2021
Reimagining Transportation in Our Region

To Improve Quality of Life and Economic Prosperity

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Truly, 2021 was a historic year for the world of transportation.

With the passage of the $1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the greatest of opportunities arrived to reimagine our country’s transportation system.

And, while we eagerly await the specifics of the infrastructure package, OKI honored the person most instrumental in its passage — our very own Senator Rob Portman. He not only helped craft the landmark bill, Senator Portman crusaded for its support on both sides of the aisle.

We presented Senator Portman with the Henry M. Mann Award at our annual luncheon in September 2021. The award, OKI’s most prestigious honor, is reserved for those individuals whose service and dedication to our region span a lifetime.

In this spirit of celebration, I am honored to present the 2021 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. 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 achievement. That said, I share with you a handful of those that best illustrate OKI’s commitment to advancing the place we call home.

We had a particularly remarkable year for innovations in 2021. OKI staff developed several unique technologies that are providing valuable resources to our member communities.

For example, staff developed the Environmental Mitigation Sustainability Modeler (EMSM). The tool identifies potential mitigation sites for future transportation and development projects. In addition, our conservation partners and local governments are using EMSM to prioritize where their conservation efforts should be focused.

In 2020, OKI became the first MPO in the country to receive a Silver designation in the national SolSmart program. OKI was recognized for helping municipalities across the Greater Cincinnati area make it faster, easier and more affordable to go solar. In 2021, OKI hosted two SolSmart workshops to educate local governments on how they can benefit from solar.

Another cutting-edge tool earned acclaim last year, when OKI was named recipient of the Achievement Award by the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) for our Ohio River Digital Guide. This interactive digital app enables enthusiasts to safely explore the big river and its historic communities.

We also introduced Tree-for-Me, a digital tree benefits calculator that estimates stormwater, air quality, and carbon dioxide benefits at any location in the Greater Cincinnati area. The tool also enables our community partners to better manage their free-tree distributions.

OKI continued to support clean energy initiatives in 2021, including those involving solar power, electric vehicles, and the mission of Cincinnati 2030 District.

With OKI’s assistance, the District completed its inaugural commuting survey and established its transportation emission baseline. Cincinnati 2030 District’s goal is to reduce emissions from building energy use, water use, and emissions from transportation by 50 percent by 2030.

As we all know, the rapid growth in electric vehicles is part of a deep shift in mobility. To that end, OKI continued offering workshops to provide information to jurisdictions on EV infrastructure and fleet electrification.

Also in 2021, OKI began an ambitious first step toward creating a new regional Freight Plan. A two-phase, two-year process, 2021’s work focused on identifying and amassing critical datasets needed for a comprehensive, multimodal approach. Safety, infrastructure, mobility, environmental, and economic data across all five freight modes — road, rail, river, runway, and pipeline — was secured in this effort.

We also updated our Fiscal Impact Analysis Model (FIAM), a scenario-planning service for local governments; and we sent out our “OKI Moves” Regional Household Travel Survey, which is collecting detailed travel information from about 4,000 households in our region.

I conclude my President’s Letter by recognizing the superb leadership that has long defined OKI. Under CEO Mark Polcinski’s guidance, 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 first year as Board president. I look forward to continued collaboration as a member of OKI’s Executive Committee with the OKI Board and OKI’s staff to provide the leadership and guidance to sustain our region’s momentum.

Remember, transportation drives economic development. I am confident the professional staff at OKI will continue to drive the economic future of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana.

Best Regards,

David Painter
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 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.

