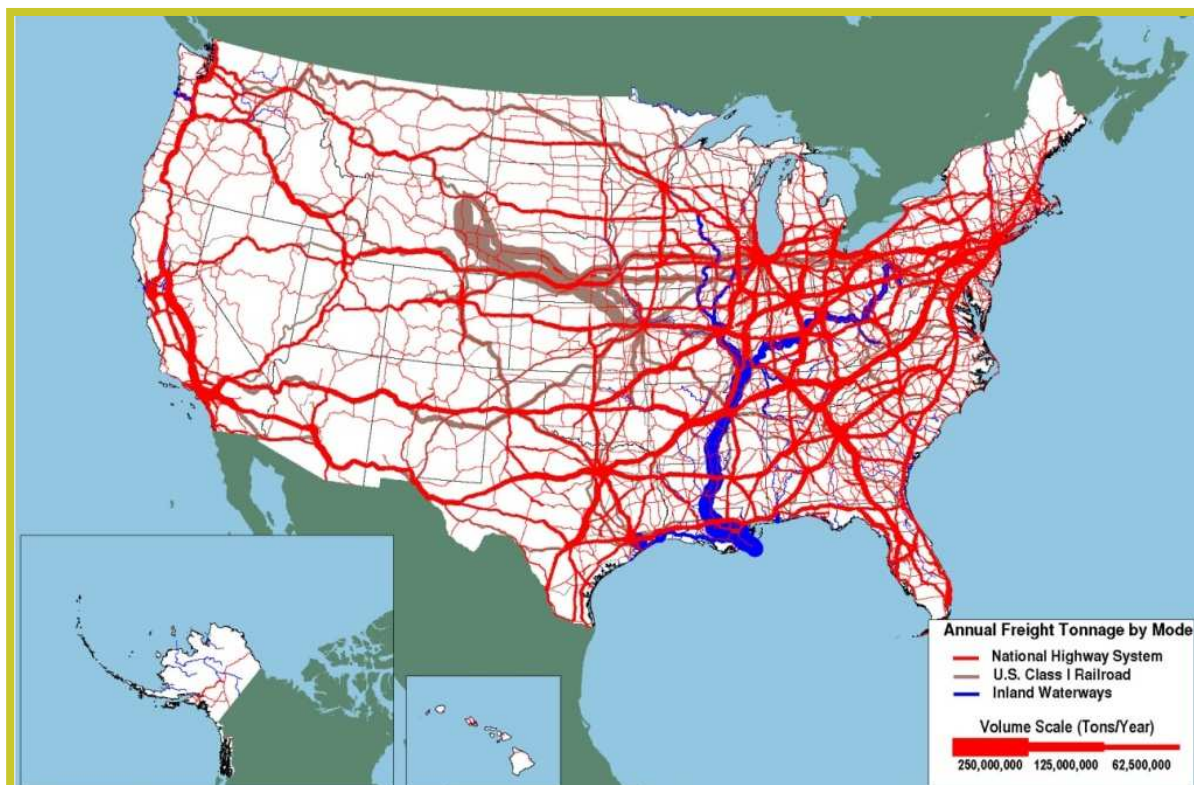


1 Introduction

1.1 Context: The OKI Region and the National Freight System

The OKI region is well situated within a dense network of railroads and highways that serve the East Coast and Midwest. Figure 1-1 depicts the volume of freight flows through this network. The OKI region is located in a strategic national position: it is at the crossroads of major freight corridors, including I-71 and I-75; the region is adjacent to major consumer markets in the heart of the Midwest, as well as the Northeast and Southeast; and with roadway, rail, river, and air freight assets, the region offers a complete set of freight transportation services.

