2020

Embracing the Future, Mobility’s Transformational Technology
OKI: Who We Are and How We Serve You

Founded in 1964, OKI began with the mission to comply with the requirements of the 1962 Federal Aid Highway Act to qualify our eight-county region for federal funds toward interstate highway planning and construction.

Through the years, as regional planning became a prerequisite for the federal funding of projects other than transportation, OKI has expanded its activities.

Today, OKI operates as a public, nonprofit organization. It assists its 118 members who represent governmental, social and civic groups from nearly 230 communities in conducting transportation planning.

OKI also performs air and water quality planning; promotes and facilitates ridesharing; coordinates intergovernmental review of federally funded projects; provides technical aid to member governments; maintains social and economic data for planning purposes; and, finally, it coordinates with state and federal agencies.

Inherent in its functions, OKI is a forum for local governments to share transportation, environmental, economic and other challenges for which causes and solutions cross political boundaries.

Two Thousand and Twenty was noteworthy for many reasons, but none more so than the arrival of a worldwide pandemic.

In one way or another, we were all touched by this disrupting event, whether that meant working from home or working on the front lines. Or, far worse, having lost a loved one to the coronavirus.

Beyond the herculean feats of our first responders, we were also inspired by another group of front-line workers: truck drivers. From the start of COVID-19, they drove the nation’s streets and highways, day and night, delivering medical supplies to hospitals and ensuring that shelves remained stocked with essential goods for consumers.

Like many of you, I was reminded of how critical all freight transporters are to the welfare and economic vitality of a nation. With this in mind, I am hopeful for our region’s future, and for a transportation system that will continue to serve our more than 2 million residents.

In this spirit, I am equally honored to present the 2020 OKI Annual Report.

We publish this report to share some of the ways that OKI is fulfilling its mission to provide safe, reliable modes of transportation in our region. Every year, OKI invests about $40 million and approves a half-billion dollars in projects.

There isn’t enough space here to highlight every OKI achievement in 2020. That said, I share with you a handful that best illustrate OKI’s commitment to advancing the place we call home.

In June 2020, the OKI Board adopted the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. For the first time, the plan considers the arrival of the driverless car. As a result, OKI created a Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) Action Plan of specific strategies to prepare for this new age of mobility.

OKI has become a regional leader in support of electric vehicles. The GIS Department developed a web app — ONI EV Charging Station Locator — to assist communities in deciding where to put new EV chargers. The app provides nearby traffic counts, amenities (malls, shopping centers & restaurants), the distance to the nearest EV charging station, and much more.

In other highlights, OKI earned federal approval of our America Marine Highway (AMH) Project Designation of the M-70 Barge Service in the Ports of Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky and Beyond, becoming one of only 26 such designations in the U.S. The OKI region and our neighbors along the Ohio River are now eligible to pursue new federal funding opportunities.

In another funding success, OKI expanded private sector partnerships to apply and secure grants from USDOT’s Marine Administration (MARAD) and the Federal Rail Administration (FRA), totaling almost $5.5 million. These funds will help spur economic growth, increase safety and ease truck traffic on our congested roadways.

In a nod to adventurists, OKI launched the Ohio River Recreational Trail Digital Guide in summer 2020. The guide increases the safety and enhances tourism along the Ohio River corridor from Portsmouth, Ohio, to West Point, Ky.

In December 2020, OKI received a Silver designation in the national SolSmart program, an initiative of the Solar Foundation, International City/County Management Association and the U.S. Department of Energy. SolSmart recognized OKI for helping local governments make it “faster, easier and more affordable to go solar.”

I conclude my President’s Letter by recognizing the superb leadership that has long defined OKI. Under the guidance of CEO Mark Policinski and Deputy Executive Director Robert Koehler, OKI continues to nurture a culture of consensus and collaboration, steering this region to new levels of service and success.

Finally, I am thankful for your support during my two years as Board president. I look forward to continued collaboration as a member of the executive committee with the OKI board and staff to provide the leadership and guidance to sustain our region’s momentum.

Best Regards,

Kris Knochelmann
OKI is 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.

The Board of Directors governs OKI and is responsible for regional policy decision-making. Two-thirds of the members are elected officials; the other one-third comprises representatives of local planning agencies, community groups, the private sector and individual citizens.

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 establish committees for advisory purposes. 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.

2020 OKI Board Officers

- **Kris Knochelmann**
  - President
- **Gary Moore**
  - First Vice President
- **David Painter**
  - Second Vice President
- **T.C. Rogers**
  - Past President
- **Kenneth F. Reed**
  - Treasurer
- **Mark Policinski, OKI CEO**
  - Secretary

2020 OKI Board of Directors (Asterisk indicates Executive Committee members)

- **Kenton County Fiscal Court**
  - Kris Knochelmann*
    - President
- **Boone County Fiscal Court**
  - Gary Moore*
    - First Vice President
- **Clermont County Board of Commissioners**
  - David Painter*
    - Second Vice President
  
  - Resident Member
    - Kenneth Reed*
    - Treasurer

  - OKI Regional Council of Governments
    - Mark Policinski*
      - Secretary
    - Butler County Planning Commission
      - David Fehr
    - Butler County Regional Transit Authority (BCRTA)
      - Christopher Lawson*
    - Campbell County Fiscal Court
      - Brian Painter*
    - Campbell County Fiscal Court
      - Steve Pendency*

