

# INTRODUCTION

It has been 101 years since the General Assembly created Ohio's "State Highway Department" with four employees and a \$10,000 annual budget. From those modest beginnings, the department has grown to construct and maintain the 10<sup>th</sup> largest road system in the nation.

The ODOT Business Plan is a biennial document which summarizes the mission, values and goals of the department and summarizes recent trends, both internal to the department and external on the transportation system. Then the Business Plan specifies initiatives and performance goals the department must achieve in the upcoming biennium to meet its goals and to respond to recent trends. The Business Plan also serves as an important input into the employee evaluation process for management employees in the Career Professional civil service classification.

The Business Plan for 2006 – 2007 reflects notable achievements in significant measures and recognizes key trends

and challenges in the coming biennium. The first section reviews the mission, values and goals of the department and details internal and external performance catalysts, relating those factors to the specific goals of the agency. The second section provides strategic initiatives for the biennium. These strategic initiatives represent continuing program activities that are necessary to achieve significant performance gains. Finally, the third section documents the actual system conditions and administrative measures in ODOT's core business practices. ODOT districts and divisions develop work plans based on the goals outlined in the business plan. The performance of every employee is evaluated against those goals annually.



# MISSION, VALUES AND GOALS

The Ohio Department of Transportation's Mission, Values and Goals are unchanged from the last biennial Business Plan. The mission of providing a world-class transportation system guides nearly every facet of the department's business processes. ODOT continually benchmarks other agencies to improve both internal efficiency and the product provided to ODOT customers.

## MISSION

We will provide a world-class transportation system that links Ohio to a global economy while preserving the state's unique character and enhancing its quality of life.

## VALUES

The Values describe ODOT's expectations for the way it does business. Taken literally, they are ambitious for any organization, but necessary, considering the obligations and public resources under ODOT's stewardship.

**Customer Focus:** We will understand and meet the needs of our customers in our policy, program development and decision-making processes.

**Integrity:** We will maintain the highest ethical standards in our dealings with each other, our business partners and the environment.

**People:** We commit to developing and supporting a flexible, technically skilled work force, with individuals and teams that work toward our shared mission and goals.

**Agility:** We will have the knowledge and ability to rapidly adapt to the opportunities and challenges offered by changing technology and business practices.

**Continuous Improvement:** In the pursuit of excellence, we will continuously improve our core business functions through better products, practices and procedures.

**Data-Based Decision Making:** Our decisions will be based on objective measurement, analysis of our system conditions, customer needs and organizational performance. We will manage by fact.

## GOALS

Since publication of the last Business Plan, the department completed ACCESS Ohio, its long-range transportation plan. ACCESS Ohio provides a long-range forecast of system conditions, and reviews key strategic issues that will drive intermodal transportation planning in the upcoming 30 years. The ACCESS Ohio plan involved a great deal of customer outreach, helping to ensure that the department's understanding of transportation needs was in line with the public's expectations. In the end, the strategic planning process affirmed the goals outlined in the 2004-2005 Business Plan, which are restated here:

**1. Transportation Safety:** ODOT will continually reduce the number and severity of crashes

which promote Ohio's economy, foster economic development and enhance the quality of life

**2. Economic Development and Quality of Life:** ODOT will support transportation improvement opportunities

**3. Efficient, Reliable Traffic Flow:** ODOT will reduce congestion and improve travel reliability



# MISSION, VALUES AND GOALS

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**4. System Preservation:** ODOT will achieve and sustain a steady state of manageable and predictable deficiencies in transportation system conditions within an \$825 million annual system preservation budget

**5. Resource Management:** ODOT will efficiently manage resources to execute core business functions while maintaining the highest-possible levels of quality and productivity

## OHIO TRANSPORTATION POLICY CATALYSTS THROUGH 2015

This update of the ODOT Business Plan uses the Mission, Values and Goals as the point of departure for review of the department's performance and as a guide for the pending biennium. Moreover, this section reviews key trends in the department's performance and in our external operating environment. Throughout, reference is made to ODOT's goals, reflecting their alignment with ongoing policy issues and the important strategic issues the agency must face in the next biennium.

### Internal Goals and Performance Patterns

Since its creation at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through the construction of the Inter-County highway system, to the creation of Interstate and urban freeways, the Ohio Department of Transportation has changed in response to changes in its mission, societal goals and technology. Recent catalysts for change within ODOT include:

- Quality improvement initiatives in the early 1990s, whereby processes undergo a continual cycle of review to identify improvements to service and efficiency;
- "Re-engineering," adopted in 1995 from private sector management practices, where processes are completely re-created in order to achieve gains in efficiency or product improvement. In ODOT, re-engineering included both staff reduction and decentralization of budget and decision making; and
- The introduction of performance measurements, which have improved in their quality and utilization (e.g., pavement and structures) and expanded to define and focus the output of other work units (e.g., County OPIs).