Figure 1-1: Tonnage on Roadways, Railroads, and Inland Waterways, 2007



Source: FHWA Freight Analysis Framework, 2007

1.2 OKI Regional Freight Plan

In early 2010, OKI launched a freight plan for the three-state, eight-county region that OKI serves. The purpose was to devise a plan that will enhance the mobility of people and goods, while encouraging economic development, and mitigating adverse environmental impacts, and safety and security risks. The OKI Freight Plan considers the adequacy of the region's freight infrastructure, but more importantly, prepares to position the OKI region to accommodate future demand within the context of the national freight system. This is important as federal, state, and local policy makers—

as well as the private sector—are making major capital investments to eliminate freight bottlenecks and ensure capacity for future growth. For example:

- Railroads are developing new western “gateways” at North Baltimore, Ohio and Memphis, Tennessee and other cities, to relieve the congestion caused by Chicago rail bottlenecks.
- Both CSX and NS have major programs underway to add intermodal capacity.
- The air cargo industry has gone through a difficult period of merges and consolidations, which has led to the closure of some air hubs (Wilmington, Dayton, and Toledo, Ohio) and the expansion of others (Louisville, Kentucky).
- The U.S. Maritime Administration is sponsoring the development of “Marine Highway Corridors” to serve as extensions of the surface transportation system, and relieve congestion on it.
- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has designated a “Corridors of the Future” program to improve freight corridors that are considered critical to the nation’s economy.

To help ensure the region’s prosperity, the OKI Freight Plan evaluates the region’s place amidst the many and various changes in the nation’s supply chain. It charts a course for freight transportation in the region. This is done so area industries have the necessary transportation services to keep them competitive and key freight investments can help stimulate the regional economy.

The OKI Freight Plan is intended to be an iterative process where system deficiencies, freight flows, cargo forecasts and recommendations are reviewed periodically. This document serves as a tool to educate the public about regional freight planning and solicit comments and feedback that will be useful in making informed decisions, prioritizing solutions consistently and allocating resources appropriately.

The OKI Freight Plan was developed through a comprehensive data collection process that included an extensive public and stakeholder involvement process such as shipper surveys and interviews. Proprietary data was acquired, such as FHWA’s Freight Analysis Framework Model (FAF 3) and IHS Global Insight’s TRANSEARCH® data, for the OKI region. The information collected enabled a thorough examination of existing conditions and current freight flows by each of the four modes (trucking, rail, inland waterways, and air cargo.) The existing conditions analysis included analysis of the freight system, its uses and limitations and a profile of its users from carriers to cargo owners.

Following an existing conditions analysis, a regional needs assessment was conducted to understand shipper behavior and preferences, forecast future regional freight volumes, and identify infrastructure needs that would be required to accommodate this growth. In consideration with other regional investments such as the NS Heartland Corridor and CSX National Gateway projects, combined with other exogenous factors like the Panama Canal expansion, the regional needs assessment identified OKI’s future freight needs.

The OKI Regional Freight Plan also consisted of developing a framework of performance metrics, which enabled a first iteration of testing recommendations against plan goals, as well as cross comparing them in a qualitative manner. As part of identifying opportunities and mitigating risks, a safety and security analysis was conducted to identify vulnerabilities and options for addressing critical infrastructure concerns. These analyses culminated in a set of recommendations that were

prioritized according to the following time horizons: immediate, mid term, and long term. An implementation plan that details next steps for carrying out recommendations was developed.

The following chapters are based on the work described above:

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of data collected, sources and methodology.
- Chapter 3 presents the current freight systems, users and current limitations.
- Chapter 4 presents the shipper survey results (which reveal behavior and preferences), a commodity flow assessment, future forecasts and freight infrastructure needs to accommodate growth.
- Chapter 5 provides a framework for developing freight performance metrics that integrate goals from the OKI 2030 Regional Transportation Plan. Goals and corresponding metrics were used for a first iteration of performance measurements and then applied to the recommendations made in Chapter 7.
- Chapter 6 identifies the potential safety and security risks associated with regional freight movements. In addition to identifying historical trends in safety and security incidents and locations, a macro-level set of measures to mitigate risk were identified.
- Chapter 7 presents recommendations that have been evaluated using the performance measures developed in Chapter 5. These recommendations have been prioritized by the following time horizons: immediate, mid term and long term.
- Chapter 8 discusses the implementation of these recommendations and next steps.

Additional reports and data collected (i.e., the IHS Global Insight Commodity Flows Report, the Tompkins Shipper Survey results and Annual WBAPS 2010) are included as Appendix A and C.