

Virtual Public Open House Summary



Oklahoma Department of Transportation

**SH-51 (6th Avenue) Roadway Improvement Project in
Stillwater**

Payne County, JP 31012(04)

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Executive Summary

This document summarizes the virtual public open house that was conducted for the SH-51 (6th Avenue) Roadway Improvement Project in Stillwater, Payne Co., Oklahoma. The project is an effort to improve the operation and safety of the SH-51 corridor. The purpose of the virtual public open house was to present information about the project background, outline existing conditions and improvement opportunities, highlight project constraints, present construction phasing options, outline next steps, and offer the public an opportunity to provide input.

The virtual public open house was held on-line between October 5 and 19, 2021. Twenty-four (24) members of the public signed in on the website; however, signing-in was not required. According to the website analytics, 732 unique visitors viewed the website over the 15-day period. After the homepage, the project presentation page was the most frequently viewed, followed by the interactive project map, the conceptual plans, then the interactive survey. In total, forty-eight (48) written comments/questions were received during the virtual public open house, including twenty-five (25) comments submitted via the website comment feature, twelve (12) comments submitted as part of the interactive survey, nine (9) mailed comments and two (2) emailed comments.

Solicitation letters including notification of the virtual open house were mailed to the appropriate local, state and federal resource agencies on October 5, 2021. One agency comment was received and included the following:

- The Oklahoma Water Resources Board indicated that their permitting staff finds no issues. Their office noted that if water is used, that is not already under a long term permit, a 90-day permit would be required. The materials were also forwarded to the Floodplain Division.

The majority of the comments were in support of or neutral toward the project. The majority of commenter concerns were about Bicycle Accommodations, Pedestrian Accommodations and Safety. Comments are tabulated in **Table E1**. Note that the number of comments in the table is greater than forty-eight (48) because several people submitted comments with more than one concern/issue.

Table E1: Major Issues of Concern

Issue	# of Comments
In Favor of/Neutral toward Proposed Project	21
Purpose of the Proposed Project	4
Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations	24
Safety	12
Drainage	8
Aesthetic Improvements	6
Speed Limits & Noise	7
Business Concerns	4
Intersections & Access	6
Utility Considerations	2
Property/ROW Concerns	7
Construction Concerns	3
Neighborhood Concerns	3
Traffic Signals	3
Meeting Format	2
Other Area Improvements	2
Other Comments	3

Responses to Comments

In Favor of/Neutral toward Proposed Project:

Thank you for your comments.

Purpose of the Proposed Project:

The purpose of this project is to provide improvements that address several vital needs within the corridor. The pavement is in poor condition, roadway drainage is poor, there is inadequate capacity for current and future traffic demand in addition to operational issues at intersections, safety concerns for vehicles turning into and out of numerous driveways and inadequate, inconsistent, and non-ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant pedestrian facilities.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations:

There are numerous deficiencies and inefficiencies in how pedestrians and handicap individuals travel within the corridor. There are multiple locations where sidewalks are discontinuous and end abruptly or begin without connecting pedestrians to a designated route. There are existing designated pedestrian crossings for travelers wanting to cross north and south of 6th Avenue. The City and ODOT standards for sidewalks and pedestrian crossings that will be utilized on this project are based on the Federal Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines. The safety of motorists and pedestrians is a driving force behind the need for this project.

Due to the high traffic and truck traffic, protected on street bicycle lanes are not recommended. The wider travel lanes are necessary for large trucks and is recommended by the American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and ODOT's Roadway Design Manual based on traffic conditions.

A multi-modal study was commissioned by the City of Stillwater, to consider multi-modal improvement opportunities in an expanded 6th Avenue Corridor. The study is focused on identifying opportunities to better accommodate pedestrian and bicycle trips, on-street bike lanes (avoiding the 6th Ave corridor), sidewalk improvements, ADA compliant curb ramps, and connections with other modes of traffic. The results of this effort that specifically apply to the 6th Avenue Corridor will be incorporated into the design improvements proposed for this project.

There is a current ADA sidewalk project east of Stillwater, which is scheduled for construction in 2025 (JP35685(04)). The project limits extend from the intersection of SH-51 and US-177 east to Highland Park Elementary School (Drury Street) on SH-51.

Safety:

Opportunities to increase spacing between driveways and intersections, restrictions on turning movements and improvements to site distance are also be evaluated to reduce crashes and improve travel time.

Drainage:

The slope of the roadway will be addressed as part of this project. Problem locations within the corridor have been identified and include 6th Avenue in proximity to Duncan. The intent of the new design is to address drainage throughout the corridor as appropriate.

Aesthetic Improvements:

Opportunities for aesthetic improvements are being evaluated and coordinated with the City of Stillwater.