2021 OKI Board of Directors (Asterisk indicates Executive Committee members)

Clermont County Board of Commissioners
**David L. Painter**
President

Boone County Fiscal Court
**Gary W. Moore**
First Vice President

Anderson Township
**Josh Gerth**
Second Vice President

Kenton County Fiscal Court
**Kris Knochelmann**
Past President

Resident Member
**Kenneth F. Reed**
Treasurer

OKI Regional Council of Governments
**Mark R. Policinski**
Secretary

Alexandria, Kentucky
**Andy Schobel**

Bellevue, Kentucky
**Charlie Cleves**

Blue Ash, Ohio
**Jeff Cappell**

Boone County Fiscal Court
**Cathy Fialg**

Boone County Planning Commission
**Kim Patton**

Butler County Association of Township Trustees & Clerks
**Christine Matacic**

Butler County Board of Commissioners
**T.C. Rogers**

Butler County Engineer
**Gregory Wilkens**

Butler County Planning Commission
**David Fehr**

Butler County Regional Transit Authority
**Christopher Lawson**

Campbell County Fiscal Court
**Brian Painter**

Campbell County Fiscal Court
**Steve Pendery**

Campbell County Planning & Zoning Commission
**Sharon Haynes**

Cheviot, Ohio
**James Sunderhaus**

Cincinnati, Ohio
**Greg Landsman**

Cincinnati (City) Planning Commission
**Katherine Keough-Jurs**

Clermont County Board of Commissioners
**Bonnie Batchler**

Clermont County Engineer
**Jeremy Evans**

Clermont County Planning Commission
**Taylor Corbett**

Clermont County Township Association
**Tom Peck**

Cold Spring, Kentucky
**D. Angelo Penique**

Colerain Township
**Daniel Unger**

Covington, Kentucky
**Joseph U. Meyer**

Dearborn County Planning Commission
**Mark McCormack**

Dayton, Kentucky
**Jeff Volter**

Dearborn County of Board of Commissioners
**Rick Probst**

Dearborn County Engineer
**J. Todd Listerman**

Deer Park, Ohio
**Ron Tolliver**

Edgewood, Kentucky
**Rob Thelen**

Elsmere, Kentucky
**Alexis Tanner**

Erlanger, Kentucky
**Jessica Fette**

Fairfield, OH
**Bill Woeste**

Fairfield (City) Planning Commission
**Greg Kathan**

Florence, Kentucky
**Gary Mint**

Forest Park, Ohio
**Rosalind Moore**

Greendale, Indiana
**Alan Weiss**

Green Township
**David Linnenberg**

Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky
**Mary Burns**

Ft. Thomas, Kentucky
**Ken Bowman**
About OKI

Leadership

2021 OKI Board of Directors continued (Asterisk indicates Executive Committee members)

Ft. Wright, Kentucky
Bernie Wessels

Hamilton County Board of Commissioners
Stephanie Summerow Dumas*

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 Krethbiel

Indiana Department of Transportation
Chris Wolfinman*

Kenton County
Jude Hehman

Kenton County Airport Board
Candace McGraw

Kenton County Planning Commission
Gaile W. Bridges

Kentucky State Representative
Sal Santoro

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet
Robert Yeager*

Lawrenceburg, Indiana
Mark Fette*

Lebanon, Ohio
Krista Wyatt

Loveland, Ohio
Ted Phelps

Madeira, Ohio
Chris Hilberg

Mason, Ohio
Kathy Grossman

Miami Township
Mary Makley Wolf*

Middletown, Ohio
Tabbott Moon*

Middletown (City) Planning Commission
Ashley Combs

Milford, Ohio
Amy Wirdado

Monroe, Ohio
Todd Hickman

Montgomery, Ohio
Chris Dobrozi

Mt. Healthy, Ohio
Jennifer Moody

Newport, Kentucky
Elizabeth Fennell*

North College Hill, Ohio
Amber Bailey

Norwood, Ohio
John Breadon

Ohio Department of Transportation
Tommy Campbell*

Oxford, Ohio
William Shively

Planning & Development Services of Kenton County
Sharmill Reddy*

The Port
Laura Brunner

Reading, Ohio
Robert Ashbrock

Sharpsville, Ohio
Charles Lippert

Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority
Darryl Haley*

Springdale, Ohio
Jeffrey Anderson

Taylor Mill, Kentucky
Don Bell

Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky
Andrew Aiello*

Trenton, Ohio
Jennifer Harris

Union, Kentucky
Brian Garner

Union Township
Robert McGee*

Villa Hills, Kentucky
Seth Thompson

Warren County Association of Township Trustees & Clerks
Jonathan Sans*

Warren County Board of Commissioners
Tom Grossman

Warren County Board of Commissioners
David G. Young*

Warren County Engineer
Neil Tunison

Warren County Regional Planning Commission
Stan Williams*

Wyoming, Ohio
James O'Reilly*

West Chester Township
Ann Becker*

Resident Members
Craig Beckley
Cindy Carpenter
Brent Cooper
Claire Corcoran
Denise Driehaus
Alicia Reece
Rob Franxman
Nick Hendrix
Shannon Jones
Eric Kearney
Roger Kerlin*
Eric Kranz
Larry H. Maxey*
Pete Metz
V. Anthony Simms-Howell*
Thomas Voss*
Mark Welch
Karl B. Shultz

Roundabout caption: Conceptual rendering of planned roundabout at the Five Points intersection in Butler County. OKI has funded 12 roundabouts totaling $38 million throughout the region. OKI provided $2.1 million toward the Five Points project in 2021. Hamilton officials expect that after the roundabout is completed, traffic efficiency on Grand Boulevard will increase, making that roadway a more attractive corridor for businesses to locate.
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.

