

# Security and Emergency Preparedness in the Transportation Planning Process

*OKI Regional Council of Governments*

## final report

*prepared for*

**Federal Highway Administration**

*prepared by*

**Cambridge Systematics, Inc.**



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# Executive Summary

The Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments is a multi-purpose, voluntary body comprising local governments, business organizations, and community groups committed to developing collaborative strategies, plans, and programs designed to improve the quality of life and the economic development potential of the Cincinnati metropolitan area. The governors of Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana designated OKI as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the eight-county region in 1964.

OKI recently completed an update of its 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, originally released in 2001. This document provides the framework for transportation priorities and investment decisions in the Cincinnati metropolitan area, and addresses the region's transportation challenges in light of safety, mobility, environmental protection, system integration and efficiency, system preservation, and support for economic vitality. Within the overall goal of improving travel safety, the Plan states that "The transportation system should provide for reducing the risk of accidents that cause death or injuries and provide for the security of transportation users." Specific objectives within this goal include increasing security for travel by transit and non-motorized modes, and facilitating the implementation of homeland security measures to protect key regional infrastructure assets.

While the 2030 Plan Update refers specifically to security concerns in a number of sections, most of the actions associated with security and emergency preparedness relate to reorientation or repurposing of ongoing activities and initiatives, rather than creating new systems, facilities, or institutions.

Among the key lessons learned in the OKI Region with respect to security and emergency preparedness in the transportation planning process are the following:

- It is critically important to get "buy-in" for transportation's contributions to security from other regional stakeholders. A constructive way to accomplish this is for the MPO to aggressively seek opportunities for information sharing, opportunities for joint training exercises, and both formal and informal relationships with emergency responders.
- First responders may not have good information about the capabilities of transportation agencies to help them accomplish their mission. By demonstrating what ITS can do to facilitate emergency response, it is possible to break down any resistance to cooperative action and to gain support for transportation investments that have a security pay-off.
- It is just as important to listen and understand what first responders require in terms of support as it is to inform them about system capabilities. This can be accomplished in part by the "membership model" used by the ARTIMIS

staff in venturing out to meetings of first responder groups. Once you meet them on their turf, it is easier to get them to meet you half way.

- Planning agencies like OKI can extend planning and analysis capabilities to assist in coordinating and integrating the activities of first responders across jurisdictional lines.
- Investments in communications made for ITS applications can be leveraged to assist in security improvements throughout a region.

# **1.0 Introduction - Transportation Planning in a New Context: Security and Emergency Preparedness in the Post-9/11 World**

## **1.1 PURPOSE OF STUDY**

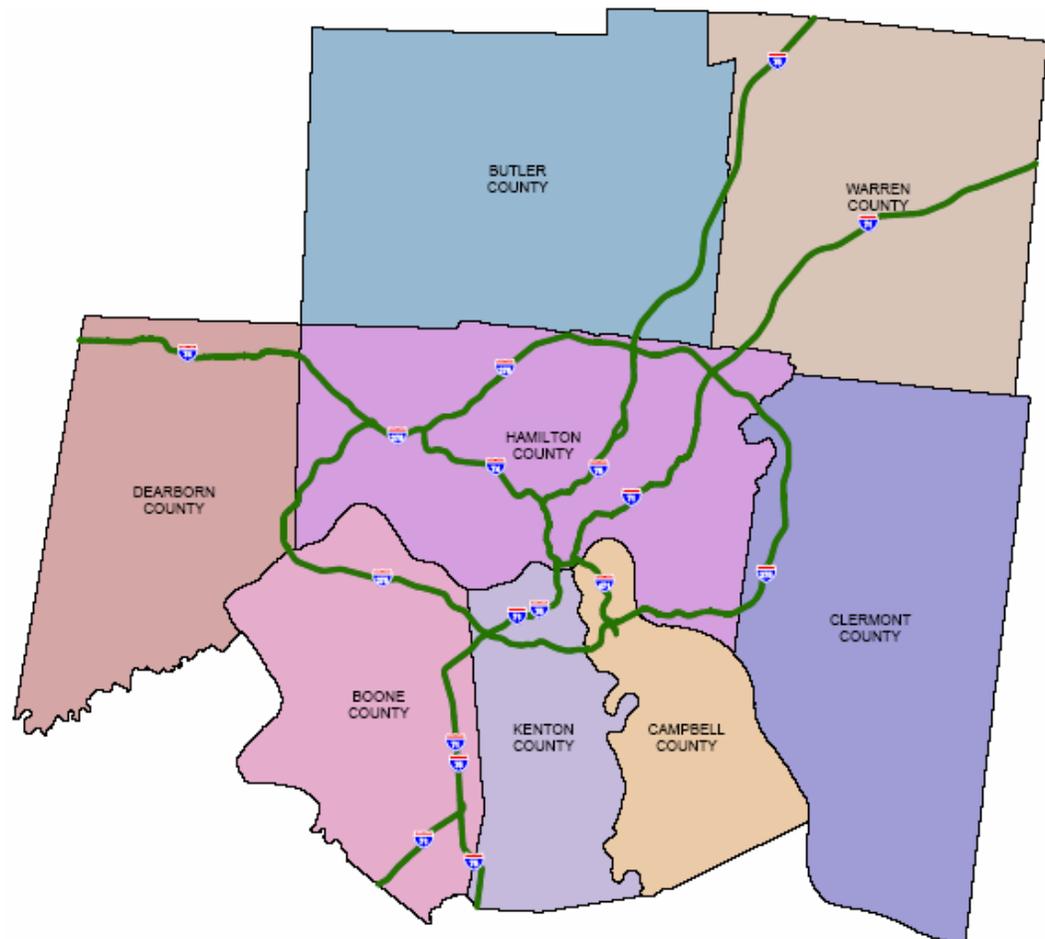
Planning agencies at all levels have become more security conscious. Practical demonstrations integrating security issues into Federal, state, and local planning organizations, procedures, and products are needed to advance institutional capabilities. In addition, information resources that support comparative analyses are needed to improve the collective understanding of the planning profession.