  - Resident Member
    - Campbell County Planning & Zoning Commission
      - Mike Williams

  - Butler County Board of Commissioners
    - T.C. Rogers*
      - Past President

  - Clermont County Board of Commissioners
    - Edwin Humphrey*
      - Clermont County Engineer
    - Jeremy Evans
      - Clermont County Planning Commission
      - Taylor Corbett

  - Butler County Association of Township Trustees & Clerks
    - Christine Maticic*
      - Butler County Engineer
      - Gregory Wilkins
      - Tom Peck

  - Butler County Planning Commission
    - David Penque

  - Cold Spring, Kentucky
    - David Penque

  - Covington, Kentucky
    - Christopher Lawson*

  - Deerborn County Planning Commission
    - Mark McCormack
    - Dayton, Kentucky
    - Jeff Volter

  - Dearborn County Engineer
    - J. Todd Listerman

  - Deer Park, Ohio
    - Charles Tassel

  - Edgewood, Kentucky
    - Rob Thelen

  - Elsmere, Kentucky
    - Alexis Tanner

  - Erlanger, Kentucky
    - Jessica Fette

  - Fairfield, Ohio
    - Bill Woeste*

  - Fairfield (City) Planning Commission
    - Greg Nathanson

  - Florence, Ohio
    - Gary Winn

  - Forest Park, Ohio
    - Rosalind Moore

  - Green Township
    - David Linnenberg*

  - Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky
    - Mary Burns

  - Mary Burns
2020 OKI Board of Directors continued (Asterisk indicates Executive Committee members)

- Ft. Thomas, Kentucky
  - Roger Peterman
- Ft. Wright, Kentucky
  - Bernie Wessels
- Hamilton County Board of Commissioners
  - Denise Driehaus*
- Hamilton County Engineer
  - Eric Beck*
- Hamilton County Township Association
  - Thomas Weidman
- Hamilton, Ohio
  - Robert Brown*
- Hamilton (City) Planning Commission
  - Liz Hayden
- Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission
  - David Okum*
- Harrison, Ohio
  - Mike Mains
- Highland Heights, Kentucky
  - Gregory Meyer
- Independence, Kentucky
  - Christopher Reinersman
- Indian Hill, Ohio
  - Steve Krehbiel
- Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)
  - Chris Wahlman*
- Kenton County Airport Board
  - Candace McGraw
- Kenton County Planning Commission
  - Greg Sketch
- Kentucky State Representative
  - Sal Santoro
- Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC)
  - Robert Yeager*
- Lawrenceburg, Indiana
  - Mark Fette*
- Lebanon, Ohio
  - Krista Wyatt
- Loveland, Ohio
  - Ted Phelps
- Madera, Ohio
  - Traci Theis
- Mason, Ohio
  - Mike Gilb
- Miami Township
  - Karl Schutz*
- Middletown, Ohio
  - Talbot Moon*
- Middletown (City) Planning Commission
  - Ashley Combs
- Milford, Ohio
  - Amy Vilardo
- Monroe, Ohio
  - Keith Funk
- Montgomery, Ohio
  - Chris Dobrozsi
- Mt. Healthy, Ohio
  - Jennifer Moody
- Newport, Kentucky
  - Beth Fennell*
- North College Hill, Ohio
  - Amber Bailey
- Norwood, Ohio
  - John Breadon
- Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)
  - Tammy Campbell
- Oxford, Ohio
  - William Shawley
- Planning & Development Services of Kenton County
  - Andrew Gordon
- The Port
  - Laura Brunner
- Reading, Ohio
  - Robert Ashbrock
- Resident Members
  - Craig Beckley
  - Cindy Carpenter
  - Brent Cooper
  - Claire Corcoran
  - Victoria Parks
  - Stephanie Summerow Dumas
  - Rob Franzman
  - Nick Hendrix
  - Pete Metz
  - Pamela Mullins
  - V. Anthony Simms-Howell*
  - Thomas Voss*
  - Roger Kerlin*
  - Eric Kranz
  - Larry Maxey*
  - Shannon Jones
  - Eric Kearney
  - Mark Welch
  - Mary Makley Wolff
  - Sharonville, Ohio
  - Mike Wilson
- Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA)
  - Darryl Haley*
- Springdale, Ohio
  - Jeffrey Anderson
- Taylor Mill, Kentucky
  - Dan Bell
- Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK)
  - Andrew Aiello*
- Trenton, Ohio
  - Jennifer Harris
- Union, Kentucky
  - Bryan Miller
- Union Township
  - Robert McGee
- Villa Hills, Kentucky
  - Scott Ringu
- Warren County Association of Township Trustees & Clerks
  - Jonathan Sams*
- Warren County Board of Commissioners
  - David Young*
- Warren County Board of Commissioners
  - Tom Grossman
- Warren County Engineer
  - Neil Tunison
- Warren County Regional Planning Commission
  - Stan Williams*
- Wyoming, Ohio
  - James O'Reilly*
- West Chester Township
  - Ann Becker*

- Completed siding track near the Waldvogel Viaduct. OKI contributed over $1.1 million in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds to improve capacity for Genesee & Wyoming to more efficiently serve their Cincinnati rail freight customers along the western River Road corridor.