**2021 OKI ICC Committee (as of Dec. 31 2021)**

**Union Township**
- Cory Wright
  - Chair

**Green Township**
- Adam Goetzman
  - First Vice Chair

**City of Florence**
- Eric Hall
  - Second Vice Chair

**City of Forest Park**
- Christopher Anderson
  -

**Green Umbrella**
- Wade Johnston
- John R. Jurgensen
- Jacki Alf

**League of Women Voters**
- Chris Moran

**Butler County Regional Airport**
- David Fehr

**Cincinnati/N. Kentucky International Airport**
- Debbie Conrad

**City of Cincinnati**
- Fred Andersont
  -

**Cincinnati Cycle Club**
- Tom Vass

**City of Cincinnati**
- Chris Ertel
  -

**Boone County Planning Commission**
- Kevin Costello

**Butler County Regional Planning Commission**
- David Fehr

**Campbell County Fiscal Court**
- Cindy Minter

**Clermont County Planning and Development**
- Taylor Corbett

**Dearborn County Planning Commission**
- Jarrod Alg

**Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission**
- Brian Wamsley

**Northern Kentucky Area Development District**
- Jeff Thelen

**PDS of Kenton County**
- Laura Tenfelde

**Warren County Regional Planning Commission**
- Hadil Lababidi

**Indiana Department of Transportation**
- Emmanuel Nsonwu

**Kentucky Transportation Cabinet**
- Dony Blackburn

**Ohio Department of Transportation**
- District 8
  - Scott Brown

**Ohio Department of Transportation**
- District 8
  - Keith Smith

**Environmental Justice Advisory Committee**
- Brad Johnson

**Greater Cincinnati Redevelopment Authority**
- Melissa Johnson

**Butler County Transportation Improvement District**
- Dan Corey

**Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District**
- Eric Beck

**Anderson Township**
- Steve Sievers

**Colerain Township**
- Jeff Weckbach

**Green Township**
- Adam Goetzman

**Miami Township**
- Brian Elliff

**City of Edgewood**
- Rob Thelen

**City of Florence**
- Larisa Sims

**City of Newport**
- Allyson Schafer

**City of Lebanon**
- Jason Milard

**City of Monroe**
- Kevin Chesar

**City of Oxford**
- Sam Perry

**City of Trenton**
- James Foster

**Kentucky Transportation Cabinet**
- Sadie Middleton

**Ohio Department of Transportation**
- District 8
  - Sam Conner

**Ohio Department of Transportation**
- District 8
  - John Smith

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**City of Lebanon**
- Jason Milard
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.

Megan Bessey
Karla Boldery
Scott Brown
Polly Doran
Gina Dowthait
James A. Foster
Allan C. Harris
Joyce Kinley
Erin Lynn
Cindy M. Minter
Rosalind Moore
Pamela Mullins
Keith Smith

When public engagement was highlighted in OKI’s 2020 Annual Report, Public Involvement Specialist Florence Parker discussed how the pandemic had disrupted the organization’s community outreach — or public participation — efforts.

A year has passed in that time, and the world is learning to live and work with COVID. And that includes OKI.

All metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), including OKI, are required to have a formal Public Participation Plan (PPP). Such a plan is designed to provide our citizens with complete information, timely public notices, and full access to key decisions and opportunities to be involved in this region’s transportation planning process.

OKI worked on revising the Participation Plan to adapt to online options in light of COVID.

For OKI, however, our commitment to engaging our public goes beyond requirements and regulations. We are always seeking new ways to reach our partners, our jurisdictions and our broader community. Many of our meetings and workshops have moved online, in some cases, with hybrid options.

In 2021, OKI continued to seek ways to engage the region through public meetings, workshops, surveys, social media, and other means. Here are just a few of highlights.

Staff continued to stay connected with OKI’s Environmental Justice Advisory Committee through the review and scoring of the Environmental Justice questions on every application during the last funding round.

OKI’s public involvement specialist was also busy updating various documents required by FTA, ODOT, KYTC, and INDOT:

- Title VI Plan
- Participation Plan
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program
- Attended 75 community council meetings during the 2021 calendar year in Avondale, Carthage, Clifton, Corryville, East End, East Walnut Hills, Madisonville, Mt Ayr, Mt Auburn, Mt Lookout, Mt Washington, North Avondale, Northside, Oakley, Over-the-Rhine, Pleasant Ridge, Sayler Park, Walnut Hills and the West End.

