

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1 – STUDY TEAM

The Study process was administered and managed by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Government (OKI) with federal funding authorization which was received in February 2003. Administration and legislative planning work resulted in a consultant selection and formal start to the Study in June 2005.

The Consultant Team was led by Edwards and Kelcey. Subconsultants included URS responsible for selected transportation elements; Thelen Associates, Inc. responsible for environmental issues; and Niehaus Engineering responsible for traffic engineering analysis.

The Study received valuable direction and input from three important groups: The Oversight Team, the Advisory Committee and the general public.

THE OVERSIGHT TEAM

The Study was directed by the Oversight Team. The 11 person membership represented key stakeholders in the Study Area. The Oversight Team was an important core group consisting of professionals in the field of transportation and elected or appointed officials. An explanation of the rationale behind the selection of these 11 agencies follows: the Study Area's two largest cities (Cincinnati and Harrison) were represented; accordingly, the Study Area's two largest townships (Colerain and Green) were also represented; to include a comprehensive and collaborative process, the two most rural, least populated townships (Crosby and Whitewater) were represented as well; the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Hamilton County Engineer's Office's technical resources were critical for the Study; the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority's (SORTA) multi-modal services and data was desired; and, having assisted in securing the Study's funding, Congressman Chabot and Senator Voinovich's political support and involvement throughout the Study was intended to assist in future implementation of Study recommendations.

The Oversight Team met on a regular (typically monthly) basis throughout the Study. OKI staff conducted meetings and the Consultant Team presented information for consideration by the members. Decisions related to Study issues were based on a thorough review of information and a consensus building process. **Figure 1-1** identifies the membership of the Oversight Team.

Figure 1-1 – Oversight Team Membership

Name	Organization
Hubert Brown	Whitewater Township, Trustee
Keith Corman	Colerain Township, Trustee
Jay Hamilton	ODOT – District 8
Andre Harper	Office of U.S. Senator George Voinovich
Ted Hubbard	Hamilton County Engineer’s Office
Beth Bryan	Office of Congressman Steve Chabot
Greg Long	City of Cincinnati Transportation & Engineering
Stephan Louis	SORTA Board
Chuck Mitchell	Green Township, Trustee
Walt “Coke” Powers	City of Harrison
Warren Strunk	Crosby Township

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee was a larger broad-based group. The 59 members represented a diverse range of interests from throughout the Study Area. The Advisory Committee met on a quarterly basis or six times over the course of the Study on August 25, 2005, December 1, 2005, February 23, 2006, May 25, 2006, August 24, 2006 and October 26, 2006.

Comprehensive presentations were made to the Advisory Committee using the results of prior discussions and direction from the Oversight Team. All documentation and analysis results were made available for review. The Advisory Committee provided feedback to the Oversight Team, OKI and the Consultant Team. **Figure 1-2** shows the Advisory Committee membership.