For the purposes of this report, security planning includes activities and products developed in response to identified criminal threats to high value, vulnerable elements of the transportation system. Preparedness planning includes activities and products developed in response to the threat of environmental hazards and natural occurrences. Some of the activities that can be characterized as contributing to the integration of security and emergency preparedness into the transportation planning process include chartering committees and organizations; establishing liaisons or otherwise designating planning staff resources; establishing project categories and program funding; conducting vulnerability and threat assessments; and developing and exercising plans. This report is intended to:

- Improve national awareness of how state and local agencies are integrating security and preparedness issues into their planning processes and organizations;
- Identify transportation planning agencies who are leaders in the integration of security and preparedness issues into their planning processes and organizations; and
- Facilitate technology transfer by documenting leading experiences and lessons learned.

## 1.2 THE OKI REGION

The Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for a three-state area anchored by Cincinnati, Ohio. The Cincinnati region's population is approximately 1.85 million, and is expected to exceed two million by 2010. About 3.3 million trips are made in the morning and evening peak periods on the region's 3,000 miles of major roadway, 6,000 miles of other roadway, and 398 miles of the National Highway System (NHS). Three transit providers provide fixed-route service in the region, while three other providers serve communities with demand responsive service. Ten publicly owned airports (including one air carrier, three reliever, and five general aviation facilities) and two privately owned airports operate in the region. The Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, the 26<sup>th</sup> busiest in the United States, saw nearly 8.9 million boardings in 2001.



Source: <http://www.oki.org/pdf/regionmap.pdf>.

Figure 1.1 OKI Region

The Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments is a multi-purpose, voluntary body comprising local governments, business organizations, and community groups committed to developing collaborative strategies, plans, and programs designed to improve the quality of life and the economic development potential of the Cincinnati metropolitan area. The governors of Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana designated OKI as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the eight-county region in 1964.

OKI, as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is governed by a Board of Trustees, which meets on a quarterly basis. The Board of Trustees is made up of elected and appointed representatives from county, township, and municipal governments in eight counties in greater Cincinnati, northern Kentucky, and southeast Indiana. Representatives from 12 city and county planning commissions, two state departments of transportation, and interested citizens also are represented on the OKI Board. The Board of Trustees is supported by a variety of advisory committees. These committees develop and review the technical aspects of transportation and environmental concerns and report their findings to the OKI Executive Committee, a core member group selected from the ranks of and by the full Board of Trustees. The Executive Committee has the authority to make all policy decisions for the OKI Board.

The Intermodal Coordinating Committee (ICC) was established by the Executive Committee to provide technical advice on transportation issues. The ICC makes recommendations to the Executive Committee and/or Board of Trustees on the continuous transportation planning process.

