

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

**I-40 GRADE, DRAIN, BRIDGE AND SURFACE FROM THE OKLAHOMA COUNTY LINE,
EAST APPROXIMATELY 7.5 MILES TO US-177(US-270)
POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY
JOB PIECE NUMBERS 21007(07)(10)(13)**

Prepared for:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document summarizes the virtual public meeting and public involvement conducted for the I-40 project from the Oklahoma County Line, east approximately 7.5 Miles to US-177(US-270), in Pottawatomie County. The purpose of the public meeting was to present the plans for the project to the public and obtain input, describe the benefits of roundabouts and how they work, and outline the next steps and schedule for the project.

Due to concerns about the spread of COVID-19, ODOT held a virtual public meeting. The public meeting was held on-line between July 24 and August 14, 2020. Thirty-two (32) members of the public signed in to the public meeting through the website, although sign-in was not required. According to the website analytics, 1,000 unique users viewed the website over the 3-week virtual public meeting period. The four most viewed webpages were the home page, the plan view map page, the meeting presentation page, and the submit a comment page. In total, ninety-six (96) written comments were received during the virtual public meeting, including three (3) agency responses, forty-three (43) public comments were submitted through the website, thirty-eight (38) public comments were mailed on comment forms or emailed on digital comment forms, and twelve (12) public comments were submitted as an email. Commenters often commented on multiple topics.

Agency comments included the following:

- The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) commented that ODOT should refer to the CFR Title 14 Part 77.13.
- The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) commented that no adverse environmental impacts under DEQ jurisdiction are anticipated.
- The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department commented that the project will have no significant adverse impact on any federally funded park or recreation area or state park.

The majority of the public's comments were focused on topics related to concerns over the proposed roundabouts, the project extents, and property rights and acquisition. A summary of the received public comments is included as Table ES.

Table ES – Summary of Public Comments

| Comment Topic* | Tally |
|---|-------|
| Approves of the project | 38 |
| Disapproves of the project | 5 |
| Concerns with roundabouts | 15 |
| Project extents | 14 |
| Property rights and acquisition | 13 |
| Frontage road questions | 4 |
| Access from Arena Road to McCloud Road | 3 |
| Project duration | 4 |
| I-40 safety concerns | 5 |
| Traffic noise concerns | 3 |
| Presence of utilities | 2 |
| Surface drainage concerns | 2 |
| Stevens Road bridge | 3 |
| Paving material | 2 |
| Environmental | 1 |
| Wayfinding signage | 1 |
| Town Resolution of disapproval | 1 |
| Concern unrelated to the proposed project | 17 |

*Some comments may cover multiple topics

The received public comments have been grouped together and summarized below by topic, and responses follow each topic.

Topic – Concerns with roundabouts

Topic Summary: Multiple commenters expressed concern with the implementation of roundabouts because of either the local population’s unfamiliarity with roundabouts, how they appear unsafe, or how they are unpreferred by some users.

Response: *ODOT has considered this intersection type because traffic studies suggest they increase safety, improve traffic flow, and also reduce cost. Although drivers may initially be unfamiliar with roundabouts, signage at the roundabouts help drivers recognize quickly how to navigate a roundabout. The proposed roundabouts are expected to reduce delay and collisions. Because they reduce the speed of through traffic, they also have been shown to reduce the severity of accidents that do occur. The three roundabouts on McCloud Road (SH-102 North) were specifically designed as an ultimate solution to accommodate the future traffic entering/exiting I-40 and accessing the new frontage road connecting SH-102 North to SH-102 South. Your comments and concerns are noted, and ODOT will consider alternative solutions that will accommodate traffic, with an eye towards future improvement.*

Topic – Project extents

Topic Summary: Multiple commenters asked why the proposed project extents or limits do not extend further west into Oklahoma County or further east.

