

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives described in the following sections address the majority of these factors and include others that are specific to the region. It was the opinion of RTPO committee members that each goal and objective is equally important, therefore they are not in any particular order.

[Goals and objectives as outlined in Ohio's long range transportation plan can be found on the ODOT website.](#)

Maintain and Preserve the Region's Transportation System

OBJECTIVES

- Identify deficiencies and recommend improvements in the region's transportation system. (e.g. pavement conditions, base structure, bridge rehabilitation, etc.).
- Develop strategies to improve and maximize the life of regional transportation systems.
- Increase transportation education opportunities for public awareness including financing and improvement costs.
- Encourage two-way reporting of roadway conditions.

Due to the solvency issues of the National Highway Trust Fund, as well as Ohio's endeavor to create more public/private partnerships, funding for transportation projects is becoming increasingly scarce. Studies nationwide have shown that most Americans feel it is a priority to maintain and preserve our transportation infrastructure rather than building new. This sentiment was demonstrated in the responses to the regional transportation survey completed by ODOT on behalf of Buckeye Hills in 2013.

Transportation committee stakeholders feel it is important to educate the public on transportation funding so citizens gain a better understanding of the true costs associated with maintaining the transportation infrastructure. The committees also feel it is important for the public to have a voice with transportation decision makers – and for those same decision makers to keep lines of communication open with the public. It is the goal of Buckeye Hills' RTPO staff to ensure that transportation planning happens *with* the residents of the region, not *to* them.

New transportation technologies should be pursued where applicable to aid in the preservation of the system's infrastructure. BH-HVRDD encourages the continued development of partnerships with research institutions finding innovative measures to sustain our transportation assets. Buckeye Hills has engaged with regional partners both in Ohio and beyond, such as Ohio University, Mid-Ohio Regional

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Planning Commission (MORPC), National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), Wood-Washington-Wirt Interstate Planning Commission (WWWIPC), North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, and others to stay abreast of the latest developments in transportation planning as well as transportation related technologies that may benefit the Buckeye Hills region.

Enhance Transportation System Safety

OBJECTIVES

- Reduce the rate of roadway collisions in identified high-risk area.
- Advocate for safety measures that protect all users.
- Improve driver awareness education (e.g. distracted driving, winter driving, bike/pedestrian alertness, motorcycle awareness, etc.).

Safety, is a primary concern of any transportation endeavor. No automaker, engineer, transit official, or pedestrian disputes that safety is the number one priority for any form of travel. It is no less true for transportation planning. It is a goal of Buckeye Hills to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries taking place on roadways across the region. To help achieve this goal, Buckeye Hills plans to use GIS mapping and data analysis to inform local stakeholders of potential high risk areas that may require attention or remediation. The best way to combat these injuries and fatalities is to put actionable information in the hands of local decision makers, while simultaneously connecting them with available resources that may help alleviate some of the attributable conditions. Other transportation systems, such as bicycle and pedestrian networks, are not immune to injuries and fatalities. Under current conditions the most robust, readily available, and actionable data to improve safety is from the largest transportation network, the highway system. As opportunities to receive and analyze safety data for other modes of transport present themselves, Buckeye Hills will apply the same analytical principals to identify areas of risk and concern in those areas.

In order to help achieve the safety initiatives of interest to our committee members and constituents, Buckeye Hills is committed to identifying and utilizing available federal and state safety programs. These programs provide a proven approach of creating safer travel, as well as providing educational opportunities that teach better driving habits to all users.

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Buckeye Hills is also committed to pursuing available funding opportunities that assist in the realization of safe travel across all modes. Buckeye Hills will work with ODOT at the state level, local district offices, as well as other regional transportation planning agencies to learn about and identify funding opportunities that can help achieve the safety goals set forth by the transportation committee members.

Strengthen the Region's Economic Vitality

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure the regional transportation system connects populations with economic assets within the region.
- Fortify the region's global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Encourage increased investments in freight movement, road, rail, and maritime project.

Historically, counties in the Buckeye Hills region have had some of the highest unemployment rates in Ohio. Leveraging transportation investments to improve this is a key focus of the RTPO program not only for Buckeye Hills, but for all the participants. Regional transportation projects should be able to enable the fostering of economic development and promoting consistency between improvements to existing assets and planned growth. Targeted investments in existing infrastructure – including roads, rail, and maritime (the Ohio River) – could yield economic benefits by enabling transport of large cargo by barge and rail, and by trucks for last-mile delivery. These types of successful investments could encourage further development in the region.

Be Sensitive to Environmental Sustainability in Transportation Planning

OBJECTIVES

- Promote the use of alternative modes of transportation to reduce the region's environmental impact from the transportation system.
- Foster the development and utilization of bike and pedestrian facilities.
- Respect the regions' environmental resources by avoiding unnecessary impacts and mitigating negative outcomes.

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While overwhelmingly travel by automobile dominates the transportation portfolio in the region, alternative modes of travel must be considered for a number of reasons, most importantly the environment. Although the Buckeye Hills region does not have the level of vehicle congestion found in metropolitan areas of the state, increased use of bike and pedestrian trails, as well as public transit are slowly increasing. Nearly 49% of those surveyed in a regional transportation study indicated that the availability of public transit in their local areas was poor or non-existent. Not only will the development and implementation of these facilities benefit those working and living in the region, but they will help to lessen the impacts all the various modes of transportation are having on the local environment. If Ohio is to continue participating in the economics of agriculture and outdoor tourism, environmental preservation must be a top priority.

Increase Mobility and Accessibility Opportunities

OBJECTIVES

- Encourage additional options for moving people and goods from place to place
- Promote ways to increase access to available public transportation options, including development patterns that reduce the need to drive.
- Consider establishing additional public transportation assets.

A regional transportation plan that emphasizes mobility and accessibility is essential for maximizing access to vital services (both public and private) for those who need these services the most. At the time of this report, nearly 20% of the Buckeye Hills region is age 60 or older. The need for accessible transportation options is expected to increase as the general population ages. This is particularly true in the rural areas of the region where seniors may not have viable options to access needed healthcare appointments and other vital health service organizations.

Surveys have shown that a great number of millennials, those born in the 1980s and 1990s, are more interested in using public transportation than owning their own vehicle. This could be attributed to the rising costs of vehicle ownership, concerns about pollution, or the general desire to conserve resources. The region's needs are greater than just maintaining our roads for individual drivers.

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Enhance the Coordination and Connectivity of the Transportation System

OBJECTIVES

- Identify and maintain a regional core transportation system that connects facilities, economic assets, and Ohio's varied transportation networks
- Strengthen intermodal links among bicycle and pedestrian facilities, public transportation, motorized transport, and recreation
- Coordinate outreach and communications with all interested parties, including local governments, communities, organizations, and individuals

A regional transportation plan must show how the different modes can work together to improve the overall efficiency of the overall transportation network. Strengthened regional partnerships and collaboration will be required to secure regional investments to fund, build, operate, and maintain additional transportation services and facilities. These investments will promote the economy, improve the quality of life, encourage additional goods movements, and support regional communities.