In partnering with ODOT and KYTC, and INDOT, OKI started the “OKI Moves Household Travel Survey.” Designed to be implemented in two phases — in fall 2021 and spring 2022 — the survey is collecting detailed travel information from about 4,000 households in OKI region.

OKI led workshops to engage the public is well established. Topics included:

- EV infrastructure and fleets for local governments;
- Our SolSmart program and how our member jurisdictions can benefit from solar energy;
- Environmental Justice issues; paratransit initiatives;
- FAM 2.0, a scenario-planning service for local governments;
- Our Environmental Mitigation Sustainability Modeler (EMSM), a new tool that identifies potential mitigation sites for future transportation and development projects; and many others.

OKI continued to use our social media platforms to advance our public participation mission.

There is growing regional optimism that Ohio and Kentucky are closer than ever to constructing a companion bridge to the Brent Spence Bridge. This confidence has been buoyed by the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BILL) in November 2021. New funding is expected to support construction of a new bridge as well as updates to the current bridge and the interstate network throughout the BSB Corridor. More than two million people live in the OKI region, 60 percent within five miles of this vital arterial. Of the one million jobs located here, 70 percent are within five miles of the I-75 Corridor and the Brent Spence Bridge.

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OKI staff also maintained lines of communication with members of the TriState Transportation Equitable Opportunity Team (TTEOT) by participating in the development of SORTA’s Greater Cincinnati Region Paratransit Implementation Plan. See page 18 for more details.

OKI’s public involvement specialist was also busy updating various documents required by FTA, ODOT, KYTC, and INDOT:

- Title VI Plan
- Participation Plan
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program
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- EV infrastructure and fleets for local governments;
- Our SolSmart program and how our member jurisdictions can benefit from solar energy;
### 2021 Distributed Funds by project type

OKI Federal Funds Awarded in SFY21 (Ohio STBG, Ohio CMAQ, Ohio TA, KY SNK, KY TA, 5310 Transit) = $56,746,671; OKI Federal Funds Encumbered in SFY22 (expected) = $67,184,596

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIKE/PED/OTHER</td>
<td>$13,676,406</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRANSIT</td>
<td>$9,676,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAINTENANCE-RECONSTRUCTION</td>
<td>$9,247,270</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRAFFIC OPERATIONS-SAFETY</td>
<td>$24,774,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLK INTERCHANGE</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIDENING/RELOCATION</td>
<td>$875,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRIDGE REPLACEMENT</td>
<td>$6,801,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OKI SUPPLEMENTAL PLANNING</td>
<td>$1,133,948</td>
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### General Operating Budget (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021)

**Revenue Sources**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>13.26%</td>
<td>$889,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>72.68%</td>
<td>$4,877,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>10.37%</td>
<td>$695,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.69%</td>
<td>$247,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$6,710,096</strong></td>
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**Expenses by Activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>87.94%</td>
<td><strong>$6,007,684</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter Services &amp; Regional Clean Air Program</td>
<td>5.58%</td>
<td><strong>$381,032</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Planning</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td><strong>$68,245</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Planning</td>
<td>2.69%</td>
<td><strong>$183,938</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and Administrative Activities</td>
<td>2.80%</td>
<td><strong>$191,026</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$6,831,924</strong></td>
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*With the help of $5.5 million of OKI funds, the Clermont County Transportation Improvement District, reconstructed, realigned and extended Clepper Lane.*
The OKI 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan is the foundation for advancing transportation projects in the Tri-State. To remain relevant and effective, the plan must respond to the changing needs of the region. Therefore, while it is updated every four years, amendments are made as needed.

This year the Board adopted Amendment 2, which included projects that received Ohio Transportation Review Advisory Committee (TRAC) funds in September 2021. These funds allow the continuation of the project development process of existing 2050 Plan projects, as well as the addition of a project not currently in the plan. In summary, the following changes were included in this action:

- Addition of North Hamilton Crossing Phase 3.
- Adjust construction costs for projects impacted by changes in year of construction and demonstrate fiscal constraint.
- Adjust air quality analysis year for projects impacted by changes in year of construction and demonstrate air quality conformity.

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

In 2021, OKI began creating a new, Freight Plan. It will be completed in two phases during Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023. The first phase is being conducted entirely in-house by OKI’s talented staff. The focus in 2021 was on identifying and amassing critical datasets needed for a comprehensive, multimodal approach. Safety, infrastructure, mobility, environmental, and economic data across all five freight modes (road, rail, river, runway, and pipeline) was secured in this effort.

