify OKI committee members;
5. Notify EJ organizations (i.e., agencies and organizations that serve or represent EJ populations) and selected media targeting EJ populations and,
6. Utilize OKI's various social networks.

The notification will include, at a minimum, 1) information on the public meeting subject, location, and time; 2) locations where documents are available for review (if applicable), and 3) invitation to participate in the public meeting. Particular efforts will be made to promote the participation of EJ populations.

Process for Public Comment and Response

Comments from public meetings will be recorded, reviewed, and summarized in a document. A summary of comments will be presented to the OKI Board for its consideration prior to Board action on the item. Changes that are significantly different and/or raise new issues from the initial item presented to the Board for action will be made available for public comment. The OKI Board will determine if additional opportunity for public comment is warranted.

General Provisions for Public Hearings

Public hearings will be convened to provide formal documentation of public comments on the major outcomes of OKI's planning process prior to its presentation to the Board for adoption. These planning process documents include a draft of the Plan update, a draft of the TIP update, and amendments to the Plan in intervals between updates (these would be needed for TIP amendments in which capacity expansion projects are added or deleted).

Public hearings will include a brief overview of the draft Plan, amendments, or TIP before the floor is open for comments. At the hearing, citizens will be able to comment verbally or submit written comments. Public hearings will be held at the OKI office or other suitable locations, which are accessible by transit and accessible to people with disabilities, as ADA specified. The comment period begins with the publication of the legal notice and remains open until OKI Board action is taken. Comments may be submitted to OKI in writing, by email or personal testimony at the Board Meeting at the discretion of the Board President.

Notification Process for Public Hearings

Public hearings will be publicized by:

1. Legal notices placed in the major newspapers and major minority newspaper(s) in their native language at least fourteen days in advance of the hearings;
2. Post a notice on OKI's website;
3. Notify OKI committee members;
4. Notify EJ organizations (i.e., agencies and organizations that serve or represent EJ populations) and selected media targeting EJ populations and
5. Utilize OKI's various social networks.

The notification will include, at a minimum, 1) information on the public meeting subject, location, and time; 2) locations where documents are available for review (if applicable), and 3) invitation to participate in the public meeting. Particular efforts will be made to promote the participation of EJ populations.

Availability of Documents for Review and Comment

Documents subject to review and comment at a public hearing will be made available at least fourteen days prior to the public hearings, which coincides with the placement of a legal notice. Copies of draft documents will be placed, at a minimum, on the OKI website and at the OKI office. Copies may be requested from OKI.

Process for Public Comment and Response

Comments on documents subject to public hearings may be made verbally or in writing at the public hearing or transmitted during the comment period.

Comments presented verbally at the public hearings will be recorded and documented. All comments submitted within the comment period will be reviewed and summarized in a document that includes staff responses. Staff responses will be made available to those who provided comment. A summary of comments will be presented to the OKI Board for its consideration prior to Board action on the item.

Participation Process for Regional Transportation Plan Update

Due to the regional, macro-level, and conceptual planning recommendations generated by the Plan, outreach must be flexible to obtain optimal participation from the region's broad and diverse populations. For each Plan update, OKI will design a unique participation plan which takes advantage of the most current and effective techniques. To address EJ concerns, each Plan update will include an EJ component. Staff will report to ICC and the OKI Executive Committee/Board at regularly scheduled meetings. Participation is critical to developing consensus so that recommendations will advance to implementation.

Notification Process for Public Meetings

The notification process for public meetings will be in accordance with the General Provisions for Public Meetings described above.

Process for Public Comment and Response



Comments from public meetings will be recorded and summarized in a format that includes staff analysis and responses. A summary of comments and responses will be presented to the OKI Board for its consideration prior to the Plan's adoption and subsequently included, along with any Board modifications, as an appendix to the Plan. If the Plan is changed significantly from the original format made available for public comment and raises new issues, then OKI will provide additional opportunity for public comment on the revised document.

Public Hearing

A public hearing will be held prior to adoption of the Plan update by the OKI Board in accordance with the General Provisions for Public Hearings discussed previously.

Document Availability

Documents subject to review and comment at the public hearing will be made available at least fourteen days prior to the meeting, which coincides with the placement of the legal notice. Copies of draft documents will be placed, at a minimum, on the OKI website, at the OKI office and in each county's main public library. Copies may be requested from OKI.