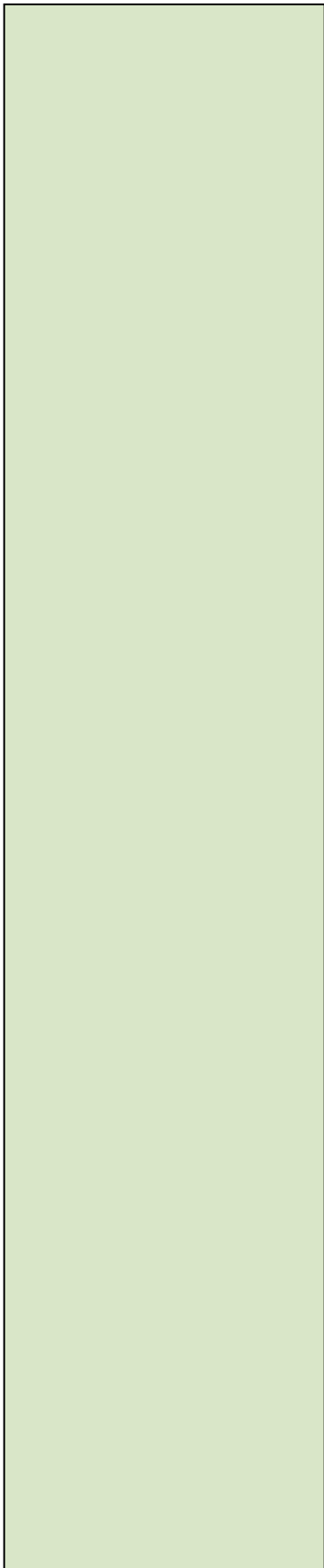
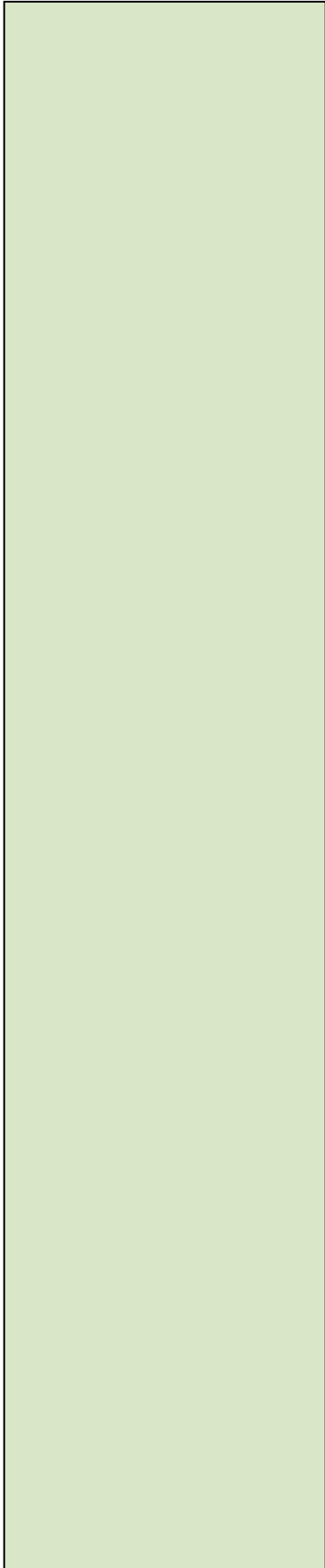


Figure 1-2 – Advisory Committee Membership

Name, Organization/Affiliation
Catherine Barrett, State Representative
Robert Bass, Delhi Township
Aaron Bley, Mercy Hospital Western Hills
Tom Braun, City of Cheviot
Hubert Brown, Whitewater Township
Beth Bryan, Congressman Chabot's Office
E. Dwight Campbell, Great Oaks/Diamond Oaks
Michael Cervay, City of Cincinnati/ Development & Planning
Senator Patti Clancy, Ohio Senator
Jennifer Clippard, Cincinnati Cycle Club
Keith Corman, Colerain Township (Chairman)
Pat Dewine, Hamilton County Board of Commissioners
Angie Drew, Three Rivers Local Schools
Steve Driehaus, State Representative
Bob Engel, Northwest Local School District
Tom Ewing, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber
Woody Fitzmaurice, Cincinnati Public Schools
Kim Gilday-Weber, Riverside Civic and Welfare Club
Joseph Gorman, Camp Washington Community Board
Jay Hamilton, Ohio Department of Transportation – District 8
Andre Harper, Senator Voinovich's Office
Allan Harris, NAACP
Nick Hoesl, Citizens for Civic Renewal
Ted Hubbard, Hamilton County Engineer's Office
Don Hughett, Colerain Township Business Association
Roland Johnson, Land Conservancy of Hamilton County
Martha Kelly, City of Cincinnati/Transportation & Engineering
Bob Lameier, Western Economic Council
Linda Liebau, College of Mount St. Joseph
Tom Losekamp, Harrison Township Board of Trustees
Stephan Louis, SORTA
Kat Lyons, Center for Independent Living Options
Jill Mallery, Oak Hills Transportation Department
Timothy Mara, Concerned Citizens of Western Hamilton County
Joel McGuire, City of Harrison
Chuck Mitchell, Green Township Trustee
Chris Moran, League of Women Voters of Cincinnati
Enid Nagel, Sierra Club

Figure 1-2 – Advisory Committee Membership (Continued)

Name, Organization/Affiliation
Doug Nienaber, Hamilton County Board MRDD
Dan Pillow, Village of Addyston
Gary Raffel, Archdiocese of Cincinnati
Etta Reed, Home Builders Association
Jack Rininger, Jr., Miami Township
Lisa Rowell, Grtr. Cinti/N. Ky African American Chamber
Eric Russo, The Hillside Trust
Kim Satzger, Port Authority
John Schneider, Alliance for Regional Transit
William Seitz, State of Ohio Representative
Stew Sonnenberg, Federal Highway Administration
Richard Spence, Friends of White Water Shaker Village Inc.
Caroline Statkus, Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission
Larry Stone, Rumpke
Warren Strunk, Crosby Township Trustees
Shawn Sutton, Village of Cleves
Marsha Watts Visher, Urban League of Greater Cincinnati
Alan Weiner, South Western Ohio Trails Association
Peter Witte, Price Hill Civic Club
Carol Wood, Westwood Civic
Tim Zelek, Hamilton County Park District