Also in 2021, OKI endorsed a third successful America Marine Highway (AMH) grant application under our M-70 Barge Service in the Ports of Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky and Beyond Project Designation. In December, Nucor Corporation was awarded $1,408,000 to buy a gantry crane for a new marine terminal that will be built at their Gallatin plant. The new crane's ability to lift 70 tons will enable the transport of steel products by barge rather than by trucks to meet market demand. The new crane and marine terminal are necessary due to Nucor's doubling in steel coil production since January 2020 (USDOT Press Release). OKI's role as grantee of two 2020-awarded Federal Rail Administration (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grants, which totaled $2.3 million in new federal funding for the region, commenced in earnest during 2021.
Electric Vehicles are Future of Mobility; OKI Preparing for Them Today

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 2021, OKI hosted two EV Webinars highlighting opportunities for procurement of EV infrastructure and fleet electrification. Both webinars were very well attended and interest for electrification continues to grow across our region.

OKI is closely monitoring the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), which includes a $7.5 billion program for electric vehicle charging stations, and FHWA guidance on the program for local opportunities to participate. We are working with federal, state and local agencies to coordinate a regional strategy for this unprecedented funding opportunity.

FIAM 2.0 Continued to Aid Local Jurisdictions in Land-use Decisions

In 2021, OKI continued to make FIAM 2.0, the fiscal impact analysis model update, freely available to member jurisdictions. Nine communities inquired about use of the model and we used the model in four of those instances. They were the village of Williamsburg, and the cities of Lebanon, Springdale and Independence.

FIAM was used to test different land-use scenarios and even to model a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) scenario. In each case, the model provided valuable insight to planners about the fiscal impacts in their land-use decisions.

OKI staff gave a presentation on the FIAM program to the Northern Kentucky City Managers’ Association in September. He also was invited to present FIAM 2.0 at the American Planning Association’s national conference in 2022. As part of that presentation, Meyer organized a panel discussion that included representatives from the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS), the Boise, Idaho, metropolitan planning organization. With OKI’s input, COMPASS developed its own fiscal impact analysis model and program.
Stephanie Spence used OKI’s EMSM to help measure bat diversity for the Boone County Conservation District, and representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. EPA, Signatory Agencies, including U.S. National Park Service, and interagency-supported conference, and addresses the broad range of ecological issues related to transportation systems.

**Tree For Me**

OKI has developed a tool for sustainability organizations, local communities, and residents to estimate the air quality and stormwater benefits of newly planted trees. Tree For Me received a national award by the National Association of Government Web Professionals, receiving its Excellence in Digital Innovation and Engagement Pinnacle Award. This tool serves as an educational tool and has been a portal for the Taking Root organization, the city of Covington, the city of Middletown, and various agencies through consultations.

**National Conference Presentations**

OKI Environmental Consultation work and EMSM were presented at the National Mitigation and Ecosystem Banking Conference (NMBC), on July 21, 2021, to an audience of key decision-makers and leaders from the business government (local, state, and federal), nonprofits, and universities. Specifically, the audience comprised of regulators, clients/buyers of credits, bankers, investors, suppliers, attorneys, engineers, real estate developers, planners, consultants, landowners, and interested observers. EMSM was also presented virtually at the International Conference on Ecology and Transportation (ICOT) on Sept. 29, 2021. ICOT is the foremost interdisciplinary, interagency-supported conference, and addresses the broad range of ecological issues related to transportation systems.

**Urban Tree Canopy Assessment (UTC)**

Tree canopy provides many benefits to communities, improving water quality, saving energy, lowering summer temperatures, reducing air pollution, enhancing property values, providing wildlife habitat, facilitating social and educational opportunities, and providing aesthetic benefits. Establishing a tree canopy goal is essential for communities seeking to improve green infrastructure. 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.

The UTC assessments serve as a tool to evaluate, prioritize, and target individual parcels, groups of parcels, and classes of parcels for GI projects, urban forest conservation, tree canopy improvement, and revitalization in underserved areas. OKI is also a partner in the Climate Safe Neighborhoods projects through Groundwork Ohio River Valley (a National Park Service initiative), and NASA DEVELOP program. This project involves remote sensing and analysis of canopy and urban heat islands in urban areas. The studies look at various factors, including land use, land cover, demographic, and spatial data to determine which areas are at the highest risk in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. OKI is also working with the Northern Kentucky Urban and Community Forestry Council to update the Northern Kentucky UTC using a recent LiDAR acquisition.

