

# **Open House Public Meeting Summary**

**US-59: FROM 0.69 MILES SOUTH OF SH-127,  
NORTH 5.46 MILES**

**&**

**US-59: FROM 2.92 MILES NORTH OF SH-20,  
NORTH 0.79 MILES**

**GRADE, DRAIN & SURFACE**

**Delaware County**

**Job Piece Numbers 24150(04) & 24151(04)**

**Held March 11, 2025**

**Prepared by:**



**Date:**

**Revised April 16, 2025**

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), along with the Cherokee Nation, held a public meeting to talk about a project on US Highway 59 (US-59). This part of the highway starts just north of Jay near EW 39 County Road and goes about 7 miles north, ending just south of Grove near EW 32 Road. The meeting was held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. at the Grove Community Center. It was an open house, which means people could come and go at any time, and there was no formal presentation. The main reason for the meeting was to show the final plans for the road project and talk about how it might affect the environment. The goal of the project is to make the road safer and help traffic move better. At the meeting, people could look at large maps and displays of the project. There were also boards showing the environment and road details. Staff members were there to answer questions. In total, 86 people from the public came to the meeting, and one news group was there. Four people left written comments. Here's what they said:

- One person wanted to make sure the road work wouldn't affect utilities.
- One person supported the project.
- One person said the meeting was helpful.
- One person asked for a right-turn lane at the corner of US-59 and SH-127 (Zena Road).

ODOT also got comments from four state agencies: the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation, and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Next, the project will move forward to the construction stage.

If you'd like to see the maps and other meeting materials, you can visit: [www.odot.org/publicmeetings](http://www.odot.org/publicmeetings)

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

ODOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in partnership with the Cherokee Nation want to improve US Highway 59. This public meeting summary document summarizes an in-person open house public meeting conducted for a segment of US Highway 59 (US-59), that begins north of Jay near EW 39 County Road and extends north approximately 7 miles to south of Grove near EW 32 Road.

The existing Environmental Assessment (EA) for this section of US-59 needs to be re-evaluated. The existing EA document was for a 12.3-mile corridor from the US-59/SH-10 junction (Third Street) in Grove south to the US-59/SH-20 East junction in Jay was completed by ODOT in 1998. The EA resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) from FHWA. Roadway improvements have already been completed on the north side of Jay and on the south side of Grove. These projects are being designed to construct the ultimate 4/5 lane facility but were originally proposed to purchase 4/5 lane right-of-way and construct a 2 lane facility with 10-foot-wide shoulders, which is a change in project scope.

The purpose of the open house meeting was to present the proposed final design and expected environmental impacts to motorists and the surrounding community. The meeting was a come and go type meeting with no formal presentation. Project team members were on hand to answer questions.

The existing US-59 roadway generally consists of two (2) 12-foot-wide driving lanes with no shoulders. The purpose of the project was and still is to improve the safety and mobility of the traffic on US-59. The proposed improvement consists of providing four (4) 12-foot-wide driving lanes with 10-foot-wide paved shoulders. North of SH-127, a 16-foot-wide center left turn lane will be included to provide a 5 lane roadway. Left turn lanes will be located at all major intersections. The improvements are located generally along the existing alignment.

A reevaluation of the existing Environmental Assessment following the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will be prepared for ODOT and Federal Highway Administration approval.

## 3.0 OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC MEETING

### 3.1 MEETING NOTIFICATION

One-hundred and forty-eight (148) property owners on the JP 24150(04) project and twenty-eight (28) property owners on the JP 24151(04) project were identified adjacent to or within the project limits. These owners were notified of the open house public meeting by postcard mailed February 11, 2025. Seven (7) utility owners were identified adjacent to or within the project limits for both projects. These utility owners were notified of the open house public meeting by letter mailed February 11, 2025.