As a standing committee, the ICC advises on technical issues related to both short-range and long-range transportation planning, i.e., the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the regional transportation plan. The ICC has approximately 70 members and meets monthly on the Tuesday before Executive Committee/Board of Trustees meetings. Members represent Federal, state and local transportation agencies; county planning commissions and other major planning organizations; and a spectrum of business, civil, environmental, and utility interests from both the public and private sectors.

Transportation planning and transportation-related activities make up the greatest portion of OKI's work program. Almost 80 percent of expenditures are directly attributable to corridor studies and transportation planning and programming, while another 14 percent is devoted to Ozone Awareness and Commuter Services. The balance of the OKI work program relates to regional planning and environmental planning.



## 2.0 Security and Emergency Preparedness in the Planning Process

### 2.1 OKI'S LONG-RANGE PLAN

OKI recently completed an update of its 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, originally released in 2001. This document provides the framework for transportation priorities and investment decisions in the Cincinnati metropolitan area, and addresses the region's transportation challenges in light of safety, mobility, environmental protection, system integration and efficiency, system preservation, and support for economic vitality. Within the overall goal of improving travel safety, the Plan states that "The transportation system should provide for reducing the risk of accidents that cause death or injuries and provide for the security of transportation users."<sup>1</sup>

Specific objectives relating to security within the goal of improving travel safety include:

- "Increas[ing] security for travel by transit and non-motorized modes"; and
- "Facilitat[ing] implementation of Homeland Security measures to protect key regional infrastructure assets."<sup>2</sup>

While the 2030 Plan Update refers specifically to security concerns in a number of sections, most of the actions associated with security and emergency preparedness relate to reorientation or repurposing of ongoing activities and initiatives, rather than creating new systems, facilities, or institutions.

One exception to this general rule is the establishment of a committee focused on coordination of regional transportation activities as they relate to security and emergency response. According to the OKI 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, "the transportation system must now be responsive to needs associated with homeland security. The Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments is creating the Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee to provide leadership and coordination of the many homeland security and domestic terrorism preparedness efforts in the region. The committee, comprised of the region's county emergency management associations, county representatives

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<sup>1</sup> OKI 2030 Regional Transportation Plan – 2004 Update, pages 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 1-4.

and others, will review these individual efforts from a regional perspective to insure that no vulnerabilities exist in our region's response efforts. The committee will strive to maximize public and private resources to assess our further needs so as to provide effective protection for the citizens of the OKI region."

The Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee has been created to:

- Develop a Regional Emergency Response Plan to maximize local strengths while eliminating any weaknesses in local emergency response efforts;
- Provide a forum for creation and implementation of new ideas related to homeland security; and
- Identify the appropriate clearinghouse for funding regional projects.<sup>3</sup>

For the most part, the implementation of security and emergency preparedness activities is through OKI's involvement in the Regional Incident Management Task Force; the ARTIMIS Center; and a study by OKI on Regional Emergency Coordination, all of which will be discussed in more detail below.

## 2.2 THE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Security also is an explicit ranking criterion in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Prioritization Subcommittee of OKI, comprising the 70 members of OKI's Intermodal Coordinating Committee (ICC) and representatives of the governing Board of Trustees, provides a forum for evaluating projects and recommending which projects should be included in the TIP. Based on whether a project is considered "essential" (5 points), "significant" (4 points), "moderate" (3 points), "minimal" (2 points), or having no impact (0 points), projects receive points in the category of "Safety/Security" (out of a maximum of 100 points). Typically, projects incorporated in the TIP are not exclusively devoted to security improvements, but instead contribute to improvements in security indirectly while accomplishing other objectives. This would be the case, for instance, with many Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) projects, which can be applied to security objectives as well as transportation system operations and management. (One exception to this rule is a transit project in the 2004-2007 Transportation Improvement Program for FY 2005: Vehicle and Building Security Improvements, with funds going to the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA), the fixed-route transit provider for the Cincinnati area.)

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 1-2, 1-3.

## 3.0 Impetus for Focus on Security and Emergency Preparedness in the Planning Process

### 3.1 SECURITY BEFORE 9/11

Security already was a concern in the Cincinnati area before the events of September 11, 2001. Terrorist incidents worldwide, ranging from the March 20, 1995 Sarin gas attacks in the Tokyo subway system, to the Oklahoma City bombing on April 19, 1995, to car bombings in Northern Ireland and the Middle East, put emergency management officials on notice that the potential existed for terrorist attack at anytime, virtually anywhere. A particular concern for emergency managers has been the sports complex by the Ohio River. New facilities were constructed for the Cincinnati Reds baseball team and Cincinnati Bengals football team to replace the outmoded Riverfront Stadium/Cinergy Field. Concern about the potential for disaster if a large explosive device were to be detonated adjacent to an occupied stadium led to greater scrutiny of potential security problems on the Ohio River.



