

The Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) Board of Trustees worked with constituents, experts and special interest groups to analyze regional trends and issues that are barriers to sustainable development, and created goals, objectives and policies to address these barriers. The product of their analysis and recommendations is the Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP), which was developed through extensive consultation with local officials, with dozens of expert reviewers in a variety of disciplines, and with the public through multiple rounds of outreach in every county in the OKI region.

OKI's Strategic Regional Policy Plan contains an overall 20-year vision for regional vitality, sustainability, and competitiveness, focusing on the land use–transportation connection. Conceptually, the strategic planning process addresses four questions: 1) Where are we as a region? 2) Where are we going given current trends? 3) Where do we want to go? and 4) How do we get there? Six strategic subject areas were selected to guide and focus planning efforts to achieve the overall regional vision. These strategic subject areas, or categories, are housing, transportation, land use, public facilities and services, natural systems, and economic development.

Each category of the SRPP contains an overview, a goal, the trends and conditions associated with each strategic regional issue in that category, and objectives and policies that address each of the issues.

### **The Stewardship Statement**

The Land Use Commission came to the conclusion early in the Regional Visioning Process – and sustained it throughout the process – that the region's trends should not become its destiny. It is not inevitable that the trend of recent growth patterns must continue; however, those trends are perpetuated by a variety of existing policies and general “business as usual” attitudes that can be changed. The Vision for Stewardship, a vision for the OKI region through year 2020 and beyond, was developed.

“In 2020, the region's land resources will be carefully managed based on a shared commitment of citizens and public and private sector stakeholders. This commitment will guide decisions on the timing, location, impact of development and redevelopment in the region. In addition, this commitment will enhance our quality of life, reduce government spending on development and ensure the health and viability of natural systems. Some areas of the region will have higher densities of people and more intense uses than other areas, and greater emphasis will be given to encourage reuse and redevelopment. Key green space areas, which add value to surrounding property and improve overall quality of life, will be preserved and protected for future generations. Future generations will also enjoy key areas of the built environment—such as established neighborhoods and villages, as well as places of cultural and historical significance.”

Thirteen stewardship principles were prepared during the SRPP development process and used to guide the formulation of the strategic regional issues, goals, objectives and policies. These principles are shown on the following page

Various public, private and non-profit and citizen-based institutions within the region that affect regional policy use the Strategic Regional Policy Plan. The plan is used by OKI in its transportation programs to address OKI's federal mandates. The plan offers guidance to local governments in areas of policy development, land development, and capital budgeting, because public investments in infrastructure greatly

## OKI Strategic Regional Policy Plan Stewardship Principles

### **Redevelopment and Infill Development**

In 2020, redevelopment of underutilized areas and infill development within existing areas will be actively promoted for more efficient use of land resources, with consideration given to the need for parkland and green space.

### **Land Use Patterns To Support Transit**

In 2020, communities throughout the region will have areas that are developed with higher concentrations of housing, businesses, and activities to better utilize land resources and support public transit.

### **Transportation Choices**

In 2020, transportation choices will be available throughout the region, including public transit, automobiles, biking and walking, in a manner that optimizes accessibility, efficiency, mobility, and affordability.

### **Public Facilities and Services**

In 2020, public facilities and services will be well coordinated and determined prior to land development and redevelopment. Such public facilities and services will include transportation, water, sewer, parks and storm water management systems.

### **Connectivity**

In 2020, neighborhoods will be linked by a network of interconnected streets and walkways as part of a larger system that provides safe motorized and non-motorized access to homes, businesses, schools, recreation facilities and services, and other destinations. These networks will be designed to keep local traffic off major arterials and high-speed, through-traffic off local streets.

### **Mixed-Use Centers**

In 2020, centers that include a mix of integrated office, retail, residential, and civic uses will be found throughout the region. These mixed-use centers – of a scale appropriate to their surroundings – will concentrate uses in a manner that supports walking, biking and public transit, and automobiles.

### **Mixed-Use Neighborhoods**

In 2020, new and redeveloped neighborhoods will include walkable, compatible retail, business, education, and civic uses, as well as a broad range of housing types and price levels.

### **Housing Choices**

In 2020, a diverse mix of housing choices – in terms of size, price, type and location – will be available within communities throughout the region. Every community in the region will maintain quality housing, whether it be newer developments or older neighborhoods, owner-occupied or rental.

### **Educational Opportunity**

In 2020, comprehensive and quality education will be available throughout the region for residents of all ages.

### **Environmental Opportunity**

In 2020, the health and viability of natural systems, such as air quality, water resources and wildlife habitats will be protected. There will be an extensive network of green spaces in the region that includes neighborhood and regional parks, hillsides, river corridors, forests, flood plains and farmland.

### **Cooperative Economic Development**

In 2020, communities will cooperate, coordinate, and share on mutually beneficial economic development opportunities, on business retention and recruitment, and workforce development. This cooperative effort will require the active participation of local governments, economic development organizations, businesses and other stakeholders.

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

In 2020, decisions on land development, redevelopment, and improvements to public facilities and services will be made with a clear understanding of their fiscal impacts to individual communities and the region. The cost of development will be allocated among those who benefit, with consideration of the fiscal impacts to existing residents.

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation**

In 2020, land use policy remains a fundamental prerogative and responsibility of each local jurisdiction. However, local governments will effectively and willingly communicate, cooperate and coordinate on issues of land use, transportation, natural systems, economic development and public facilities and services.

affect land development and land use decisions affect infrastructure investments. The Strategic Regional Policy Plan encourages various conservation-oriented non-profit organizations to look at natural resources extending beyond their agency's service area. The plan also illustrates how the economic development community integrates with housing, transportation, and other issues.

Successful implementation that moves the region toward its vision and goals is the ultimate test of a good policy plan. Since the Strategic Regional Policy Plan was adopted in 2005, the OKI region has continued a commitment to realize the vision developed by regional stakeholders in this plan, including:

OKI developed the *Elements of an Effective Local Comprehensive Plan*, a common set of guidelines for local governments to follow as they prepare or update their local comprehensive plans, and has provided multiple local jurisdictions with comprehensive planning assistance based on SRPP recommendations.

In addition to comprehensive planning guidelines, OKI developed sample ordinances and policy recommendations for communities with regard to Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Standards, Connectivity, Infill Development, Large Scale Retail Development, Mixed Use Development and Transit Friendly Development. These have been used by many communities throughout the region as a foundation to initiate policy change to incorporate sustainable practices.

The need for a fiscal impact analysis tool was also identified as part of SRPP. OKI, through partnership with 10 local governments, developed a Fiscal Impact Analysis Model as an analytical tool for local governments. Information generated from the Model helps local governments better understand the revenues and costs associated with new development as well as the jurisdiction's ability to provide public facilities and services. The FIAM estimates the costs and revenues associated with land use change and can compare alternative development scenarios within a jurisdiction and analyze effects of specific development projects. The results of the Model are an estimate of potential future expenditures and revenues.

The SRPP serves as the foundation for an integrated approach to community planning in the region. Since the development of the SRPP, many projects across the region have sought to more fully integrate a variety of investments and community elements into cohesive planning efforts.

Finally, the SRPP recognizes and recommends policy based upon the understanding that strategic regional issues are best approached through coordinated actions that consider inherent linkages, such as the connection between land use and transportation or between housing and workforce opportunities. The OKI tri-state region consists of many interconnected physical, economic, and social components, and the SRPP provides a foundation for understanding that the best planning and investment decisions should be integrated and leveraged with other community investments for maximum community benefit and sustainability.