The Department of Transportation today is characterized by internal efficiency and outcome-oriented management, with tightly managed resources. Investments are geared toward system preservation, safety improvement and congestion relief.

The foundation for ODOT's current internal structure is reflected by a strong commitment to system preservation and resource management. Positive achievements in these

areas have allowed other initiatives to move forward, setting the stage for other customer-oriented goals and the strategic initiatives in this business plan.

### Resource Management

Prior to 1995, ODOT's operating costs were rising at an average rate of 5.7 percent – a rate of growth that threatened to obliterate capital budgets within a matter of a few years. Through a re-engineering effort which began in 1995, ODOT became a more lean, productive organization, downsizing from 7,800 to 6,031 employees. In the 10 years ending in 2004, absolute payroll expenditures rose a total of eight percent, or only 0.78 percent annually.

Efficiency equates to dollars. ODOT annually spends \$132 million less than it would if it were still at 1995 employment levels. It can be said that projects such as the Columbus Interstate 270 outerbelt widening, or the Interstate 71 rehabilitation between Columbus and Cleveland, were totally financed by the operational efficiency achieved by the department.

Re-engineering also decentralized budget authority to district offices, allowing them to keep operational savings. This led to district incentive to save money in areas such as equipment budgets because savings were plowed back into district pavements and bridges.

At the same time, ODOT was working to improve another core function – the development of projects through preliminary engineering, environmental clearance, design, right-of-way acquisition and construction. Historically – in ODOT and other state DOTs, project delivery is plagued



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by inconsistency and delay. When first measured in 1998, the department found that only 72 percent of projects were delivered on time. Today, the department delivers 90 percent of its projects on time, even though milestones are set years in advance. Consistent project delivery is a core business function and is a vital precursor to most other department goals.

### System Preservation

Perhaps above all else, ODOT is entrusted with a road and bridge network that is vital to the state's economy and quality of life, and requires a consistent level of investment and management to keep it from falling into disrepair. Preserving this system in a steady, high-quality condition is a core function, but the department has not always performed well in this area. In the 1980s, there was a significant inventory of deficient bridges, which prompted a special bridge repair and replacement program. As recently as 1997, 20 percent of the state's freeways had a pavement condition rating of less than 65 out of 100.

The system preservation goal has focused the department to improve and sustain these basic system conditions. Since 1997, freeway pavement deficiencies have been reduced 79 percent and two-lane pavement deficiencies by 62 percent. Structural deficiencies in ODOT's bridge inventory have been cut by 74 percent. Performance indicators in county maintenance items have shown similar dramatic improvement, even over a shorter time frame.

The section on System Conditions shows achievement in pavement, bridge and county maintenance performance indicators. The department exceeds all its statewide goals in the aggregate, and only a few districts have any deficiencies at all. Districts with deficiencies are on a plan to achieve system performance goals within a given time horizon, as documented in this business plan.

A related part of system preservation is to ensure the sustainability of those conditions, at a given level of investment, over time. Keeping a "steady state" of low percentage system deficiencies provides certainty for long-term budgeting and predictability in programming and project development.

### Summary: Resource Management and System Preservation Goals

ODOT has shown impressive achievement in internal efficiency and system preservation goals, which remain the

primary foundation for other goals and initiatives. There is a logical progression of these goals, as follows:

- Through resource management efforts, ODOT constrained internal operating cost and improved project delivery;
- Through system preservation goals, ODOT set and attained a steady, predictable state of system conditions;
- Achieving this steady state allowed for a long-range fiscal forecast and financial plan, demonstrating that existing program/funds management budgets (with rational revenue growth forecast) could sustain good system conditions;
- Success in these areas bolstered public trust in the department, leading to the Governor's Jobs and Progress Plan and related finance proposal; and
- The Ohio General Assembly embraced the Jobs and Progress Plan by passing a historic transportation finance package; that package, coupled with pending Congressional action, allows ODOT to advance its other goals of transportation safety, economic development and quality of life, and efficient, reliable traffic flow.

With this progression as background, and the goals of resource management and system preservation as foundation, attention turns to the three remaining ODOT goals of transportation safety; efficient and reliable traffic flow; and economic development and quality of life.

### EXTERNAL STRATEGIC CATALYSTS

ODOT's key external catalysts relate to the popularity of its product and the product's impact on the natural and human environment. Stated simply, traffic demand has outstripped road capacity in almost every year since the inception of state highway building programs. Ohio is no different. With the possible exception of wartime and the Depression, total travel grows one to three percent annually, while highway capacity increases only a fraction of a percent.

System preservation and resource management speaks to the public trust in managing a vast and expensive public works system. While success is critical, the goals are mostly inward



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looking. The remaining three department goals are outward looking, responding to the values and aspirations of our customers in the provision of our products and services.