Source: [http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/transeng/images/transeng\\_img7095](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/transeng/images/transeng_img7095).

**Figure 3.1 Riverfront Stadiums**

## **3.2 SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AFTER 9/11**

Since September 11, 2001, OKI has taken a proactive role in regional initiatives focused on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. In interviews conducted in September 2004, OKI staff noted that the organization was influenced by the position of the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), which provided training for its members in homeland security issues and focused on homeland security in its Priorities and Proposals for Reauthorization of TEA-21 (2003). The NARC report focused on the role of MPOs and councils of government as coordinating bodies that can add value to regional Homeland Security initiatives.

In the Cincinnati area, OKI factored in the results of a Regional Summit, designed to identify regional priorities, which ranked Homeland Security as the number one issue in the metropolitan area. In addition, the OKI Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee initiated a work plan designed to focus attention on regional security needs. Tasks for the Regional Task Force established by the Committee include:

- Create a database of regional Homeland Defense assets;
- Identify issues that undermine Homeland Defense efforts and seek to correct them;
- Bring organizations that have not traditionally worked together on this type of project into the process; and
- Look for ways to increase funding for priority projects.

In looking around the region, OKI recognized that each county was responsible for developing its own emergency management plan, but that there was little integration or coordination among and between the counties and other local jurisdictions. OKI received a grant from the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (OEMA) to improve coordination in the region. Through a process of surveying first responders and convening a meeting of representatives of leading first response organizations, OKI will facilitate the creation of a list of candidate projects and regional priorities. So far, a pilot survey has been distributed, and the rollout to the entire region will occur soon.

In addition, OKI will assist in the creation of a process for establishing priorities and distributing Homeland Security funds. Equitable distribution of funding and establishment of regional priorities has been problematic in the Cincinnati region, as elsewhere, with some areas receiving funding because they had projects “ready to go” or on the basis of perceived need, rather than any regional agreement on priorities. OKI and OEMA had a mutual interest in identifying a mechanism for distribution of Homeland Security funds, with the OKI Intermodal Coordinating Committee (IIP approval) model as one possible approach.

## **4.0 Critical Transportation Initiatives in Security and Emergency Preparedness**

Much of the Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness activity in the region revolves around the implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) initiatives. This is in part a result of the similarities between the need for functions such as surveillance, intrusion detection, and communications required for security, and the applications required for operation and management of the transportation system. There also is a significant impact from the kinds of institutional relationships – both formal and informal – that have been established during the deployment of ITS in the Cincinnati region.

The current focus for ITS in the OKI region has been on integration of existing capabilities, both from a physical and an institutional perspective. This emphasis closely parallels the need to establish greater coordination and integration among organizations in the sphere of emergency response and homeland security. One area in which ITS and emergency management intersect is in the transportation and emergency operations centers, as well as the Regional Incident Management Task Force.

### **4.1 ARTIMIS CENTER**

The Advanced Regional Traffic Interactive Management and Information System (ARTIMIS) Center evolved from an initial study by the OKI Regional Council of Governments in 1996. Today, the Center is operated as a partnership among the State of Ohio Department of Transportation, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, the City of Cincinnati, OKI, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The ARTIMIS Center is the hub of a system comprising closed circuit TV cameras, electronic dynamic message signs, portable variable message signs, a 511 traveler advisory telephone service, highway advisory radio, freeway service patrol vans, vehicle detectors, Total Station electronic surveying equipment, and “low-tech” assets like ramp and reference markers. The system is deployed over 88 miles of the region’s freeway system, 53 of which are connected with fiber optic communications.

In addition to management of the freeway ITS network, the ARTIMIS Center is linked to the region’s fixed-route transit operators, the Southeast Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA) and the Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky

(TANK). The transit operators can use ARTIMIS information to detect trouble spots that can affect their own operations.

Formal links already exist with the Hamilton County Communications Center. ARTIMIS provides camera feeds to the Center, and in turn gets text output from the computer aided dispatch system. (Eventually ARTIMIS will have an electronic data interface to the system so that information will “pop up” into the ARTIMIS displays.) The Cincinnati region has achieved radio communications interoperability on the 800 MHz band, and ARTIMIS is hooked into the 800 MHz radio net on the mutual aid frequency. In addition, ARTIMIS, SORTA, and TANK operate on a separate, dedicated transportation frequency licensed by the State, and some freeway service patrol vans have direct radio connections or



Nextel “direct connect” walkie-talkie connections with local police departments.