Participation Process for TIP Update

For comments on the TIP, OKI will maintain a separate record of comments for subsequent incorporation into the summary of comments prepared in conjunction with the public hearing on the TIP. If the TIP is changed significantly from the initial document made available for public comment and raises new issues, then OKI will provide additional opportunity for public comment on the revised document.

A public hearing will be held prior to adoption of the TIP update by the OKI Board in accordance with the General Provisions for Public Hearings discussed previously.

Participation Process for Amendments to the TIP and Regional Transportation Plan (Plan)

In the intervals between updates, amendments to the TIP and the Plan will be documented in a resolution presented to OKI's ICC for consideration and then to the OKI Board for approval.

In accordance with FAST Act, participation plans should incorporate a recommended list of projects for which TIP and/or Plan amendments can be processed without a requirement for public review and a new transportation conformity determination. Table 1-1 lists project types that are exempt from a public review requirement and transportation conformity. Exemption of such projects would not deny the public the right for interested parties that are affected by transportation plans, programs and projects to be involved in the early stages or at key decision points in the planning process, since the exempted projects are of types that are typically not identified through the planning process and/or are known to be non-controversial, negligible impact projects. A project for which public review is not required could be subject to public involvement requirements if OKI, in consultation with either the KYTC, Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), ODOT, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) or FHWA, determines that public review is appropriate due to a potential for controversy, negative impacts, or public concern for any other reason.

For amendments involving non-exempt projects (project types not included in Table 1-1), public review and a new transportation conformity determination are required. OKI, in consultation with KYTC, INDOT, ODOT, FTA or FHWA, may determine that the amended projects are not regionally significant and therefore the new conformity determination may rely on a previous regional emissions analysis. In this case, the participation process will consist of a posting of the amendment and conformity report on OKI's website and the opportunity to provide comment for a period of at least fourteen days prior to OKI Board action.

If a TIP amendment involves a non-exempt, regionally significant project it must be incorporated into the Plan in order to be eligible for federal funding, which involves either a Plan update or amendment. Participation is thus provided through either a series of public meetings and a public hearing related to the Plan update or, if the TIP amendment for a capacity expansion project occurs in the interval between Plan updates, through a public hearing to amend the Plan.

Corridor and Special Studies

Corridor Studies

Due to the discussion of local issues which often generate intensive public interest, corridor studies are a major focus of OKI's participation efforts. For each corridor study, OKI will design a unique participation process to obtain optimal participation from the area's key stakeholders, a diversity of community and special interest groups, and the general public. To address EJ concerns, each corridor plan will include an EJ component for participation. At a minimum, each corridor study will have its own advisory group that oversees the study process and is involved in designing the participation process, study goals, problem definition, alternative solutions, and selection of preferred alternatives. In addition, each study may apply any number of other methods to provide public outreach or obtain public input. Participation is important for developing consensus so that recommendations will advance to implementation. Public Meetings are valuable to the process and will be held at locations appropriate to attract stakeholder input. Public Hearings are not required for corridor studies.

Special Studies

For special studies that focus on specific transportation issues (such as a bike plan or a freight study), OKI will tailor an individual participation program based on project scope, funding, and purpose. Efforts to involve the public may include developing a separate committee for the study duration as well as a combination of efforts to provide outreach and obtain input from affected organizations and the general public. Study recommendations incorporated into the Plan are subject to the participation efforts conducted as part of the Plan amendment process. Public Meetings are valuable to the process and will be held at locations appropriate to attract stakeholder input. Public Hearings are not required for special studies.

Table 1-1: TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY EXEMPT PROJECT TYPES

Safety

| | |
|--|---|
| Railroad/Highway crossing | Skid treatments |
| Shoulder improvements | Adding medians |
| Increasing sight distance | Truck climbing lanes outside the urbanized areas |
| Traffic control devices and operating assistance | Lighting improvements |
| Railroad/highway crossing warning devices | Widening narrow pavements or reconstructing, rehabilitation, or replacement of bridges (no additional travel lanes) |
| Guardrails, median barriers, crash cushions | Emergency truck pullovers |
| Pavement resurfacing, restoration and/or rehabilitation | Safety roadside rest areas |
| Pavement marking | Changes in vertical and horizontal alignment * |
| Emergency relief | Truck size and weight inspection stations * |
| Fencing | Interchange reconfiguration projects * |
| Changes in access control for safety | Intersection signalization at individual intersections * |
| Hazard elimination program, highway safety improvement program | Intersection channelization * |