**Campbell County/NKU Stream Restoration Analysis**

OKI provided technical assistance to the NKU in-lieu fee compensatory environmental mitigation provider. OKI assessed potential areas for a new stream mitigation site using the Environmental Mitigation and Suitability Modeler (EMSM). We provided the program with a list of potential sites through this process and gained first-hand experience on how EMSM can be improved for future updates. The first round of properties is being vetted for potential stream restoration projects. We are providing additional technical assistance to provide a preliminary assessment on additional areas of interest.

**University Partnerships**

OKI continued to collaborate with Northern Kentucky University to guide student projects for Ecology of the City course and Environmental Studies course. For the Spring 2022 Ecology of the City class, students provided valuable environmental planning research to the regional planning:

- **Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Review** — compiled 2020 UTC layer data developed by OKI with the 2012 UTC.
- **Pollinator’s Project** — Pollinators are essential to ecosystem health. An estimated 85 percent of the world’s flowering plants depend on animals — mostly insects — for pollination. As pollinators decline, so does agricultural production, putting the Nation’s food supply and agricultural economy at risk. OKI developed a mobile application to support the collection of data needed to evaluate opportunities to integrate pollinator-friendly practices in the built environment.

OKI’s Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP) — to provide climate change research to inform OKI’s Land Use Steering Committee as they continue to advance the SRPP.

The OKI-NKU partnership allows students to conduct environmental planning research that is valuable to the region. Student work exposes them to the environmental planning field and prepares them for future opportunities. The students’ work helps OKI conduct data analysis and updates.
Innovative Technologies

DATASETS FROM ABOVE

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Aided Data Gathering for OKI, Partners

OKI’s unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) program continued to take off during 2021. This program will provide transformative value to many of the transportation and environmental datasets collected and maintained by OKI.

OKI continued a partnership with KYTC District 6 as part of a three-year program to capture imagery and videos of 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 collaborated with Paddlefest organizers to provide video footage and still imagery of Paddlefest 2021. It will be used on their website and for future promotions of the event.

In partnership with the Cardinal Land Conservancy and Bahr Farms, OKI captured imagery to document a recently purchased undeveloped parcel adjacent to Bahr Farms. Specific focus was given to the property’s creek, as a place where potential projects from mitigation and suitability funds could be best served.
OKI Continued Collecting Key Traffic and Travel Data in 2021

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. In 2021, OKI continued intensive traffic and travel pattern data collection across the region.

OKI used consultant services to collect traffic counts at 175 locations along highways and major arterials in the region. This data was fed into OKI’s traffic count database for Travel Demand Model and traffic analysis.

OKI and ODOT partnered to start the Regional Household Travel Survey. It was designed to be implemented in two phases, in fall 2021 and spring 2022. The survey is collecting detailed travel information from about 4,000 households in OKI region.

The survey is the primary source of information about how people across the region travel, and is critical input in travel demand model development. The survey data will be used to validate and calibrate the OKI’s activity-based travel demand.

Also in 2021, OKI continued to maintain and operate the Ohio River Bridge counter stations, and to evaluate and monitor the equipment performance and data quality. OKI continued to compile and analyze ODOT traffic data, which will be used to evaluate and assess the impact and evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region.

Travel Demand and Air Quality Model

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 and transit volume based on information such as land use patterns; socioeconomic characteristics of the population and employment; and the composition and configuration of transportation system. OKI is the only agency in the region that owns, develops and operates a regional travel demand model.

In 2021, OKI’s Activity-Based Travel Demand Model was applied to generate mobile emission estimates for Air Quality Conformity for OKI 2050 Plan amendments.

EPA’s Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator (MOVES) is a state-of-the-science emission modeling system that estimates emissions for mobile sources. In 2021, OKI’s Activity-Based Travel Demand Model was integrated with EPA’s MOVES3 software.

OKI applied the integrated model to generate mobile source emission estimates for the re-designation of the Greater Cincinnati area to attainment of the 2015 8-hour ozone, National Ambient Air Quality Standard.
Data, Demographics

ANALYSIS AND SYSTEMS GUIDING MOBILE COMMUNITIES

OKI’s GIS Highlights: Tree Canopy Layer, Transit Shed Update

Providing detailed, up-to-date Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data, analysis and web mapping applications for OKI’s many programs was a primary focus for our GIS Department during 2021. The GIS department deployed machine learning algorithms and LiDAR datasets to develop an Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) layer for our three Northern Kentucky counties. The UTC layer is helpful in understanding existing conditions of our green infrastructure, and it can provide a base line for future analysis.

Tree canopy provides many benefits to our local communities: improving water quality; reducing erosion; reducing stormwater runoff; lowering urban temperatures; reducing air pollution; enhancing property values; providing wildlife habitat; and providing aesthetic benefits.