CHAPTER 2 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Additional participation by the public throughout the Study process was an important element. The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) included a vigorous and far reaching effort to inform as many individuals and organizations as possible about the Study. These communications activities are also a mandated component of the environmental analysis and documentation processes as outlined by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) of 1969.

The PIP was designed to provide maximum flexibility while incorporating multiple layers of public involvement techniques. The process engaged interested and potentially impacted parties in dialogue, provided multiple opportunities for them to share information and feedback about project issues, as well as express their concerns, opinions and other pertinent ideas regarding the Study. At the same time, the plan was sensitive to local considerations and issues.

Goals for the PIP included the following:

- Establish an identity for the Western Hamilton County Transportation Study;
- Increase public awareness and project understanding through communicating clearly, accurately and in a timely fashion with the public regarding the project;
- Be responsive to public comments and concerns and provide feedback whenever possible;
- Develop a partnership with the media to ensure accurate reporting of information; and
- Allow the project management team to establish regular communication with key groups in a cost effective and timely manner.

Key tasks in the PIP included:

- Establishing a Study base;
- Identifying and integrating environmental justice communities into the Study process;
- Developing a study logo, website and project telephone number;
- Creating informational packets and handouts;
- Delivering presentations to civic groups, public officials and special events;
- Utilizing direct mail and paid advertisements;
- Conducting media relations; and
- Hosting public open houses.



JURISDICTIONAL ONE-ON-ONES

Between December 2004 and March 2005, interviews were conducted by the Study Project Manager with key representatives from each of the jurisdictions located within the Study Area. These meetings were intended to: initiate a working relationship between OKI and the local jurisdiction, inform the jurisdiction of the Study, document and understand the community's major transportation concerns, answer any initial questions and engage each in the work of the Study.

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

Public open houses served as forums to both inform and gather input. Over the course of the Study, three public open houses were held on:

- September 28, 2005 5-8 PM – Whitewater Township Community Center – 6125 Dry Ford Road
- Wednesday, April 26, 2006 4-7 PM – Colerain Township Senior Center – 4300 Springdale Road
- Wednesday, September 27, 2006 4-7 PM – College of Mt. St. Joseph Theatre Building – 5701 Delhi Road

The first public open house had an attendance of 58 people with a combination of 59 comment sheets and cards received.

The second had an attendance of 32 people with a combination of 62 comment sheets and cards received. The third public open house, with an attendance of 70 people, received a combination of 53 comment sheets and phone comments.

The meetings were open house format to enable one-on-one attention to be given to each attendee by Study team staff. This format also permitted the public to spend as little or as much time on issues of interest to them.

The meetings occurred at key milestones during the Study process where public input and consensus was needed. Meetings were widely publicized through several means. First, notices were posted in the Cincinnati Enquirer, Cincinnati Herald and Spanish Journal. Second, press releases and newsletter articles were distributed to the media, local community press papers and public/private organization newsletters. Third, flyers announcing the public meeting were mailed to addresses collected in the Study database, as well as to the OKI's Board of Trustees and Intermodal Coordinating Committee. Fourth, information was posted on the Study website (www.WesternStudy.org) and several of the Oversight Team and Advisory Committee members' websites. Fifth, flyers were mailed and emailed to Advisory Committee members. Sixth, in addition to the notices, paid advertisements were placed in The Community Press and Cincinnati Enquirer.



A variety of additional activities were used to publicize the open houses. In the month leading up to the first public open house, OKI staff asked to conduct an overview presentation and distribute information at each Township Trustee and City Council meeting in the Study Area. A total of nine trustee/council presentations were conducted. Outreach for the Study was enhanced due to the fact that many of these meetings were televised.