## Transportation Safety

Public safety is a near universal and inherent goal of public programs. ODOT's programs, too, are infused with a safety focus, from programs that improve high-crash locations to design standards that improve highway safety.

But growing traffic volumes have blunted some safety gains. While the overall crash rate has improved consistently in Ohio over the last 10 years, the number of crashes remains constant at about 380,000 annually, and fatal crashes at about 1,300 per year. If Ohio air travel had the same fatality frequency, it would equate to the loss of nine Boeing 737s per year.

In surveys, transportation safety rates as the highest customer priority. Starting as its number one goal, the importance of highway safety cascades through the department. As a strategic initiative in 2000, ODOT improved its crash data management and analysis tools, and then in 2002, initiated district safety work plans to identify short-, medium- and long-term countermeasures for high-crash locations. Finally, ODOT doubled funding from \$30 to \$62 million annually, expanding its ability to address high-crash locations.

The Governor's Jobs and Progress Plan program is critical to advancing highway safety. First, it provides the funding necessary to double ODOT's program to address high-crash locations. Secondly, the Jobs and Progress Plan addresses reconstruction of urban interstates, which have some of the highest crash frequencies in the state, and macro corridors, which will advance rural highway safety.

## Efficient, Reliable Traffic Flow

ODOT performance indicators have improved in nearly every measurable area, with one notable exception: traffic congestion. Ohio highway travel has increased in 28 of the last 30 years. As has been the trend for decades, peak-hour travel in Ohio's cities has created chronic, congested travel on a significant portion of the urban freeway system. But the congestion growth is not limited to urban, peak-hour travel; with truck volumes increasing 90 percent over the past 25 years, even rural interstate highways experience lower levels of service in some areas, at some times of the day.

The goal of reliable traffic flow seeks to address congestion through system management and capacity expansion projects. ODOT has created systems to objectively measure congestion, track its growth over time and direct investments toward congestion relief projects. The department also conducts special studies, such as for freight, to identify underlying trends and possible strategic countermeasures.

Transportation system management is an umbrella term for a number of congestion initiatives, including access management, incident management and maintenance of traffic during construction. ODOT has strengthened its training and administration procedures to ensure consistency in access management. The department has implemented urban freeway service patrols, urban freeway management systems and incident management clearance procedures, all to mitigate incident disruptions to highway capacity. Finally, maintenance of traffic practices have mitigated the congestion impact of the department's own construction projects.

Significant advances in congestion management will only come through the development of transit and highway capacity expansion. Here again, the Governor's Jobs and Progress Plan is critical to achieving ODOT's goals for efficient traffic flow. Through the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC), ODOT has been the single largest financial participant in transit planning and capital projects, such as the Euclid Corridor in Cleveland, the Central Ohio Transit Authority light rail initiative in Columbus and the Eastern Corridor transit improvement projects in the Cincinnati area.

The Jobs and Progress Plan also advances highway capacity and geometric improvement projects on the state's most congested freeways, including the Interstates 70/71 split in downtown Columbus; the Cleveland Innerbelt; Dayton Interstate 75; Cincinnati Interstate 75; the central interchange in Akron; and the Interstates 75/475 interchange in Toledo. The Jobs and Progress Plan also advances rural mobility, through completion of the U.S. Route 24 corridor in northwest Ohio, U.S. Route 30 across northern Ohio and Appalachian corridors.

## Economic Development and Quality of Life

The final external strategic catalyst reflects the department's concern for the preservation and enhancement of the state's natural and cultural resources. As with safety goals, the



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economic development and quality of life goals infuse all of the department's activities and programs.

First and foremost, transportation both reflects and promotes a region's economic activity. Through the era of canals, railroads, and highways, freight transportation has grown hand in hand with overall economic advances. Viewed on a graph, the nation's Gross Domestic Product and Vehicle Miles of Travel parallel one another. Today's transportation system has given rise to true national markets, further driving down the cost of shipping as a percent of the Gross National Product.

The TRAC, using the Governor's Jobs and Progress Plan, has funded projects that improve transportation efficiency and thus promote economic development. Projects which are an inducement for job creation or retention are rewarded additional points under the TRAC scoring criteria.

Highway advocates often promote the economic benefits of highway expansion, which are real, but societal goals for environmental protection and cultural preservation are not mutually exclusive. ODOT's project development process embraces both the letter and spirit of the National Environmental Policy Act. This includes the cataloguing of significant land and aquatic habitat and locating new facilities to do the least damage to the natural environment.

In the past two years, ODOT's projects have taken just 22 acres of wetland, and replaced those doubly. Even with a construction program of more than \$1 billion, ODOT projects rarely impact parkland or historic properties. And ODOT's transportation enhancement program has restored 28 historic bridges, funded 81 bicycle/pedestrian facilities, and 14 streetscape projects.