Staff updated transit sheds for our Job Hubs application, due to major changes in routes and schedules for TANK and METRO. This updated layer will provide valuable information on the accessibility to each of our Job Hubs via transit service.

In 2021, GIS staff assisted with the development of the Tree for Me app and the Environmental Mitigation and Suitability Modeler (EMSM). Both of these apps provide a great deal of value for OKI’s member communities and provide a valuable resource that was not previously available.

OKI Develops ITS Architecture Roadmap for Transportation Systems Integration

As the MPO, OKI maintains and updates the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture and Standards for the region as required by Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transportation Administration.

The architecture provides an overarching framework that spans all organizations and individual transportation projects within the OKI region. Using the architecture, each transportation project can be viewed as an element of the overall transportation system. This provides visibility into the relationship between individual transportation projects, as well as ways to build a cost-effective, integrated transportation system over time.

A new element to the ITS Architecture was a Connected Vehicle/Automated Vehicle (CV/AV) update developed by DriveOhio and ODOT. This update incorporates the Statewide CV/AV Architecture into the regional ITS architecture. It also promotes consistency and interoperability among all CV/AV technologies and projects being implemented throughout the region.

The regional ITS Architecture update also includes a strategic plan that provides a ten-year outlook for ITS activities in the region. It represents a snapshot of the currently anticipated projects based on information from stakeholders.
On Aug. 12, 2021, the U.S. Census Bureau released population and housing unit counts at the block level from the 2020 Census. The region gained 121,247 residents between 2010 and 2020, an increase of 6.1 percent. Boone County, Kentucky, grew at the fastest rate at 14.4 percent followed by Warren County, Ohio, at 13.9 percent.

Population growth between 2010 and 2020 occurred in Cincinnati neighborhoods surrounding the University of Cincinnati; in the Madisonville and Mt. Adams neighborhoods; as well as in suburban greenfield communities across the region. Population declines were found in older established neighborhoods adjacent to growth or in areas where public housing was demolished.

Suburban communities with the strongest growth were in the cities of Mason and Lebanon in Warren County; Ross Township in Butler County; the city of Madeira in Hamilton County; Union and Batavia townships in Clermont County; Burlington, Union, and Florence areas in Boone County; the city of Independence in Kenton County; and the city of Alexandria in Campbell County.

Areas seeing the largest decreases in population were in the neighborhoods of Riverside, Saylor Park, Queensgate, Lower Price Hill, East Price Hill, North and South Fairmount, English Woods and Evanston neighborhoods in Cincinnati; and in Newport's west end, a result of the Peter G. Noll apartment demolition.
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, they are Boone, Campbell, and Kenton; and in Ohio, Butler, Clermont, Hamilton, and Warren.

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).
Active Transportation & Air Quality

PROGRAMS AND FUNDING IMPROVING THE REGION’S SAFETY

OKI’s RideShare program continues to remove single-occupant vehicles from the region’s roadways.

The program’s goal is to make trips to work easy, less costly, more environmentally friendly, and overall more convenient. RideShare is committed to improving the daily business commute for everyone in the OKI region. This is done through innovative transportation solutions, such as carpooling and vanpooling. OKI’s vanpool program grew an astounding 350% from 2020.

RideShare provides commuters an opportunity to save money and “wear and tear” on their vehicles, including on gas, tires, decreasing mileage, and reducing maintenance costs. 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’s Regional Clean Air Campaign Promoted in 2021

OKI’s Regional Clean Air Program continues to provide valuable information to businesses, the media, and the larger community on 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 teaching individuals how they can help reduce air pollution.

OKI Provided Funding for Bike, Pedestrian Trails in 2021

Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure supports everyone in a community, whether they need or choose to bike or walk to get to their jobs, schools, stores, or other places. They want to feel connected and have access to the communities they live in. Convenient access to reliable transportation is essential for the livelihood and well-being of communities. OKI provides funding for numerous trail and bike projects to help make this happen.

OKI awarded more than $2.7 million in Transportation Alternative funds toward projects that advance non-motorized transportation in 2021.
OKI's Strategic Regional Policy Plan a Tool for Consistent Development

The regional trends and conditions used to inform the OKI Strategic Regional Policy Plan, housed at www.howdowegrow.org, were systematically updated throughout 2021, as the 2020 U.S. Census data became available.

The policy recommendations of this plan are designed to help inform and guide local decision makers, and are based on regional trends in population change, increasing costs of public services, while incorporating environmental health and a better quality of life.

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, when requested.

