3.5. NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The No Build Alternative consists of continued use of the existing transportation network (including existing roadway and bus transit components) to meet the long-term transportation needs of the region within the Eastern Corridor. The No Build transportation network includes maintenance of existing facilities and systems as well as near-term improvements scheduled for implementation for which funding has been committed (near-term projects included in the OKI Region's Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP, and Ohio's State Transportation Improvement Plan, or STIP).

Coordination with OKI in 2002 identified over seventy TIP/STIP committed projects in the 13-county region, all of which were included in the regional travel demand modeling work for the Eastern Corridor to make sure that planned minor improvements to the existing network were properly accounted for as a baseline condition. Three of these seventy TIP/STIP committed projects occurred within the Eastern Corridor, including: 1) Interstate 275 widening from State Route 32 to Five Mile Road, 2) a new interchange for Olive Branch-Stonelick Road at State Route 32, and 3) widening of State Route 125 from SR 32 to Corbly Road. The latter two projects have recently been completed and are open to traffic. About two-thirds of the I-275 widening project is substantially complete.

Recently (2004 update to TIP/STIP), a few other minor projects were added to the committed project framework for the No Build condition within the Eastern Corridor. These include minor resurfacing, bridge rehabilitation, signal coordination and landscaping projects.

Consequences of the No-Build Alternative are discussed in Chapter 5.7 of this DEIS. Secondary and cumulative impacts associated with the No Build Alternative are presented in Chapter 5.6.2 (Current Development Activities).

The Eastern Corridor Major Investment Study (OKI, April 2000) concluded that the No Build Alternative would not meet the long-term transportation needs of the region or the Eastern Corridor study area.

development) resulting in part from a poor transportation system that does not respond to capacity, efficiency, access or modal option needs of businesses, communities, the regional economy or the environment.

Conclusions

Based on the information presented in this preliminary cumulative impact evaluation, it is concluded that although past and present actions in the Eastern Corridor have resulted in some loss or modification to the area's environmental resources, these actions have also resulted in notable benefits within the Eastern Corridor.

Furthermore, the benefits of the project, combined with other past, present and expected future actions, are considerable. These benefits have played, and will continue to play, an important role in the local economy and overall quality-of-life in the project area.

Overall, the Eastern Corridor project is not expected to critically compound conditions that have resulted from other past and present actions, or that may result from expected future actions, when the specific benefits of the project are weighed against the project's expected direct and indirect impacts (costs).

5.7. CONSEQUENCES OF THE NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Under a No Build Alternative, no major transportation capacity investments would be made now or in the 30-year planning horizon, except for projects that are already approved and have specific funds committed. Coordination with OKI in 2002 identified over seventy TIP/STIP committed projects in the 13-county region. Three of these seventy TIP/STIP committed projects occurred within the Eastern Corridor, including: 1) Interstate 275 widening from State Route 32 to Five Mile Road, 2) a new interchange for Olive Branch-Stonelick Road at State Route 32, and 3) widening of State Route 125 from SR 32 to Corbly Road. The latter two projects have recently been completed and are open to traffic. About two-thirds of the I-275 widening project is substantially complete. Recently (2004 update to TIP/STIP), a few other minor projects were added to the committed project framework for the No Build condition within the Eastern Corridor. These include minor resurfacing, bridge rehabilitation, signal coordination and landscaping projects.

The No Build Alternative, as defined above, involves some disruption of existing structures and land and some amount of direct environmental impacts for construction of committed projects. Secondary impacts associated with the construction of committed projects included in the No Build (most have which have been recently completed, as noted above) are addressed in Chapter 5.6.2.

The Eastern Corridor Major Investment Study (April 2000) concluded that a No Build scenario would not meet the transportation needs of the project area. Key expected consequences of the No Build Alternative include the following:

- Current conditions and trends would continue in the corridor, with increasingly inefficient transportation linkages and related losses of population, employment and economic development opportunities.

- New capacity and connectivity improvements would not be built, while travel demand would continue to grow.
- Public expectations would not be met.
- Congestion, delays, travel times, and safety problems would be expected to increase without relief.
- Relative market areas for employment areas, communities and destinations would be expected to shrink due to increasing travel inefficiencies.
- No new non-car options for travel would be established (such as rail transit).
- Development would most likely be less consistent with land use plans, and the beneficial transportation-land use relationship established by various community, county and regional planning activities in the corridor would be diminished or made ineffective (and these risks and related potential adverse consequences are exacerbated under the State of Ohio's constitutional "home rule" authority granted to local governments which has no requirement or obligation for centralized or coordinated planning)
- Commerce and movement of goods and services would be expected to suffer, and would decrease the economic competitiveness of the Cincinnati metropolitan area and outlying eastern suburbs.
- Future development would be expected to occur as inefficient, "leapfrog" outward growth (instead of infill development) resulting in part from a poor transportation system that does not respond to capacity, efficiency, access or modal option needs of businesses, communities, the regional economy or the environment.
- Beneficial coordination among different jurisdictions, established and forwarded by the transportation and land use planning effort, would likely become less active and less effective on both a local and regional scale.

Projected travel times, delays and miles traveled in the Eastern Corridor and overall OKI region for a No Build versus multi-modal build alternative for the project are further described in Chapter 7.1 of this DEIS.