In addition to their critical function, ODOT projects can also be aesthetically pleasing and designed in concert with a community's unique character or design aspirations. In Dayton, an ordinary retaining wall retraces the arc of the Wright brother's first flight. In Toledo, local citizens chose the distinctive cable-stay design for their bridge. In Columbus, a citizen's advisory panel provides input to the aesthetic features of the Interstates 70/71 split reconstruction.

The goal of economic development and quality of life has moved ODOT toward the appropriate balance between the raw functionality of a transportation facility and its contribution to cultural and aesthetic mores. ODOT's achievements in this arena are noteworthy, but the department does not consider its goals complete, and the number of projects still in development provide once in a lifetime opportunities for communities to advance their civic aspirations as part of urban transportation reconstruction projects.



# GOALS

Restatement of ODOT Goals through 2015, with specific objectives for the biennium and beyond.

## GOAL 1 – TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

ODOT will continually reduce the number and severity of crashes.

2006-2015 Objectives – ODOT will:

- Reduce the crash fatality rate from the current rate of 1.31 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (mvmt) to not to exceed one fatality per 100 mvmt.
- Reduce the frequency of crashes by 10 percent (reduction of approximately 40,000 crashes statewide per year).
- Reduce rear-end crashes by 25 percent (reduction of approximately 25,000 rear-end crashes statewide per year).
- Target and implement all low-cost, short-term safety solutions, all medium-cost improvements and 80 percent of the high-cost improvements at high-crash safety locations in the annual safety and congestion work plan.
- Continuously reduce the delay between problem identification and countermeasure implementation.
- Continuously improve safety and design standards.
- Sustain the highest standards and improve on snow and ice removal through new and improved technologies, materials and operation strategies.
- Sustain the highest safety standards and improve on safety in work zones through new and improved technologies, materials and operational strategies.

## GOAL 2 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE

ODOT will support transportation improvement opportunities, which promote Ohio's economy, foster economic development and enhance the quality of life.

2006-2015 Objectives – ODOT will:

- Complete macro-corridor projects identified in the Governor's Jobs and Progress Plan.
- Reconstruct deficient urban freeway and multi-modal facilities while remaining sensitive to social, cultural and economic aspirations of Ohio's communities.
- Improve inter-modal connectivity to reduce congestion, improve safety and preserve the environment.
- Protect the natural environment, and historic and cultural resources, by avoiding, minimizing or mitigating the environmental impacts of transportation improvements.
- Design projects that are compatible with the essence of Ohio's communities.



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### GOAL 3 – EFFICIENT, RELIABLE TRAFFIC FLOW

ODOT will reduce traffic congestion and improve travel reliability.

2006-2015 Objectives – ODOT will:

- Target and improve traffic flow on congested road segments identified by the department's congestion management system.
- Using the congestion management system, quantify the congestion relief of the department's projects to 2015, using per-capita and aggregate measures.
- In congested urban corridors, invest in public transportation projects which add alternative modal capacity to relieve road congestion, and provide travel options.
- By 2007, implement district-level freeway operations strategy, with attendant training and quality assurance from central office. The strategy will include:
  - Freeway management systems delivered according to the current TRAC schedule, with advanced elements for maintenance of traffic where possible;
  - Freeway service patrols as per warrants;
  - Incident response procedures; and
  - Local incident management committees, including quick clear practices.

### GOAL 4 – SYSTEM PRESERVATION

ODOT will achieve and sustain a steady state of manageable and predictable deficiencies in transportation system conditions within an \$825 million annual system preservation budget.

2006-2015 Objectives – ODOT will:

- Sustain Ohio's pavements so at least 93 percent of all state-maintained lane miles meet the pavement condition rating standards.
- Sustain Ohio's bridges so at least 97 percent of all state-maintained bridges meet the general appraisal standards.
- Sustain an overall level of performance on Ohio's roadways to meet or exceed the standard as defined by a county's composite Organizational Performance Index (OPI).
- Complete the reconstruction of 60 percent of interstate lane miles and sustain a preventive pavement maintenance program on 5 percent of all appropriate lane miles per year.
- Continually research and improve maintenance practices and technology, construction techniques and the use of better materials.



# GOALS

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## GOAL 5 – RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ODOT will efficiently manage resources to execute core business functions while maintaining the highest-possible levels of quality and productivity.

2006-2015 Objectives – ODOT will:

- Continually review the results of the cost accounting system to improve the quality and efficiency of the department.
- Manage the construction program to get high quality, competitive prices and efficient project administration.
- Train and equip an increasingly productive work force that does not exceed 6,031 full-time employees.
- Maintain a financial plan to meet long-term operational and capital goals.
- Continuously focus on creating a quality culture as measured by the Baldrige Criteria.