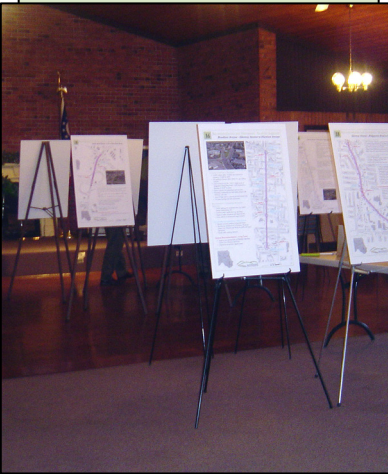
In preparation for the second public open house, SORTA installed posters publicizing the event on each of their 400 Metro buses with routes in the Study Area.

For both the second and third open houses, tabletop or front desk displays were installed at all 10 public library branches serving the Study Area. Handout materials included in the displays not only announced the upcoming public open house, but also provided the website address and the phone number for interested persons wanting to complete a comment sheet.

Another activity utilized was a direct mail postcard sent to every property located within ¼ mile radius of the each of the project recommendations. This entailed the mailing of over 12,000 postcards for the 26 project recommendations presented at the second public open house and over 36,000 postcards for the final 100 project recommendations presented at the last open house.

At the meetings, the public was surveyed on their thoughts and ideas and asked to rate the transportation conditions of Western Hamilton County as well as the goals, existing conditions, alternatives and recommendations of the Study. They provided insight as to which issues were important and needed to be focused on. They also gave information about themselves to illustrate how the Study directly or indirectly impacted them. The information collected from the meetings was reported to the Oversight Team for their consideration and review.

Valuable information and comments were provided by residents and interested individuals. Each person attending the meetings had an opportunity to view materials, receive handouts and submit their opinions about transportation-related issues. Many of the ideas expressed at these meetings have been included in the Study.



MEDIA RELATIONS

The media was kept up to date throughout the course of the Study through press releases, media advisories and newsletter articles. Study updates were typically sent to: township newsletters, The Community Press, The Spanish Journal, The Cincinnati Herald, The Cincinnati Enquirer and The Cincinnati Post.

STUDY LOGO

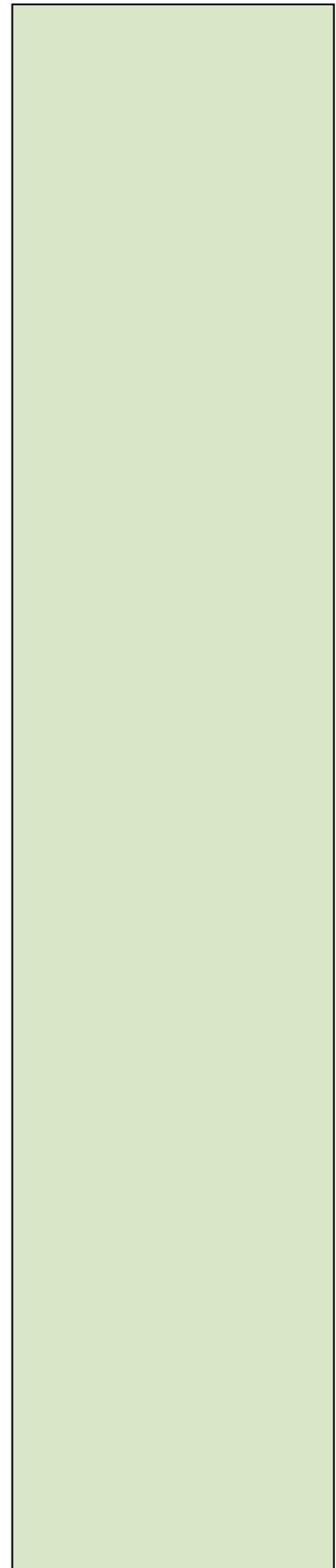
It was important that the Study be easily identified by the public and Study participants. One way to accomplish this was through the creation of a logo which appeared on all Study related materials as well as the website. OKI staff developed the logo with all aspects of Western Hamilton County in mind. The logo creatively incorporated three green hills and a winding roadway to signify both the rural aspect of Western Hamilton County and the fact that transportation was the focus of the Study. The logo provided consistent message reinforcement throughout the course of the Study.

WEBSITE

The Western Hamilton County Transportation Study utilized a website throughout the Study process (www.WesternStudy.org). This website address appeared on all Study related materials. The site contained updated information relative to Study activities. The site also provided interactive opportunities to make comments about the Study and direct links for visitors to ask questions and request additional information. All Advisory Committee and public open house presentation materials were added to the website as electronic, downloadable files for public review. From March 2005 until November 2006, the website received over 78,000 hits. The average visitor session length was over seven and ½ minutes and the number of visitors who visited the site more than once was 877.