- Longbranch Road widening in Boone County includes three lanes from Camp Ernst Road to Cooper High School with a multi-use path. OKI contributed $500,000 in SNK funds.

- Coordination | Cooperation | Communication
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 year 2020 will be an expanse of time not soon forgotten. The first known case of the coronavirus in the U.S. was announced in January. On March 9, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed an executive order declaring a State of Emergency due to COVID-19. The pandemic immediately disrupted many workplaces — and OKI was no exception. We enacted a remote work plan for all staff to ensure we continued to implement our Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), to be available to our member organizations and to fund transportation projects across the region.

The change in our manner of operation initially affected OKI’s outreach efforts, specifically our public involvement specialist, who traditionally attended in-person meetings throughout the region for public engagement. Due to state mandates, in-person meetings were no longer permitted, yet OKI still needed to remain engaged and available. We used our social media platforms to share project updates. We enacted new ways of meeting with our OKI Board, committees, and the residents in our region by using virtual conference platforms.

As the landscape for current and future public meetings is evolving, some organizations are considering hybrid meetings, which feature one group of in-person attendees connecting virtually with other attendees. While virtual strategies are resulting in a more equitable solution for public engagement, this shift in civic engagement creates questions and challenges. How can we provide equity for less tech-savvy residents or communities with limited access to broadband? How can we engage with limited English-proficient citizens, multilingual residents or adults over 65? Moreover, how do we retain our public records?

We applaud easier access along with increases in participation. It is important to note the social and political movements of equity and environmental justice have risen to the top of the conversation, bringing a flexibility to the process that allows individuals and communities to participate at a scale never seen before. Yet, even with these challenges, virtual strategies provide many flexible options for busy residents, especially for those who must deal with childcare arrangements, potentially missed work shifts, and finding reliable access to transportation when trying to participate in public meetings. Virtual options do offer greater access thus increasing opportunities for participation.

This new level of civic engagement will continue to enhance OKI’s presence and strengthen key relationships, as we strive to connect with residents in our eight-county region.

How willing are you to use the following modes of transportation, if it were available?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Transportation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommuting</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participation in the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan survey increased 123% over completed surveys for OKI’s 2016 Plan update. OKI partnered with the seven largest libraries in the region inviting residents to take the survey, which was posted on each library’s respective website.
2020 Distributed Funds by project type
OKI Federal Funds Awarded in SFY21 (Ohio STBG, Ohio TA, KY SNK, KY TA, 5310 Transit) = $41,565,219
OKI Federal Funds Encumbered in SFY21 (expected) = $61,706,780

General Operating Budget (July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020)

### Revenue Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
<td>$347,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>77.79%</td>
<td>$4,522,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>14.13%</td>
<td>$821,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
<td>$122,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.97%</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,813,602</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expenses by Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>83.85%</td>
<td>$4,885,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter Services &amp; Regional Clean Air Program</td>
<td>6.86%</td>
<td>$399,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Planning</td>
<td>3.15%</td>
<td>$183,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Planning</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
<td>$172,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and Administrative Activities</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
<td>$185,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>83.85%</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,826,173</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In June 2020, the OKI Region took a major step forward as the Board adopted the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. For the first time, the plan considers the impacts of connected and autonomous vehicles and Mobility as a Service (MaaS). Its vision: to develop innovative, sustainable and multimodal transportation solutions that support the goals and economy of the Greater Cincinnati area.

In 2020, OKI became more intentional about how to make advancements in regards to the world of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles. OKI conducted an internal process of developing a CAV Action Plan. Through a series of discussions, staff examined potential roles, interests and opportunities revolving around CAVs.

OKI's definition of CAV goes beyond fully autonomous (Level 5) cars to include autonomous buses, trucks, sidewalk delivery bots, UAVs, VTOLs (Vertical Take-Off and Landing vehicles), or anything that transports goods and/or people.

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These changes will take many years to come to fruition. To bridge the gap, many traditional project recommendations are included in the recommended list of projects. The 2050 Plan (https://2050.oki.org/) includes 206 projects with an estimated cost of $8.5 billion. This does not include maintenance and operations.

The plan recommends 15 transit projects with an investment of $823 million. Also, 28 bicycle and pedestrian projects are recommended, adding 66 new miles of shared use paths at a total investment $208 million. The plan recommendations add 198 roadway lane miles to the highway network at a total investment of $2 billion. An additional $5.45 billion is recommended for a wide range of projects, including signalization upgrades; transportation system management and operations (TSMO); intersection improvements; and major reconstruction projects.

As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Cincinnati urbanized area, OKI is the responsible agency for developing the region’s transportation needs. The OKI 2050 Plan allows for the continued flow of federal transportation funds to our communities.

OKI Board Adopts 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

OKI Preparing for Future of Connected, Autonomous Vehicles

In 2020, OKI became more intentional about how to make advancements in regards to the world of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles. OKI conducted an internal process of developing a CAV Action Plan. Through a series of discussions, staff examined potential roles, interests and opportunities revolving around CAVs.