Strong relationships also have been forged with local media. Broadcast TV stations have direct access to camera images for traffic reports. This arrangement also helps ARTIMIS, because their logo is included on the video feeds to the stations, helping them to establish their “brand.”

Source: <http://www.kybiz.com/lanereport/issues/january04/threebridges.html>.

### Figure 4.1 Brent Spence Bridge

ARTIMIS also is the designated command center for the Ohio River Cooperating Committee. This entity is activated whenever there is an emergency situation or incident on the Ohio River. Bridge surveillance systems on the Kentucky-owned bridges spanning the Ohio River feed into the ARTIMIS Center, and can be monitored in the event of a problem. Security officials concerned about the potential for terrorist acts along the Cincinnati riverfront sought a demonstration project in the transportation appropriations bill to expand surveillance to cover the rivers from under the bridges, but this “earmark” project was not funded.

ARTIMIS enjoys strong cooperative relationships with the region’s district transportation managers, assisting in managing congestion during reconstruction projects and loaning out variable message sign devices for special events. In addition, ARTIMIS has participated in Homeland Defense tabletop exercises and sponsored workshops, including crash site management workshops and demonstrations on how to use Total Station for data collection at crash scenes. ARTIMIS staff members also actively reach out to first responder organizations and other nontraditional partners.

The program of aggressive outreach by ARTIMIS has succeeded because of two major factors. First, ARTIMIS staff have adopted a “membership model” to reach out to stakeholder groups such as first responders, attending business meetings and social events of organizations like the association of chiefs of police or the association of fire chiefs. They have carefully cultivated the formal and informal relationships with these existing organizations and groups representing the first responder community. Second, they have been able to demonstrate real benefits to the region, not only in terms of managing traffic (ARTIMIS has contributed to a 30 percent improvement in response time, according to a recent evaluation using the ITS Deployment Analysis System, or IDAS model), but in demonstrating the capabilities of transportation technology in responding to incidents and emergencies.

The ARTIMIS approach to cultivating relationships with other nontraditional agencies underscores the fact that technology is not the issue; cooperation and coordination depend on interpersonal relationships and communication. This fact also has been demonstrated through the other major regional transportation initiative: the Incident Management Task Force.

## **4.2 REGIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE**

The Incident Management Task Force has been in place for over 15 years. The Task Force includes in its number transportation agencies, law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services, emergency management agencies, and tow operators. The current chair of the Task Force is an Assistant Chief with the Cincinnati Police Department. Among other activities, the Incident Management Task Force conducts after-action debriefings in the wake of major incidents and emergency drills. The Task Force also conducted a campaign to promote a “quick clearance” initiative that limited liability for first responders in moving vehicles involved in a crash from the travel way.

In part because of the involvement of first responders in the Incident Management Task Force, emergency management officials recognize the benefits of transportation technology, and seek more information from ITS. Participation in ARTIMIS-sponsored training opportunities also has contributed to cohesion among the Incident Management Task Force members; training opportunities are important because they “get everyone in the same room” and create opportunities for personal relationships.

## **4.3 EMERGENCY OPERATIONS COORDINATION**

The City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County currently are constructing a Regional Emergency Operations Center that will serve the Ohio and Kentucky region from a site in Cincinnati. When the Center is completed, there will be a physical (fiber optic) connection to the ARTIMIS Center to share information from the regional ITS network. In addition, there will be an ARTIMIS

workstation in the Center; in event of a declared emergency, an ARTIMIS staff member will be detailed to occupy this workstation.

Local officials acknowledge that there currently are no formal evacuation plans for the region. Diversion routes have been identified in both Kentucky and Ohio, providing detours or alternative routes on arterial roadways in case segments of the freeway system are closed. The identification of evacuation routes and access routes for emergency responders is a logical next step, but no specific efforts to develop these plans are under way. Transportation planners note that it is difficult to identify north-south alternative routes due to geographic constraints such as the Ohio River and the alignment of hills and valleys. In addition, corridor studies in the region currently are more operational in orientation.

## 4.4 COORDINATION WITH STATE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION

The Cincinnati region, as a multistate agency, coordinates the development and adoption of its long-range transportation plan with the respective state departments of transportation in the region.