Forty-three (43) invitation letters to the public meeting were mailed to various agencies and members of the public on February 11, 2025. The public officials meeting invitation list included FHWA, ODOT Commissioners, Delaware County Commissioners, State and U.S. elected officials, Cities of Grove and Jay, Grand Gateway

Economic Development Association, Grove and Jay Public Schools, Grove and Jay Police and Fire Departments, and Tribal Nations.

A copy of the letters and the mailing lists are included in **Attachment A**.

### 3.2 OUTREACH

Outreach was provided by direct mailing by the post office to three (3) mail delivery routes along the project area as noted below. One thousand three hundred forty six (1,358) postcards were printed and mailed by Mercury Press Plus and direct mailed to the Post Office for distribution to routes.

- 74346-R007 441 mail pieces
- 74346-H066 298 mail pieces
- 74344-R003 619 mail pieces

Direct mailing helps to ensure that individuals who are leasing property within the study area will get the information, as well as the property owners receiving notification through the mail. As the postal route serves a larger area, more people who use the US-59 roadway received the information, increasing the opportunity for input.

### 3.3 MEETING INFORMATION AND FORMAT

The open house public meeting was held Tuesday, March 11, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Grove Community Center located at 104 East 3rd Street in Grove. This was a come and go open house meeting with no formal presentation.

The open house had several stations people could visit and speak to either consultant staff or ODOT personnel. The first station contained the sign in sheet, handout material and the comment form. The second station contained aerials of the project on a table with a board for each roadway typical section. This station was covered by design personnel to answer questions. The third station contained the environmental board and was covered by environmental personnel to answer questions.

Copies of the public meeting information can be found in **Attachment B**. All comments were requested to be received on or before March 25, 2024. Written comments could be submitted by mail or email or on the webpage. Following the meeting, the meeting materials will be available on the ODOT Public Meeting Website: <http://www.odot.org/publicmeetings>.

## 4.0 COMMENTS

### 4.1 COMMENTS RECEIVED AT PUBLIC MEETING

In general, there was overall support for the projects. There were questions as to when the construction would start and how long the construction would take. A lot of people were concerned about SH-10 and downtown Grove. They were informed the public meeting for downtown Grove would be held in April of 2025.

### 4.2 PHONE CALL COMMENTS

No phone calls were received.

### 4.3 WRITTEN COMMENTS

Four (4) written comments were received from the open house meeting. These comments are listed in the following table. An ODOT response has been added at the end of each general category. Copies of the citizen written comments are included in **Attachment C**.

<b>WRITTEN COMMENTS</b>	
<b>Confirm No Utility Conflicts with Roadway</b>	
1a	<p>There is a PSO Transmission line that crosses over Highway 59 and there is a structure that is near the highway, I am waiting to confirm with my engineer its current location. The structure may have been moved out of the ODOT property boundary in the last 4-5 years. Could you provide the outer limits of your construction/road expansion? I would like to see if it will affect our structure near the highway. Will the road only be built within its current property boundaries or will more property be purchased to expand the road? If there is a transmission line structure within ODOT property/parcel boundaries will the transmission line structure need to be moved? Could you provide the grading and site plan for this area?</p>
<p><b>ODOT Response:</b> American Electric Power was notified by E-mail that the new roadway is going to be built within the limits of the currently existing "Present Right-of-Way." This right-of-way was purchased awhile back to accommodate the widening to 5 lanes. There will be no impact to the existing PSO transmission line.</p>	
<b>Support for Roadway Project</b>	
2a	<p>Comment - I approve and support ODOT's US-59 between Grove &amp; Jay Delaware County Project. The aspect that I love about ODOT's US-59 between Grove &amp; Jay Delaware County Project is that US-59 will be widened from 2 lanes to 4 lanes in each direction from 2.92 Miles North of OK-20 to Grove, OK which will improve safety, reduce congestion, and improve freight mobility in Delaware County, OK.</p>
<p><b>ODOT Response:</b> This comment is noted.</p>	