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OKI Board Adopts 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

OKI Preparing for Future of Connected, Autonomous Vehicles

Learn more about the 2050 Vision, visit 2050.oki.org/vision

OKI CAV Action Plan Strategy | Description
--- | ---
Staff CAV Education | Staff sharing of CAV training, workshops, webinars, or other educational opportunities. A “CAV Training Opportunities” page has been established for easier information-sharing on OKI’s Workplace.

Regional Planning CAV Choices Guide | Create a guide to help local governments understand and address the land use impacts of CAVs in their comprehensive plans.

Identification of Emerging CAV Technology | Identify CAV-related technology that may be of interest and benefit to our members by identifying local, national, and global partners to accomplish forward-thinking solutions.

OKI/CVG Strategic Growth and Innovation Opportunities | OKI has an MOU with CVG to discuss Strategic Growth and Innovation Opportunities. Under discussion is the ability to collaborate to identify private partners that need real-world, transportation experience to test what technology is most viable and easily implemented.

OKI ITS Architecture Update | Include a new section discussing EV/CAV technology, which may lead to future OKI actions.

OKI Strategic CAV Communications Plan | Develop the framework and basic communications plan to inform the public and OKI members on the impacts of a CAV world.

OKI-Awarded Traffic Signalization Projects: Technology Inventory | Create and maintain inventory to compare technology investments and share information with members to improve future transportation technology investments.

OKI Regional Travel Demand Model | Develop a micro-simulation model to better understand CAV driving behavior and CAV impact on transportation system.
OKI Takes on Leadership Role in Electric Vehicle Adoption

Electric vehicles (EVs) are the future of transportation and their contribution to cleaner air has led OKI to support the widespread adoption of this technology. In 2020, OKI developed a web app to assist local communities in siting new EV chargers. The OKI EV Charging Station Locator can be used to find ideal sites for both level 2 and DC fast-charging stations across the Greater Cincinnati Region.

To use the app, simply enter an address or pick a location on the interactive map, which returns a detailed analysis of the location. The analysis provides nearby traffic volumes; amenities (malls, shopping centers & restaurants); the distance to the nearest EV charging station; the distance to the nearest EV alternative fuel corridor; the highest functional classified roadway within a quarter mile; and a detailed map of the location.

In July of 2020, OKI hosted and developed the content for the OKI EV Funding Webinar. The webinar, attended by more than 100 participants, highlighted a variety of EV funding opportunities for local jurisdictions, including the VW Settlement Funds from Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio.

OKI Secures Nearly $5.5 Million in New Freight Funding

In 2020, OKI expanded our partnerships with the private sector to apply and win grant awards from USDOT’s Marine Administration (MARAD) and the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) totaling almost $5.5 million. These funds will be used for improvements that will spur economic growth, increase safety and alleviate truck traffic from our congested roadways.

OKI kicked off the year with federal approval of our America Marine Highway (AMH) Project Designation of the M-70 Barge Service in the Ports of Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky and Beyond, becoming one of only 26 such designations in the U.S. This designation made the OKI region and our neighbors along the Ohio River eligible to pursue new federal funding opportunities. In addition, OKI provided grant-writing assistance and endorsement to two MARAD AMH Grant applications with Nucor Steel Brandenburg, Kentucky and the Port of Jeffersonville, Indiana. In June, both projects were successfully awarded federal funding totaling over $2.9 million to expand short-haul barge service and reduce highway truck traffic.

Building on the successful MARAD grants, OKI served as applicant for two FRA Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program Grants with Cincinnati Bulk Terminals, LLC and Benchmark River and Rail Terminals, LLC. In September, OKI was awarded a combined $2.3 million in new federal funding for the OKI region, with the local matches covered entirely by private dollars. These two CRISI projects will work to increase safety, enhance efficiency, spur economic growth, improve air quality and reduce maintenance costs of river to rail freight transport.

View the EV Funding Webinar

Total Alternative Fuel Vehicle Registrations by Type, 2018 – 2020: Butler, Clermont, Hamilton & Warren Counties

Electric vehicle registrations have increased significantly in Butler, Clermont, Hamilton & Warren Counties from 2018 to 2020. Butler County leads in registrations of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) followed by Clermont County. Clermont County shows the highest percentage increase in BEV registrations.

Benchmark River and Rail Terminals’ post project at-grade improvements

Cincinnati Bulk Terminals’ overhead conveyor schematic

Ohio River Marine Highway 75

View the EV Funding Webinar

Butler, Clermont, Hamilton & Warren Counties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Battery Electric Vehicles</th>
<th>Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)</th>
<th>Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1,920</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2,710</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1,105</td>
</tr>
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Cincinnati Bulk Terminals’ overhead conveyor schematic
Fiscal Impact Analysis Model 2.0 Improved, Free to OKI Partners

Significant upgrades were made to the OKI Fiscal Impact Analysis Model (FIAM) to reduce the time and effort required to maintain the model’s data. These changes allowed OKI to dramatically re-frame the program, providing communities personalized service while making access to the tool at no cost for all OKI member communities. In October, we launched FIAM 2.0, and since then, the communities of Williamsburg, Independence, Colerain Township, Springdale, and Lebanon have each benefited from the new tool.

The FIAM provides jurisdictions an ability to evaluate the fiscal impact posed by multiple land use scenarios. By estimating both revenues and service costs associated with land use activities, communities applying FIAM in their decision-making are armed with a better understanding of how a proposed land-use scenario is most likely going to affect their annual budget. OKI is helping communities employ fiscal impact analysis in conjunction with land-use planning in comprehensive plans and special-area plans.