ADDITIONAL OUTREACH

Over the course of the Study, supplemental pieces were developed as needed to communicate Study progress. One example was a Question and Answer sheet or Q&A which is included as **Appendix A**. A phone line was established at the onset of the Study to provide another method through which Study participants and the public could communicate with OKI staff. Phone messages, letters and emails received from the general public were responded to in a timely manner. A record of each piece of correspondence was created and filed.



CHAPTER 3 - APPROACH OVERVIEW

The Study Team took a comprehensive multi-modal approach to the Western Hamilton County Transportation Study. This approach reviewed and considered all aspects of the transportation system that affect Western Hamilton County, including:

- Regional access including connectivity with Dearborn and Butler counties
- Connectivity with the eastern portions of Hamilton County
- Internal circulation systems in the various townships, villages and cities
- Transit systems and mass transit accessibility and circulation
- Pedestrian and bicycle travel

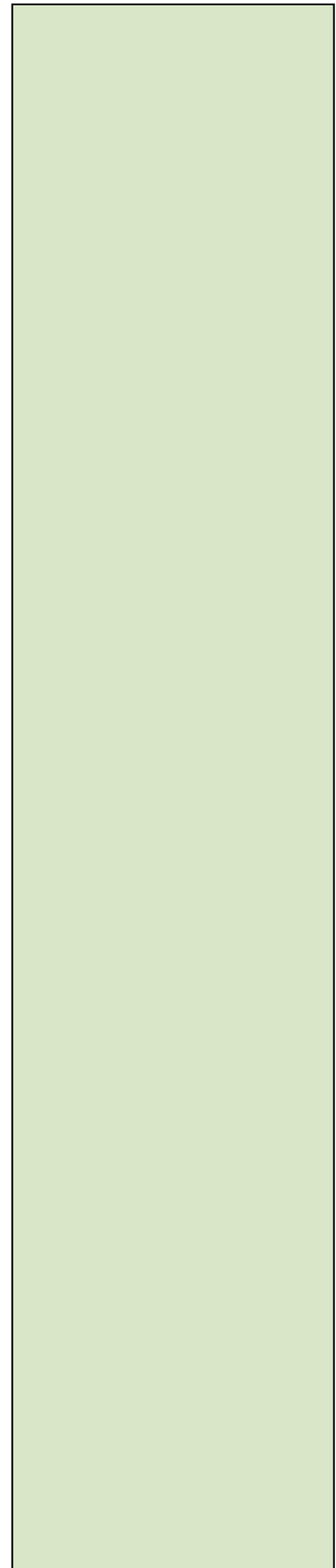
In addition, sewer infrastructure, land use patterns, economic vitality and environmental resources and concerns such as waterways and hillside stabilization were also taken into consideration as important components that affect the transportation system in the Study Area.

Specific design characteristics were considered and evaluated in order to provide a cohesive and integrated plan:

- **Continuity.** Transportation systems should be continuous between destinations. While relatively common in transportation systems where vehicles are involved, this is not always the case with pedestrian or bicycle systems.
- **Capacity.** Each transportation mode considered should be designed to accommodate existing and future users.
- **Safety.** Transportation systems need to be designed to be as safe as possible. This includes adequate separations between different modes of transportation, design and location of the various modes of transportation, access management, safety engineering and lighting.
- **Environmental.** Environmental factors should be considered in transportation system designs. Flooding, landslides and detrimental visual impacts are all elements that can affect or are impacted by transportation systems.
- **Systems Integration.** Each mode of transportation serves a specific use within Western Hamilton County. These types of uses or systems (rail, roadway, sidewalks, bicycle routes, etc.) have dedicated right-of-way or share right-of-way with one or more other modes of transportation. In either case, they must be integrated to be effective.