Response: *The proposed project is part of ODOT's 8-year program which also includes widening the section of I-40 in Oklahoma County, which would complete the widening from I-240 to Shawnee.*

Topic – Property rights and acquisition

Topic Summary: Commenters are concerned about income from commercial signs on their property, relocation of any currently permitted signs, and how much of their property will be needed for the project.

Response: *ODOT is in the early design engineering phase and will consider methods to minimize impacts where possible. If ODOT cannot avoid the need to acquire portions of your property, details of any land acquisition, property relocation, or previously permitted signs can be negotiated and agreed to with agents of ODOT Right-of-Way and Utilities Division. These agents would meet with each affected property owner and be able to discuss concerns and negotiate a workable solution. ODOT is required to follow specific federally mandated guidelines with the goal of giving the property owner opportunities and options to get fair and equitable solutions and compensation.*

Topic – Frontage roads questions

Topic Summary: Commenters are concerned about who benefits from the proposed frontage road, its funding due to its proximity to the casino, and the possibility of additional frontage roads.

Response: *The frontage road will not be a private road for the nearby casino. The frontage road is being proposed to alleviate some of the traffic issues that may result from the removal of the I-40 bridges at Arena Road and Stevens Road and will remain a public road. This frontage road will be constructed only with the financial participation of local government entities. ODOT is in the process of obtaining cost participation agreements and we anticipate the entire construction cost of the frontage road will be paid by others.*

In regard to additional frontage roads, 45th Street parallels I-40 on the south side and functions well to connect local traffic from SH-102 North to SH-102 South as a local reliever route and the location of the cemetery east of Stevens Road complicates adding a frontage to the south side of I-40. Due to the relatively lower amount of traffic, cemetery location, costs of additional construction and right-of-way acquisition, it has been determined that the construction of additional frontage roads would not be feasible at this time.

Topic – Access from Arena Road to McCloud Road

Topic Summary: Commenters are requesting an access road from Arena Road to McCloud Road to provide access to the City of McCloud for citizens and emergency vehicles because of the removal of the bridges on Arena Road and Stevens Road. Additionally, this will limit access to the McCloud reservoir.

Response: *A study of the traffic patterns within the proposed project area led to the location and design of the proposed frontage road between McCloud Road and SH-102 South. The Stevens Road bridge and the Arena Road bridge were selected to be removed based on traffic studies of the proposed project area and the low traffic amounts at these locations. Primary access to the reservoir is off EW-113 and the majority of the high volume is local traffic which may be northbound SH-102 to EW-113 and higher volume southbound Fishmarket Road to EW-113. Additionally, 45th Street parallels I-40 on the south side and functions well to connect local traffic from SH-102 North to SH-102 South as a local reliever route.*

Topic – Project duration

Topic Summary: Commenters are concerned about the length of time it will take to complete the project.

Response: *Construction for the whole 7.5-mile long project is proposed to be phased as three distinct parts described as the middle project, the west project, and the east project. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2022 for the middle project (near McLoud Road and Stevens Road), in 2023 for the west project (near Fishmarket Road and Arena Road), and 2026 for the east project (near the North Canadian River and Bethel Rd). Construction on the east project is scheduled to be completed by 2028.*

Topic – I-40 safety concerns

Topic Summary: Commenters had various questions regarding the safety of the design and construction of the proposed project along I-40. Comments included questions about shoulder width, safety of nearby residences, and speed limits.

Response: *ODOT appreciates your input. ODOT is designing the proposed improvements in conformance with numerous safety standards set by the Federal Highway Authority Administration (FHWA) and ODOT. It is ODOT's mission to provide a safe, economical, and effective transportation network for the people, commerce, and communities of Oklahoma.*

Topic – Traffic noise concerns

Topic Summary: Commenters are worried about noise pollution from the completed project.