Innovative Tool Helps Identify and Prioritize Mitigation

As a result of the Environmental Consultations conducted for the OKI 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, OKI staff developed an Environmental Mitigation and Suitability application. This tool poises our region for retaining future mitigation investments from funding provided by projects in our region. The tool was developed through consultation with mitigation experts in Ohio (ODNR, OEPA, ODOT, The Nature Conservancy), Kentucky (NKY Stream Restoration Advisory Committee, ACOE, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, NKU) and Indiana (IDNR, IDEM). OKI collaborated with local partners, including Green Umbrella Greenspace Impact Team, Cardinal Land Trust, Cincinnati Nature Center, Great Parks of Hamilton County, and Boone County Conservation District.

The Environmental Mitigation and Suitability application allows users to select and weigh the environmental features of importance to their community and to find areas of interest based on the size and number of areas. The results will show a heat map representing priority areas. This tool enables communities to determine areas of importance based on their unique priorities.
OKI Focus on Ohio River Recreation Trail Leads to Digital Guide

Since 2018, OKI has partnered with River City Paddle Sports in Louisville; members of the Paddlefest and Adventure Crew leadership team; and the National Parks Service’s Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program to develop a national water trail and bicycle route along the Ohio River from Portsmouth, Ohio, to West Point, Ky.

OKI assisted the planning team in conducting Rivertown Reviews for river communities along the trail. OKI’s task: to evaluate their current engagement with the river and trail — then suggest areas for improvement. The trail team’s goal is to support the economic development of our river towns.

To that end, OKI developed the Ohio River Recreation Trail Digital Guide and launched it in summer 2020. The guide increases the safety and enhances tourism along the Ohio River corridor from Portsmouth, Ohio, to West Point, Ky. Along with identifying access points, marinas, campgrounds, and points of interest, the guide shows real-time information on the location and direction of travel for commercial traffic on the river.

Forbes Magazine ranked Cincinnati #2 on their national list of best road trip destinations. The Ohio River Recreation Trail was a significant factor in this ranking both for cycling and water sport excursion. The Ohio River Basin Alliance Recreation Subcommittee is also working to expand the digital guide to include the entire Ohio River from Pittsburgh, Pa., to Cairo, Ill.
Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Program to Aid Data Gathering for OKI

OKI’s unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) program continued to gain momentum during 2020. This program will provide transformative value to many of the transportation and environmental datasets collected and maintained by OKI.

OKI began a partnership with KYTC District 6 on a three-year program to capture imagery and videos of the two INFRA grant projects (Mt. Zion Road and Richwood Road interchanges) on I-71/75 in Boone County and the new Graves Road interchange on I-275. OKI UAV pilots will capture imagery five times a year during construction season providing the cabinet timely aerial intelligence for each project.

The UAV program also collaborated with the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District to provide video footage of the Caesar Creek watershed. The footage was used in a series of videos to help educate the public on the importance of protecting the soil and water within the watershed.
Travel demand is one of the critical factors considered in transportation investment decision making. The travel demand model is a computer tool used to estimate traffic volume and speed based on information such as land use patterns; socioeconomic characteristics of the population and employment; and the composition and configuration of the transportation system.

The model forecasts volume and speed on roadway segments and transit ridership on transit routes. The model is constantly being updated and enhanced.

In 2020, OKI’s Activity-Based Travel Demand Model was applied to generate system performance measures for the OKI 2050 Plan. The model was also utilized to create input for the air quality model to generate vehicle emission estimates for the Plan.

As a service to local and state agencies, OKI developed travel forecasts for certified traffic and other transportation planning studies for several projects, including:

• IR75/IR275 interchange safety study (PID 111658)
• IR275 SmartLane certified traffic study (PID 94256)
• CLE SR-32 1.40 certified traffic study (PID 111492)
• Millikin Way interchange (IR75) certified traffic study (PID 113647)
• North Hamilton Crossing feasibility study
• KY-9/IR275 interchange traffic study
• Northern Kentucky Active Transportation Demand Management (ATDM) feasibility study

In 2020, OKI continued intensive traffic count data collection and travel pattern data compiling and analysis. Traffic and travel pattern data are critical input for travel demand model design, as well as transportation system performance evaluation, congestion management, and transportation planning studies.

OKI continued to maintain the Ohio River Bridge count stations’ performance and data quality. The bridge counter traffic data was utilized to evaluate the impact of Brent Spence Bridge closure on local traffic.

OKI compiled and analyzed ODOT traffic data to evaluate and assess the impact and evolution of the pandemic in OKI region.

In 2020, OKI developed tools and apps to process and analyze the INRIX passive data to generate speed, origin-destination, departure time and other travel pattern measures for model calibration/validation and other transportation planning studies.

OKI: Traffic and Travel Data Collection Continued in 2020

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Data & Demographics

ANALYSIS AND WEB MAPPING GUIDING MOBILE COMMUNITIES

GIS Dept. Highlights: Raven911, CORIS updates, and Much More

Providing detailed, up-to-date Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data, analysis and web mapping applications for OKI’s many programs was a major focus for our GIS Department during 2020.