Finally, the Study incorporated three basic principles:

- **Create a comprehensive and coordinated plan for the Study Area.** The inclusion of short- and long-term transportation alternatives and recommendations will work to minimize negative social, economic and environmental impacts while improving overall quality of life. The Study involved a broad-based investigation for solutions and recommendations covering transportation needs for the following categories:
 - Residential;
 - Commercial businesses;
 - Industrial (heavy truck traffic, freight, barge, railroad);
 - Commuting employees;
 - Recreational;
 - Mass transit (SORTA) and
 - Educational (e.g. students and staff of the College of Mount St. Joseph).
- **Undertake a systematic, interdisciplinary approach to planning.** The EK Team supplemented the talents and experience of OKI's professional staff, the Oversight Team and the Advisory Committee. The collective experience in transportation planning, civil and structural engineering, land use planning, regulatory control, public involvement, environmental planning and economic analysis provided a solid basis for OKI to provide a quality Study that is both informative and capable of being implemented.
- **Engage public officials, citizens, related agencies and other interested parties throughout the planning process.** The Study's Public Involvement Plan (PIP) provided an outline which was followed and even expanded upon during the course of the Study to better collect and engage diverse individuals and organizations.



CHAPTER 4 - SCOPE OF WORK

Specific work tasks were defined for the Study. Each of the work tasks had an objective, an outcome and a relationship to the Study as a whole. The following is a brief description of the individual work tasks:

1. Include comprehensive study development
 - a. Prepare Purpose and Needs Statement
 - b. Prepare and implement Public Involvement Plan

2. Prepare an Existing and Future Conditions Report
 - a. Assemble existing studies and project plans
 - b. Review proposed transportation improvements
 - c. Inventory issues relevant to transportation issues:
 - Functional roadway classifications
 - Pedestrian and bicycle facilities
 - Number of through travel lanes
 - Journey-to-Work travel patterns
 - Vehicle classification
 - Transit ridership/route data
 - Congestion zones related to on-street parking and traffic flow
 - Accident information
 - Traffic volume counts
 - Turning movement counts at intersections
 - Travel time on major routes
 - d. Identify environmentally sensitive areas
 - Prepare Red Flag Summary Report
 - e. Document transportation facility data collection and analysis
 - Key intersections Level of Service
 - Major roadway segments with deficient conditions
 - Freight movements
 - Interstate system

3. Draft conceptual alternative system solutions
 - a. Conduct a comprehensive analysis and development of a wide range of improvements.
 - b. System elements to include:
 - Roadway system
 - Roadway segments
 - Transit
 - Key intersections

-
4. Compare and evaluate alternatives
 - a. Develop and apply evaluation criteria to each alternative.
 5. Final recommendations and report
 - a. Recommended strategic plan
 - Priorities
 - Cost estimates
 - Funding opportunities

Figure 1-3 shows the timeline for the Study.

THE ODOT PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Western Hamilton County Transportation Study anticipated that its final recommendations would result in numerous projects requiring state and federal funding. Therefore, the Study's specific work tasks followed guidelines established by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) for the planning, programming and implementation of transportation facilities in the Project Development Process (PDP). Generally, the purpose of the PDP is to facilitate and expedite:

- Communication;
- Availability and documentation of information;
- Elimination of repetitive work;
- Smooth transition and seamless process;
- Reduction of project development time;
- Better decision-making;
- Development of quality plans and
- Minimization of cost overruns.

There are a total of 14 steps in the overall PDP. The Western Hamilton County Transportation Study included Steps 1 through 4 as follows:

- Step 1. Work with stakeholders to understand problems, needs and goals
- Step 2. Conduct research and technical studies
- Step 3. Identify and evaluate conceptual alternative solutions
- Step 4. Develop a strategic plan.

Figure 1-4 shows the complete 14-step PDP.