OKI's Strategic Regional Policy Plan

Regional Conservation Council Events

The OKI Regional Conservation Council held its business meeting on May 27, 2021 at the University of Cincinnati Center for Field Studies in Harrison, Ohio. This event marked the 50th year for the OKI RCC. The event was abbreviated and held outdoors due to COVID precautions, but attendees enjoyed a walking tour of the Center’s 17.6 acres of advanced teaching and research facilities.

Central Ohio farmer Dave Brandt discusses no-till farming practices during the OKI Regional Conservation Council’s “2021 Annual Conservation Tour” in Campbell County, which took place in October. A national expert on the topic, Brandt has successfully used no-till methods for a half-century and cover crops for more than 40 years. The event marked the 50th year the RCC has been in existence.

OKI Assisted Morgan Township in Updating its Comprehensive Plan

OKI staff helped Morgan Township staff facilitate a process over the past year to update their local comprehensive plan. The plan was last updated in 1994. OKI helped organize and lead their local steering committee through this planning process, and is developing most of the content for this critical plan. For the initiative, OKI reached out to Miami University’s Geography Department, which provided GIS analysis for the plan and established an intuitive online GIS map portal for the township’s ongoing use.

OKI continued to support clean energy initiatives in 2021. For example, staff provided expertise to the Cincinnati 2030 District to help it measure and develop tools to achieve their transportation emissions goal. With OKI’s assistance, the district completed its first annual commuting survey and established its transportation emission baseline. Facilitated by Green Umbrella, the 2030 District is a partnership of more than 40 organizations, including Cincinnati Bell, 5/3, P&G, Kroger, City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, UC, XU, and NKU. The district’s goal is to reduce emissions from building energy use, water use, and emissions from transportation by 50 percent by 2030.

December 2020, OKI received a Silver designation in the national SolSmart program, an initiative of the Solar Foundation, ICMA 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. In 2021, OKI hosted two SolSmart workshops to help local communities become more informed about the SolSmart program and learn ways they can benefit from solar.

Morgan Township officials held an open house for residents to offer comment on updates to the comprehensive plan. In 2021, OKI helped the township facilitate the process while working with Miami University, whose geography department provided GIS analysis for the plan.
Ohio River Recreational Trail Digital Guide

In June 2021, OKI received the Major Metro Achievement Award from the National Association of Regional Councils for developing the Ohio River Recreational Trail Digital Guide in 2021. The online tool was developed to increase safety and enhance tourism along the Ohio River corridor from Portsmouth, Ohio, to West Point, Ky.

In 2021, Forbes magazine ranked Cincinnati #2 on their national list of best road trip destinations. The Ohio River Recreational Trail, which inspired the digital guide, was listed as a main attraction for kayakers and other water sport activities. The guide can be found at https://gis.oki.org/ohiorivertrail/.

The Ohio River Basin Alliance Recreation Sub-committee is working to expand the digital guide to include the entire Ohio River from Pittsburgh, Pa., to Cairo, Ill. The group is focusing on connecting with other river groups along the Ohio who can take on the responsibility of entering, managing, and maintaining the data for their area.

Master Rain Gardener Program Leadership

In partnership with our region's soil & water conservation districts, SD1, and MSD, OKI has helped initiate a master rain gardener training program. This six-week course trains local residents how to design and build a residential rain garden culminating in building one of their own. Participants are also encouraged to be ambassadors for rain gardens and help train the classes that come after them. This program is modeled on a Washtenaw County, Mich., program that has resulted in more than 1,000 rain gardens built over ten years. Seventeen students participated in the inaugural class. A second class is scheduled for fall 2022.

Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework (ACPF)

OKI led the effort to develop this tool in Southwest Ohio. ACPF is an innovative GIS-based model that identifies agricultural fields most at risk for nutrient runoff and the placement of BMPs to reduce that runoff at the HUC 12 Watershed level. OKI has gathered and prepared the required GIS data across Butler, Warren, Hamilton, Clermont, and Clinton counties. This is so that local partners can run the model to aid the development of Nine-Element Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategies plans (NPS-IS). The model allows the user to explore different practices, such as grassed waterways, edge of field wetlands, and controlled drainage, just to name a few. This model has been recently utilized in watershed planning around Caesar Creek Lake in Warren County; the East Fork Little Miami River in Clermont County; and Beals Run-Indian Creek Watershed in Butler County.

Additionally, the ORRT partnership was awarded a U.S. National Park Service in-kind technical assistance grant in 2019. A second award is pending for 2022 to help plan and develop the trail following the standards of the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.