Transit

| | |
|--|---|
| Operating assistance to transit agencies | Construction of small transit passenger shelters and information kiosks |
| Purchase of transit support vehicles | Reconstruction or renovation of transit buildings and structures |
| Rehabilitation of transit vehicles | Purchase of new buses or rail cars to replace existing vehicles or for minor expansions |
| Purchase of office, shop, and operating equipment for existing transit facilities | Transportation corridor fringe parking facilities |
| Purchase of operating equipment for transit vehicles (e.g. radios, fare boxes, lifts, etc.) | Bus terminal and transfer points * |
| Construction or renovation of power, signal, and communications systems for transit | Construction of new bus or rail storage/maintenance facilities * |
| Alterations to facilities or vehicles in order to make them accessible for elderly and handicapped persons | |

Air Quality

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Continuation of ride-sharing and van-pooling promotion activities at current levels | Bicycle and pedestrian facilities |
|---|-----------------------------------|

Other Minor Projects

| | |
|--|---|
| Planning and technical studies | Acquisition of scenic easements |
| Engineering to assess social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed action | Planting and landscaping |
| Noise attenuation | Directional and information signs |
| Emergency or hardship advance land acquisitions | Repair of damage caused by natural disasters, civil unrest, or terrorist acts |

*Projects must meet criteria for categorical exclusion

Other Provisions for Involving the Public

OKI Website

To increase public awareness and understanding of OKI planning efforts and opportunities for participation, OKI will maintain a website (www.oki.org) with information on the agency, its planning activities, and special opportunities for participation. Information will be updated on a regular basis.

Networking

Networking involves OKI staff presenting information and seeking opportunities for discussion to groups with a special interest in transportation planning. OKI will offer networking opportunities during the update of the Plan and in the intervals between Plan updates. A networking session may feature an explanation of the planning process, plan recommendations, or a planning issue and will include a question-and-answer session. OKI may distribute handouts, a survey form, or use other methods to provide information or obtain input. OKI will be available for networking in response to requests and will continue to promote its availability to EJ communities and organizations.

Additionally, OKI's analysis of roadways within the urbanized area is a critical element which will be provided to each individual State Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The use of safety conscious planning workshops is a component of this process and furthers the interagency consultation efforts to implement projects and programs. Through such participation efforts, OKI ensures outreach to and input from local and regional safety stakeholders including, but not limited to, transit providers, elected officials and staff from departments of environmental services, police, fire, emergency services and planning.

Other Outreach Methods

Independent of efforts to involve the public as described in preceding sections, OKI may make additional outreach efforts at any time. The outreach method and timing will be determined based on the need for education, the nature of the planning effort, and the audience to be reached. Methods for increasing public awareness of transportation issues or participation opportunities include, but are not limited to, social media, press releases, public service announcements, media briefings, newspaper articles, and coordination with EJ communities or organizations. Methods to provide for public education include, but are not limited to, social media, newsletters, information displays, fact sheets, brochures, a speaker's bureau, and information for distribution by EJ communities or organizations.

Additional Participation of EJ Populations

In addition to the efforts to involve EJ populations in OKI transportation planning as provided in the preceding sections, and in addition to the resources to improve communication with EJ populations as discussed in Participation Plan Element 4, there may be occasions in which public comment is needed from one or more EJ populations or, perhaps for a corridor study, at a level more localized than which OKI is traditionally involved. In that case, OKI will seek to collaborate with the public and private organizations that represent or serve these special populations. This collaboration would involve working with agencies/organizations willing to present information to the people they serve or represent; provide space in their newsletters; allow meetings in their facilities, or otherwise serve as intermediaries. These agencies/organizations may include, but are not necessarily limited to, congregations, schools, neighborhood centers, housing associations, adult education centers, and sponsors of special events.

Availability of Data

In addition to drafts of the Plan and the TIP being available for review and comment, these and other documents and technical information will be available to the public in response to requests. Reproduction costs of more than 10 pages will be borne by the party making the request.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

In carrying out this policy to involve the public in transportation plans and programs, discrimination against any person because of political or religious opinion or affiliation or because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, income or disability is hereby prohibited.

Amending the Participation Plan

In accordance with FAST Act legislation, this OKI Participation Plan is developed “in consultation with all interested parties.” This consultation requirement is intended to afford all parties who participate in the regional planning process a specific opportunity to comment on the Plan prior to its approval or subsequent amendment. The update process for this document – the OKI Participation Plan – is required four years after the document’s adoption and every four years thereafter. Revisions to this document will be preceded by a 45-day public review period. OKI is committed to consideration of public input.