Considerable effort was spent in 2020 updating functionality and data in many of the OKI-developed mapping applications. Data updates were completed for CORIS, Project Application Assistant, TIP on Demand, Freight Dashboard and 2050 Plan maps.

The GIS department played a key role in the development of the Ohio River Recreation Trail Digital Guide in 2020, from development of the underlying database infrastructure to the data collection mechanisms to coding and hosting the app.

The RAVEN911 system was awarded a commendation for its technical expertise and use of GIS technology from FHWA during the 2020 certification process. A complete overhaul of the RAVEN911 user management system was completed in 2020. The new user management system replaces the original system; and it will allow the RAVEN911 team to analyze how RAVEN911 users utilize the system in their daily workflows and analyze user usage patterns. The system now also supports a new sustainability model for RAVEN911.

We recently got a look at the first results of the 2020 Census, a process in which OKI staff and our region’s communities were heavily involved. For example, OKI staff hosted census workshops and participated in other census-related activities throughout 2020 to help ensure an accurate count within the region.

The 2020 Census campaign was a rousing success in our region, with U.S. Census Bureau employees commending OKI for our active participation.

These first results included statewide population totals. In Ohio, population grew 2.3 percent this decade, going from 11.54 million to 11.8 million, an increase of about 263,000 people. That’s the 23rd fastest growing state in absolute terms. Ohio maintains its place as the 7th most populous state.

In Kentucky, population grew from 4.34 million to 4.51 million, an increase of about 166,000 people, for a growth rate of 3.8 percent. Kentucky remained the 26th most populous state.

Indiana population grew 4.7 percent and added 302,000 residents. The state’s population increased from 6.48 million to 6.79 million. Indiana’s growth rate was the 20th fastest in absolute terms.

All three states grew faster than expected. As we look forward to getting data at the county and community level in fall 2021, we can now expect strong growth numbers for our area. The trend throughout the decade is that estimated strong growth in our region has offset population losses in more rural parts of our states. With the official state numbers now released, we have good reason to believe that our local population growth numbers were even higher than we previously thought.

Within the region, we’ve seen plenty of evidence of a growing urban core. Estimates put the City of Cincinnati’s growth at more than 7,000 new residents this decade. And we can now expect that the official numbers will show even higher growth. We are also seeing a similar story on the Northern Kentucky side of the Ohio River, in Covington, Newport, Bellevue, and Dayton. We fully expect that the official census numbers will show strong growth throughout the region, especially in our urban core communities.

Incoming Census Data: OKI Region Expected to Fare Well

Environmental Justice Populations

Freight Truck Volumes

Population Growth in OKI States

Population Growth in City of Cincinnati
FEDERAL MANDATES

Performance Measures

The federal transportation regulations require that states and MPOs establish performance and outcome-based, multimodal programs to strengthen the U.S. Transportation system. The objective of such programs is to ensure that states and regions invest resources in projects that collectively make progress toward achieving national transportation goals. The program also encourages states and regions to track the progress of the performance measures by setting performance targets. OKI has set performance targets through board resolutions consistent with each of our state DOTs. These targets apply to safety, pavement and bridge condition, congestion, travel time reliability and air quality. An update to the Congestion Management Process Findings and Analysis Report (CMP), completed this year, includes the functional elements of the federal performance measures, along with several additional performance measures to assess congestion. Along with the CMP, staff continually monitors and reports on progress of the performance measures through the TIP, Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Performance Measures website.

OKI Continues to Track Progress of Transportation System

Congress adopted the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) in 1990 to address the country’s major air pollution problems. The CAAA regulates six pollutants: sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, lead, carbon monoxide, particulate matter and ozone. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated seven counties in the Cincinnati area as a nonattainment area for ozone under the 2015 ozone standard. In Kentucky, these counties are Boone, Campbell and Kenton; and in Ohio, Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren counties.

Nonattainment means the area is not meeting the national ambient air quality standard and, therefore, must demonstrate transportation conformity. Transportation conformity is a mechanism to ensure that federal funding and approval are given to those transportation activities that are consistent with air quality goals as contained in the State Implementation Plans (SIPs).

Using the EPA’s MOVES model, OKI was able to successfully demonstrate air quality conformity for the region’s Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

OKI Demonstrates Air Quality Conformity for the MTP and TIP

Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program

OKI awarded more than $1.3 million to agencies across the region in 2020 for vehicles and activities focused on improving mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. These awards were used to buy 19 new paratransit vehicles; provide vehicle cameras and dispatching software; fund two mobility management programs serving residents with navigation support to medical appointments and to provide transit training for blind individuals; and operating costs for TANK’s Regional Area Mobility Program (RAMP). RAMP is a door-to-door paratransit service available to disabled citizens who are unable to use TANK’s fixed-route bus service.

OKI Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan

In 2020, OKI updated the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan). This plan is a unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery. Specifically, it identifies the transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities, lays out strategies for meeting these needs; and prioritizes services for these target populations.

Transportation Equitable Opportunity Team

The Tristate Transportation Equitable Opportunity Team (TTEOT), facilitated by OKI staff, includes members that represent a broad spectrum of transportation planners and transportation providers working diligently to identify how best to continue to address the transportation needs of the elderly and individuals with disabilities. TTEOT met during the year holding workshops to discuss these growing needs and gauge the most effective and feasible strategies for addressing them.