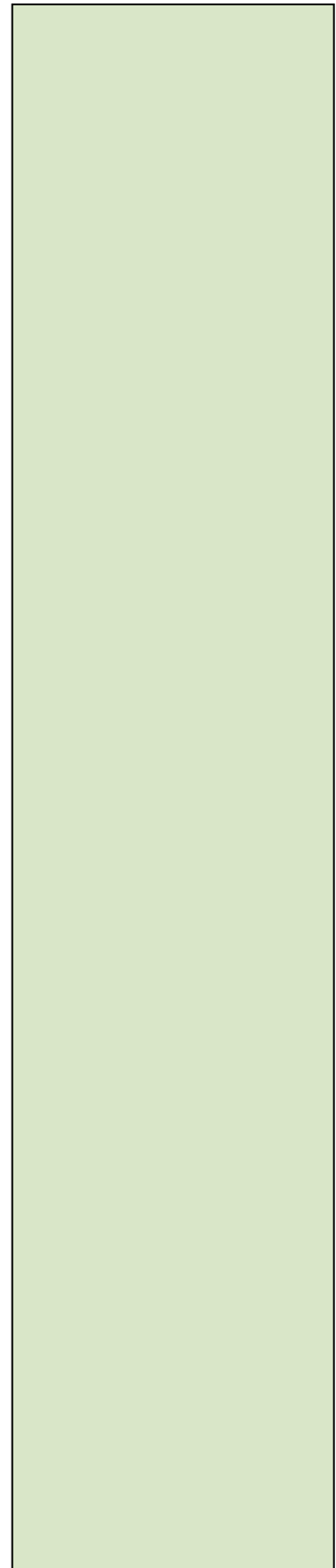
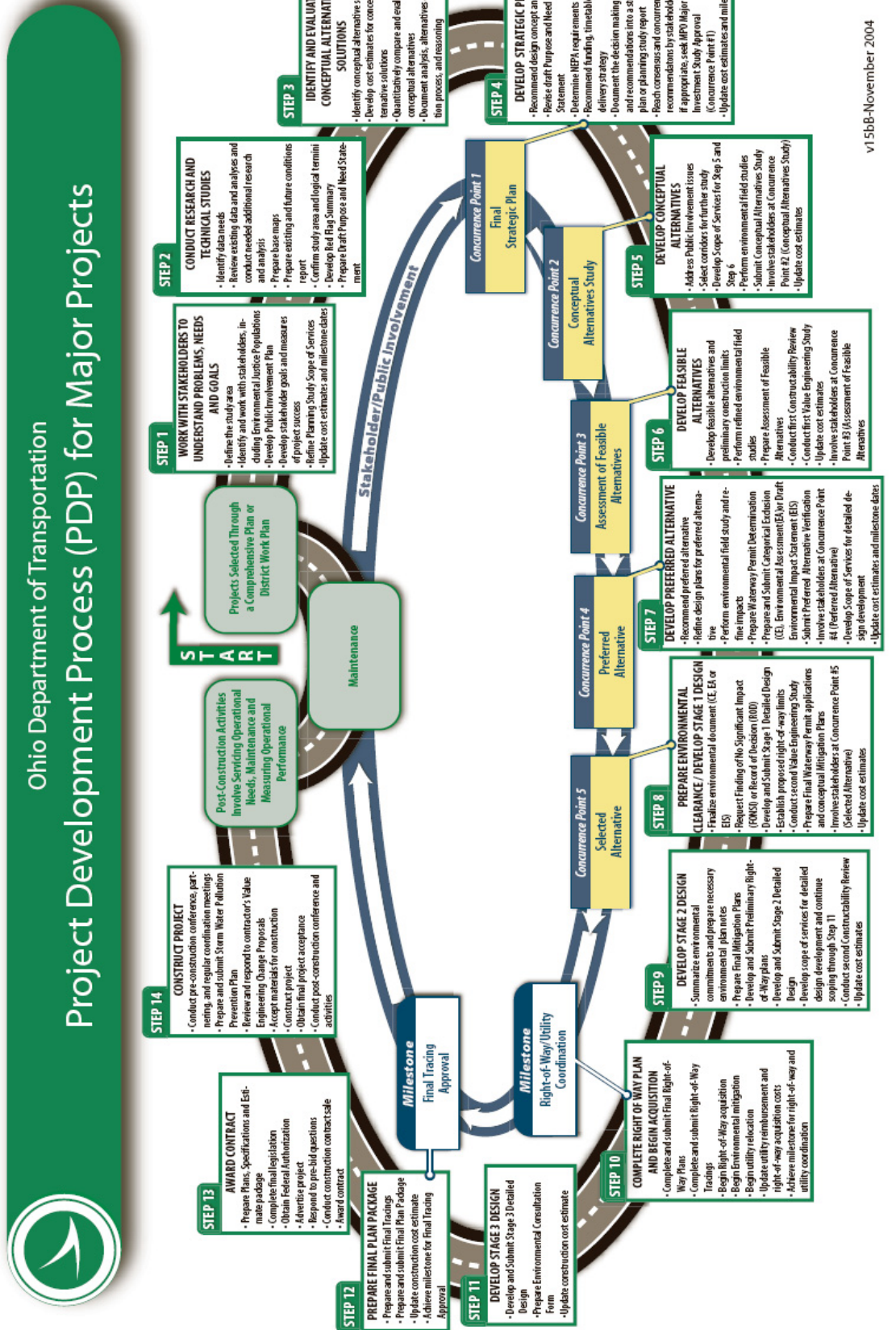