Response: *A Traffic Noise Study was completed according to FHWA and ODOT policies and procedures using FHWA Traffic Noise Model version 2.5. Results of the analysis indicated that noise barrier walls ranging up to the maximum of 22 feet were not feasible and/or reasonable in accordance with ODOT noise policy for noise walls. Noise mitigation will not be included with the proposed project.*

Topic – Presence of utilities

Topic Summary: ONEOK has no facilities within the proposed project area, but they have four (4) pipelines that cross I-40 within the project area.

Response: *After the project design plans are prepared, ODOT Utilities Branch will be in contact to discuss potential conflicts with existing utilities.*

Topic – Surface drainage concerns

Topic Summary: Several commenters had questions or concerns about water drainage during construction and flooding concerns near McLoud Road and I-40.

Response: *The proposed project includes drainage improvements within the existing and proposed right-of-way to facilitate the widening of I-40. The proposed drainage improvements will be designed to convey stormwater and stream flows at both existing and new culverts and bridges.*

Topic – Stevens Road bridge

Topic Summary: Multiple commenters are against the removal of the Stevens Road bridge because of their frequent usage, including the need to move farming equipment.

Response: *The Stevens Road bridge and the Arena Road bridge were selected to be removed based on traffic studies of the proposed project area and the low traffic amounts at these locations. 45th Street parallels I-40 on the south side and functions well to connect local traffic from SH-102 North to SH-102 South as a local reliever route.*

Topic – Paving Material

Topic Summary: Multiple commenters voiced their preference for a certain paving material, some wanting concrete and some wanting asphalt.

Response: *The proposed project proposes to use asphalt. Although concrete roads are more durable than asphalt roads, concrete roads are more expensive to install and maintain. Asphalt roads are easier to maintain during inclement winter weather and provides better safety of the vehicle against snow and skidding.*

Topic – Environmental

Topic Summary: One commenter opposes the removal of beautiful and natural native habitats/woodlands.

Response: *ODOT is committed to minimizing environmental impacts. Steps were taken in the environmental review and preliminary design process to minimize or avoid protected natural resources and tree removal during this project.*

Topic – Wayfinding Signage

Topic Summary: The City of Shawnee would like signage to Twin Lakes Recreation Area.

Response: *ODOT has guidelines with regard to wayfinding signage, and restrictions, particularly on this type of signage on the interstate. ODOT Division 3 will consider this and would be happy to discuss this topic in more detail as the project progresses to see where we can accommodate your request in the ways that are permissible under the guidelines.*

Topic – Concern unrelated to the proposed project

Topic Summary: Commenters had questions on many topics that are unrelated to the proposed project. Topics unrelated to the proposed project mostly pertained to the portion of I-40 near the Harrah-Newalla Road exit, which is west of the project limits. Other topics involved various traffic control measures at county road intersections in the general vicinity.

Response: *Thank you for participating in our public involvement process. Although this concern is not within the proposed project area, we have documented your concern and will take it under consideration.*

Topic – Town Resolution of Disapproval

Topic Summary: The Mayor and Board of Trustees of the Town of Bethel Acres have officially made it known its opposition to any expansion of federal, state, or county highways within the Town limits, to include new construction of highways and interchanges, and/or widening or resizing of existing highways. This does not include necessary maintenance of existing highways and roads. The Town would further oppose the construction of any turnpikes within the town.

Response: *ODOT appreciates the concerns and objections of the Town of Bethel Acres. Interstate 40 is essential for the delivery of goods and services, not only for the State of Oklahoma, but for the nation. The current four lane interstate is insufficient to handle the current traffic volumes in and out of the metropolitan areas without significant congestion, which also increases the potential for traffic accidents. The traffic volumes are projected to continue to increase as was described in the public meeting materials. These safety and capacity realities are what necessitate the widening of the interstate to add two additional lanes. With these improvements, ODOT also must look at the modification of the interchanges to accommodate the new lane configurations while improving functionality and safety. The interchange of I-40 and SH-102 heading south to Bethel Acres will not be altered with this project, since those improvements have already been constructed.*