The Ohio Department of Transportation's draft Statewide Transportation Plan devotes a chapter to security and emergency preparedness issues. The Plan notes that, in addition to concerns about potential terrorist activity, transportation security must address incidents and risks such as natural disasters, roadway incidents, and technological and radiological hazards. In fact, the most common emergency that ODOT responds to is flooding. Other weather-related emergency events include tornados, snow and ice emergencies, and culvert failures.

According to the Ohio State Transportation Plan, a realistic transportation security strategy must go beyond "guards and gates." It should be multilayered. ODOT's Transportation System Security Strategy contains four layers:

- **Predict** - Quickly identify problems, incidents, and needs resulting from natural disasters, severe weather condition; improve surveillance of potential targets.
- **Harden Targets** - Build redundancy into the system through both design and provision for multiple routes to specific locations.
- **Educate** - Teach people to recognize potential problems and who to contact if they identify a problem or need.
- **Respond and Recover** - Have in place a plan or procedures manual to direct how to quickly clean-up or mitigate damages. This includes, but is not limited to, identifying detour routes in advance, so they can be activated when needed.

The Ohio Department of Transportation has contingency plans, programs, manuals, and policies in place for natural disasters, roadway incidents, terrorist

attacks, and technological and radiological hazards. In the event of an emergency, ODOT is positioned to provide both equipment and skilled personnel for disaster relief. Existing contingency plans, which detail standard operating procedures and delegate responsibility for each, are in place for a wide array of natural disasters, roadway incidents, technological, and radiological hazards. The Ohio Department of Transportation also has standard plans, programs, manuals, policies, and procedures in place to monitor and predict roadway conditions and incidents that may require an emergency response. Furthermore, Ohio hardens transportation targets or facilities by building redundancy into its system. Redundancy includes both design features such as multiple column pier bents for bridges, as well as the availability of alternative routes, modal options, and detours.

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet lists a number of recent accomplishments with respect to Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. Among the activities most directly related to the planning process are:

- The Cabinet has developed a roadway incident response plan, which identifies detour routes for all interstates and parkways in the Commonwealth.
- The Cabinet is in the early stages of developing a statewide transportation emergency response plan to assist the 12 transportation districts across the State with personnel, equipment, and material as needed. This plan will insure the best and most efficient use of the Cabinet's resources in responding to any disaster or terrorist attack.
- In addition, the Cabinet has completed the first revision of the Transportation Emergency Response Plan. The Cabinet has taken the business continuity plans of the 12 transportation districts and combined them into a statewide transportation response plan identifying needs and filling the gaps.

## **4.5 ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRAINTS**

In both Kentucky and Ohio, the state emergency management agencies are the recipients of Homeland Security grants as the designated "first responder" agencies. Distribution of Homeland Security grants is perceived as a problem on the Ohio side of the river, as noted above; some communities feel that funds intended for the region as a whole have stayed at the jurisdiction that was the applicant of record, while other cities or counties have had to stand in line.

Kentucky is perceived by some as being ahead of Ohio in both sophistication in ITS deployment and in transportation security. One factor may be that a member of OKI's board of trustees with a great interest in transportation security issues was tapped as Deputy Secretary of Transportation in the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. Kentucky's Homeland Security office is co-located with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, and will share the use of Kentucky's statewide Transportation Operations Center. Officials at OKI feel, however, that Governor of Ohio and his Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency are looking for strategies to "do more with homeland security."



## **5.0 Lessons Learned**

Among the key lessons learned in the OKI Region with respect to security and emergency preparedness in the transportation planning process are the following:

1. It is critically important to get “buy-in” for transportation’s contributions to security from other regional stakeholders. A constructive way to accomplish this is to aggressively seek opportunities for information sharing, opportunities for joint training exercises, and both formal and informal relationships with emergency responders.
2. First responders may not have good information about the capabilities of transportation agencies to help them accomplish their mission. By demonstrating what ITS can do to facilitate emergency response, it is possible to break down any resistance to cooperative action and to gain support for transportation investments that have a security pay-off.
3. It is just as important to listen and understand what first responders require in terms of support as it is to inform them about system capabilities. This can be accomplished in part by the “membership model” used by the ARTIMIS staff in venturing out to meetings of first responder groups. Once you meet them on their turf, it is easier to get them to meet you half way.
4. Planning agencies like OKI can extend planning and analysis capabilities to assist in coordinating and integrating the activities of first responders across jurisdictional lines.
5. Investments in communications made for ITS applications can be leveraged to assist in security improvements throughout a region.



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