OKI Continues to Support Mobility Options for Seniors, Disabled

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Regional Clean Air Program

OKI’s Regional Clean Air Program continues to provide valuable information to the community, businesses and the media concerning air quality topics through the “Do Your Share for Cleaner Air” campaign.

OKI promotes the clean air message by educating the public on the harmful effects of ozone and particulate matter pollution, while also informing individuals how they can help to reduce air pollution.

OKI’s RideShare program goal:
Improve Commutes in Several Ways

Due to the arrival of COVID-19 in 2020, OKI’s RideShare program did not conduct its normal activities. Anticipated to fully return in 2021, the program will continue to remove single occupant vehicles from the region’s roadways. RideShare’s goal is to make trips to work easy, less costly, more environmentally friendly and more convenient.

RideShare provides commuters an opportunity to save money on the normal “wear and tear” of a vehicle, including gas, tires, mileage and maintenance. The program also offers flexibility that fits commuters’ lifestyle by allowing them to share a ride as infrequently as once a week or as often as every day.

OKI Bicycle and Pedestrian Program
Funding Many Trail Projects

To be successful, a bicycle transportation system should make it possible for bicyclists to travel to their destinations directly and safely. They should be able to ride on the roads, use the bridges and viaducts, and find a place to park. If you are the driver of a motor vehicle, you probably have similar travel objectives. To help make this happen in the region, OKI provides funding for numerous trail and bike projects to communities. Since 2010 OKI has funded more than $84 million in bike and pedestrian projects.

OKI also encourages the development of a more walkable region. In support of the walkability concept for communities, OKI supports Safe Routes to School projects through the award of Transportation Alternatives Funds.

Vanpool

OKI awarded the City of Cincinnati $6,000,000 in STBG funds for phases 3, 4, 5 and 6A. Phase 3 (Madison Road to Eastern Hills Lane) was built and opened in November 2020.
The OKI Strategic Regional Policy Plan continued to inform communities and decision-makers across the region this year. OKI advanced the plan, housed at www.howdowegrow.org, by expanding resources available to communities pursuing energy efficiency; updating the Fiscal Impact Analysis Model program to better fulfill local community needs; and, providing technical support to communities updating their local comprehensive plans.

The SRPP encourages consistent local comprehensive planning by rewarding it with additional consideration when awarding funding for transportation projects. The comprehensive plan is the fundamental tool for ensuring that development is consistent with community resources and priorities. OKI also encourages local planning efforts by providing resources like the Elements of an Effective Local Comprehensive Plan guide, maps, data, and tools, and even limited staff involvement, as requested.

Advancing Energy Efficiency

SolSmart Silver Designation – In December 2020, OKI received a Silver designation in the national SolSmart program, an initiative of the Solar Foundation, International City/County Management Association and the Department of Energy. SolSmart recognizes OKI for helping local governments across the Greater Cincinnati area make it faster, easier and more affordable to go solar. This designation is based primarily on the Solar Ready products developed in partnership with NARC and several other MPOs in recent years.

Local Community Energy Planning Project – OKI wrapped up a multi-year project that engaged eight OKI member communities in a locally driven planning process that culminated in an Energy Plan for each community. In implementing these plans, OKI leveraged $130,000 from Duke Energy into nearly a half-million dollar investment in energy efficiency. This investment in energy efficiency will save these local governments nearly $50,000 a year; and it will remove 377 metric tons of annual CO2 emissions from our air. This is the emissions equivalent of the typical passenger vehicle driving 933,000 miles.

Collaboration and Strengthening Regional Relationships

In other initiatives, OKI’s Land Use Commission Steering Committee hosted three informative Regional Planning Forum events during 2020. They drew more than 150 planners across the region. The forum is a regional outlet for sharing information, experience and expertise among planners and those in related disciplines and industries. The forums addressed the need for local participation in the 2020 Census, a tutorial on how to use the Census’ new data portal, and how the collection of 2020 Census responses had to change in response to the pandemic. We also hosted an informative roundtable discussion of how local governments in the region were adjusting their public meetings and public engagement in the early months of the pandemic.

Cincinnati 2030 District Support – OKI staff provided their expertise in helping the District measure and develop tools to achieve their transportation emissions goal. The 2030 District is a partnership of more than 38 organizations, including Cincinnati Bell, Fifth Third, P&G, Kroger, City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, University of Cincinnati, Xavier University, and Northern Kentucky University. The district’s goal is to reduce emissions from building energy use, water use, emissions from transportation all by 50 percent by 2030.
Throughout 2020, the OKI Greenspace office has continued to maintain and provide data on our regionally significant environmental resources to regional partners. 

OKI Consulted with Environmental Experts on Mitigation Strategies

Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to consult with environmental experts so that regional environmental issues relating to transportation are considered in long-range planning. As part of this process, surveys were administered to environmental experts in 2019 to address the progress, feasibility, and criticalness of strategies to avoid environmental impact. The 2019 survey was administered with 35 respondents. In March 2020, OKI hosted the In-Person Workshop, where preliminary results of the 2019 survey were presented to 25 participants.