Figure 1-3 – Study Timeline

YEAR	2004		2005												2006					2007								
	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February
PROJECT ACTIVITY	Presentation to OKI Committees & Board																											
	RFQ Development Process (part of PDP Step #1*)																											
	Create Timeline																											
	Draft / Refine Planning Study Scope of Work																											
	Meetings with Key Interested Parties/Stakeholders																											
	Confirm Study Area Map																											
	Create Cost Estimates																											
	Identify/Secure Consultant Selection Committee																											
	Internal OKI Staff Team Developed & 1st Mtg. Held																											
	Develop Public Involvement Plan																											
	RFQ Procurement Process (part of PDP Step #1)																											
	Identify/Secure Study Advisory Committee																											
	Publication Notice in Media																											
	Deadline for RFQs																											
	Evaluation of RFQs																											
	RFQ Final Selection & Negotiation																											
	Execution of Contract for Services																											
	Public Involvement (black box = Public Open House / Meeting)																											
	Oversight Team Meetings																											
	Advisory Committee Meetings																											
	Field Data Collection (PDP Step #2)																											
	Confirm Study Area & Logical Termini																											
	Prepare Base Maps																											
	Identify Data Needs																											
	Develop Red Flag Summary For Alternatives																											
	Conduct Needed Additional Research & Analysis																											
	Review Existing Data & Analysis																											
	Prepare Draft Purpose and Need Statement																											
	Prepare Existing and Future Conditions Report																											
	Analysis (PDP Step #3)																											
	Document Entire Process																											
	Identify Conceptual Recommendations																											
	Reach Consensus on Conceptual Recommendations																											
	Develop Cost Estimates For Alternatives																											
	Quantitatively Compare & Evaluate Alternatives																											
	Recommendation Development (PDP Step #4)																											
	Document Process Into Strategic Plan																											
	Revise Draft Purpose and Need Statement																											
	Update cost estimates and milestones.																											
	Reach Consensus on Final Strategic Plan																											
Recommend Funding, Timetable, Delivery Strategy																												
Final Reporting																												

PDP (Ohio Department of Transportation's Project Development Process for Major Projects)

Figure 1-4 – ODOT PDP Process



CHAPTER 5 - PURPOSE AND NEEDS STATEMENT

During the Study work process, a substantial effort was directed toward the development of a realistic Purpose and Needs Statement (Step 2 of the PDP). The following was discussed and adopted for the Study:

Purpose

The purpose of the Western Hamilton County Transportation Study is to develop a strategic plan for Western Hamilton County that will prioritize and recommend transportation improvement projects. This comprehensive transportation plan will serve the needs of the area's diverse population and visitors, respond to multi-modal transportation deficiencies and support economic vitality. The Study's collaborative process will cultivate the public and private partnerships needed for securing funding and ensuring implementation of the strategic plan.

Needs Statement

The Western Hamilton County Transportation Study will forward conceptual planning level recommendations that fulfill the following needs:

1. Address the critical **safety** concerns/problem areas – those with high crash rates leading to injuries, fatalities and property damage
2. Address the existing and projected **traffic congestion and capacity** problem areas (poor level of service, high volumes, inconsistent traffic flow, etc.)
3. Improve **travel time** by addressing any capacity and north/south or east/west **connectivity** problems of existing major Study Area corridors.
4. Promote **multi-modal** uses that:
 - a. Consider opportunities to increase public transit ridership and remove vehicles from the roadway
 - b. Improve transit, bicycle (both commuter and recreational) and pedestrian connectivity
 - c. Preserve future right-of-way for wider outside lanes to accommodate shared vehicular use or for future multi-modal improvements
5. Ensure consistency with the local jurisdiction's **land use and/or zoning** plans for the purpose of:
 - a. Preserving and enhancing quality of life
 - b. Supporting economic development
 - c. Protecting environmental and cultural features
 - d. Supporting neighborhood business districts

-
6. Benefit the larger, public good **without resulting in supplemental impacts** which may compromise environmental justice populations (zero car households, elderly, those living below poverty, minorities, disabled) or the environment (noise, air quality, wetlands, steep slopes, etc.)
 7. Use and maintain **existing right-of-way**
 8. Include **access management** techniques to improve safety, travel time, traffic flow, air quality, access to properties and aesthetics
 9. Be **financially and physically feasible** from a conceptual planning level analysis.

Be **supported by the local jurisdiction** in which the recommendation is locate.