<b>Public Meeting was Informative</b>	
3a	I just wanted to comment on the representatives from ODOT and the US Highway project were very helpful and informative. They were confident in their answers, and I left the meeting much better informed. Thank you for presenting this public forum.
<b>ODOT Response:</b> This comment is noted.	
<b>Request Right Turn Lane on Southbound US-59 and SH 127 (Zena Road)</b>	
4a	Southbound 59 at 127 (Zena) turnoff could use a right turn lane. Many just use the shoulder. It causes backups.
<b>ODOT Response:</b> Many comments similar to this were made at the public meeting. The capacity increase to 4 through lanes will alleviate the slowdown caused by the turning movement at SH-127. Going from 2 lanes to 4 lanes will provide two southbound driving lanes. The outside lane can be utilized for the vehicles wanting to turn and the inside lane can be used to pass by the turning traffic. A center two way left turn lane will provide refuge for drivers needing to turn left allowing the inside lane to continue on unimpeded. There will also be a 10 foot wide shoulder which will provide additional space should a situation with a disabled vehicle arise.	

## 5.0 AGENCY SOLICITATION LETTERS

Agency solicitation letters dated February 11, 2025 were mailed. These letters provided a short project description and enclosed a project location map. The letter requested recipients provide input by March 25, 2025. This letter was sent to twenty-five (25) State and Federal agencies including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A copy of the solicitation letter and the mailing list is included in **Attachment D**, while **Attachment E** contains the written agency comments received.

### 5.1 SOLICITATION LETTER COMMENTS AND ODOT RESPONSES

Four (4) solicitation letter responses were received and are summarized below along with an ODOT response. The actual letters can be found in **Attachment E**.

1. The **Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB)** requested that ODOT contact the state NFIP coordinator for possible permit requirements for this project.

**ODOT Response:**

This comment is noted and ODOT will obtain the appropriate floodplain permit.

2. The **Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)** stated no adverse environmental impacts under DEQ jurisdiction are anticipated for the project; however, please be aware of the following regulatory requirements:

If water or wastewater utilities may be impacted by this project, please note that water and wastewater infrastructure projects that will require a construction permit from DEQ's Water Quality Division include the following:

- Construction of new water and wastewater treatment facilities;
- Modifications and upgrades to existing facilities;
- Construction of new water distribution and wastewater collection lines;
- Relocation of existing water distribution and wastewater collection lines.

Projects that do not require a construction permit include:

- Replacement of existing equipment with same type and size equipment;
- Replacement of existing water and wastewater lines with the same size line in the same location.

Please contact DEQ's Water Quality Division (Construction Permitting Section) if you have specific questions or need further clarification. If USACE determines a Section 404 Permit is required for this project, then you must obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from DEQ.

**ODOT Response:**

These comments are noted and ODOT will obtain authorization under OKR10, construction stormwater prior to construction.

3. The **Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation | State Parks** stated that based on our research of the property addressed in your JPN 24150 & 24151 project area, we have determined that the project will have "No Adverse Impact" on any Oklahoma State Park, or Federal 6(f)3, boundaries pursuant to the LWCF Act 54 U.S.C. 200305(f)(3).

**ODOT Response:**

These comments are noted.

4. The **Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC)** provided a letter for technical assistance to help plan and design this project in such a way as to avoid or minimize its potential negative impacts on fish and wildlife resources. They did not conduct an actual field investigation. The Ozark Region contains many complex systems of interconnected aquifers, caves, sinkholes and springs, and these systems support diverse subterranean communities of state- and federally listed species and Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Oklahoma's state-endangered Oklahoma Cave Crayfish inhabits several Delaware County caves, but our records show this crayfish occurring outside of the boundary of your highway expansion project. ODWC recommends contacting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation if, during construction, a sinkhole is unearthed, especially one that exposes a subterranean spring. Consultations regarding federally listed threatened and endangered species and associated critical habitats should be made to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**ODOT Response:**

These comments are noted, and a field investigation was completed for the project site. Consultation with the US Fish Wildlife Service has taken place and concurrence from the US Fish Wildlife Service has been obtained (2024-0082642). Plan notes will be placed on the construction plans including a karst features note.