Participants were broken up into groups and presented the proposed transportation projects for the 2050 planning horizon. They were then asked to respond to any environmental concerns for the region and concerns related to the proposed projects. The five most feasible solutions were identified in the survey and included the following strategies:

- Overlay resource data with transportation project locations early on / Obtain information on potential mitigation needs as soon as possible
- Reduce mowing in rights-of-way
- Manage roadway rights-of-way to protect and enhance environmental resources
- Increase the use of swales, detention basins, and roadway ditches
- Keep project fill out of the floodway

The five most critical strategies below were also identified:

- Manage roadway rights-of-way to protect and enhance environmental resources
- Reduce mowing in rights-of-way
- Acquire or expand rights-of-way to allow for green infrastructure / best management practices
- Keep transportation projects out of the floodway
- Reduce the use of road salt / Increase the use of road salt alternatives

NEPA Expertise - OKI staff completed ODOT NEPA Training to better understand environmental issues with transportation projects. Staff also completed the Climate Adaptation Planning Course, a course sponsored by USDA Climate Hubs, US Forest Service, American Forests, and Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science.

Taking Root – John Peaslee Award recipient – OKI received this award at the Taking Root Annual Great Tree Summit for OKI’s continued support of the organization, dedication for improving the region’s forest canopy, and efforts made to develop tools benefiting urban foresters and tree boards across the region.

Supporting Local Greenspace Efforts

- Urban Tree Canopy Assessment (UTC) - OKI is a partner on the Cincinnati Parks UTC update for Hamilton County and the City of Cincinnati. Funding for this project was provided through a USDA Forest Service Grant.
- Climate Safe Neighborhoods – OKI supports the project through our partnership with Groundwork Ohio River Valley (a National Park Service initiative) and the NASA DEVELOP program. This project involves remote sensing and analysis of canopy and urban heat islands in urban areas.
- Northern Kentucky Urban and Community Forestry Council – OKI continues to provide expertise as an update to the Northern Kentucky UTC is developed using recent LiDAR acquisition.
- Greenspace Gems Story Map - OKI provided technical expertise for the Green Umbrella Greenspace Gems Story Map. This story map highlights the best of the Greenspace areas in the region that are selected by Greenspace experts.

University Partnerships - OKI collaborated with Northern Kentucky University to guide student projects for Ecology of the City Course and Environmental Studies Course. OKI has provided alternative co-op opportunities for five students at the University of Cincinnati this past year.

In March, OKI invited environmental experts to share their thoughts on projects and strategies designed to promote mitigation and more sustainable uses of land.
In 2020, OKI engaged designated management agencies in our Ohio counties to update our region’s Facility Planning Areas mapped in Chapter 7 of the OKI Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP). These agencies are the entities providing sanitary sewer treatment as identified by the OKI WQMP. They are responsible for specific water pollution control as stipulated by the Clean Water Act. OKI worked with each agency to modify the Facility Planning Areas depicted by the plan as needed to accurately include any amendments approved, any active intergovernmental agreements in place, and update their areas of service.

OKI also updated Chapter 4 dealing with onsite waste water systems. This included streamlining background information and updating guidance to follow the 2015 legislation that standardized statewide regulations on what systems are allowed.

What is 208 in Ohio?
Collaborating with Ohio EPA and other area-wide agencies in Ohio, OKI produced a story map featuring a short film explaining Water Quality Management Planning history and requirements of the Clean Water Act. OKI produced the film, created the narrative, and conducted many of the interviews featured in the story map.

Warren County Home Sewage Treatment System (HSTS) Prioritization raster analysis was begun to identify clusters of HSTS most likely causing water quality issues. The Warren County study will complete OKI’s analysis of HSTS in our four Ohio counties. The analysis will be used by Ohio EPA and local health departments to prioritize funding and projects to repair, replace, or connect failing systems.

Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework (ACPF) OKI has led the effort to develop this tool for our region. ACPF is an innovative GIS-based model used to identify agricultural fields most at risk for nutrient runoff and the placement of best management practices (BMPs) to reduce that runoff. OKI has gathered and is preparing the required GIS data across Butler, Warren, Hamilton, Clermont, and portions of Clinton counties so that local partners can run the model to aid the development of Nine-Element Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategies plans.

OKI’s Water Quality Program also upheld long-standing staff support commitments to the:
- Groundwater Committee, which provides technical education to public water system operators, regulators and others concerned about drinking water protection
- OKI Regional Conservation Council, a forum for county conservation districts of the Tri-State
- Mapping and Data sharing support for Nine Element Non-Point Source Implementation Strategies Plans:
  - The Mill Creek Alliance (Sharon Creek-Mill Creek Update)
  - Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District (East Fork Riparian Analysis)
  - Butler Soil and Water Conservation District (Acton Lake Dam-Four Mile Creek)
  - Warren Soil and Water Conservation District (Caesar Creek Collaborative)
  - Cooper Creek Collaborative, led by the Hamilton Soil and Water Conservation District to restore Cooper Creek to meet its Clean Water Act use designation.
- East Fork Collaborative, a broad partnership of local, state and federal agencies working to reduce nutrient runoff into Harsha Lake and eliminate harmful algal blooms (HABs).

In 2020, OKI actively supported the Green Umbrella Green Infrastructure Group to design and install a rain garden at Deer Park High School with the help of a Duke Energy Grant to Green Umbrella.