Speed Limits & Noise:

Existing posted speed limits will remain 30 and 40 mph within the corridor with special limits within the school zone. Since only a center turn lane is being added, and not additional travel lanes, significant changes in noise are not anticipated.

Business Concerns:

SH-51 will remain open during construction and access to businesses will be maintained. We are looking at all reasonable efforts to mitigate impacts to properties.

Intersections & Access:

The intent of this project is to provide the center turn lane (with specific intersections having left turn lanes) throughout the limits of the project. This approach was selected to mitigate the numerous turning movements in the corridor. ODOT and the City are in the process of performing an access management evaluation which identifies restrictions aimed at improving operations and/or the potential for safety. Some driveways are being reviewed to determine if right turn only movements are appropriate and whether potentially restricting the left turn movement onto 6th Avenue at some driveways may be beneficial.

Utility Considerations:

Options regarding utility relocations are currently being evaluated and the final location of the utilities is not yet determined.

Only the storm sewer trunk line will be in the center of the roadway, this will allow for more utilities to be buried in this corridor. If the trunk line is moved to the outside lane, a travel lane would have to be closed to make repairs. Placing it in the center of the road, allows the two-way-left turn lane to be closed while keeping through driving lanes open.

The contractor will be required to provide notice prior to any temporary water shut-offs. All efforts will be made to limit disturbances to service; however, with any construction projects there are unforeseen utility conflicts that can impact residents. There will be a construction management team on site to aid in resolution of any unforeseen utility disturbances.

Property/ROW Concerns:

Until right-of-way plans have been developed and finalized, details about property impacts will not be fully known. Once right-of-way plans are finalized, if additional right-of-way will be acquired from your property, ODOT right-of-way agents will meet with you to discuss potential impacts. The corridor will be widened using various offsets from the center of the existing roadway and by using retaining walls in select locations, to limit the footprint and help limit the acquisition of new right-of-way. We are looking at all reasonable efforts to mitigate impacts to properties.

We have been working closely with OSU for improvements associated with Western Avenue.

Construction Concerns:

A preliminary analysis has been performed to look at potential construction phasing options. It's currently being proposed to split the corridor into eight separate work packages or projects that have the potential to be constructed separately or concurrently depending on various factors (time and cost of construction, length, available local detours, and impacts on significant event traffic, including game days). In general, the corridor has been split into separate work packages that should aid in accelerating the construction and restricting construction limits to shorten impacts to residents within the work zone.

Neighborhood Concerns:

The Westwood neighborhood is situated near the western end of the corridor in the northeast quadrant of S Western Rd and 6th Avenue. ODOT is coordinating with the City of Stillwater and they're an active participant in plan review. It is assumed that any inconsistencies with that overlay would be identified by the City.

Traffic Signals:

This project will, as part of the scope of work, provide a signal synchronization plan where signal timings will be determined for at least three time of day settings. It is the intent to improve the traffic flow and to reduce overall travel time through the corridor. The study did not challenge previous decisions or warrants for existing signals at Husband and Lewis. Current traffic volumes do not warrant additional traffic signals. Further, crash data in the corridor and specifically at the location of the Lowry Street intersection, was reviewed for recent years, and a pattern of crashes was not identified.

Meeting Format:

Thank you for your comment. ODOT appreciates public comments and feedback as part of our project development process. We have been seeing good response to our virtual meetings and making adjustments to format based on website analytics to improve the experience. We welcome any additional questions/comments you may have. Please reach out to Anjie King at 405.522.7610 to discuss your concerns. Feedback from the public helps the project team better understand concerns, priorities and preferences. The input provided by the public is reviewed and considered as part of the project development process.

Other Area Improvements (roadway and pedestrian):

Thank you for your comment. For programmed projects funded by ODOT in and around the Stillwater area, you can view the 8 Year Work Plan as well as all other Transportation Programs and their associated projects on ODOT's website. <https://oklahoma.gov/odot/programs-and-projects/transportation-programs.html>

There is currently an ADA sidewalk project east of Stillwater (JP35685(04) from the intersection of SH-51 and US-177 east to Highland Park Elementary School (Drury Street), which is scheduled for construction in 2025. There is also a project programmed for 2026 and 2027 on SH-51, 3.25 miles east of SH-18 and extending east 5.2 miles through the Town of Yale to the Creek County Line, pending funding.

ODOT in partnership with the City of Stillwater, has begun a Road Safety Audit of the 6th Avenue Corridor. A team of engineers and local stakeholders are examining the existing roadway and intersections for potential road safety issues and opportunities for improvements considering all road users. A second supporting effort is a multi-modal study commissioned by the City of Stillwater, which will consider multi-modal improvement opportunities in an expanded 6th Avenue Corridor. The study area is bounded by Hall of Fame on the north and 12th Avenue on the south and is focused on identifying opportunities to better accommodate pedestrian and bicycle trips, both east and west and north and south.

Additional information on the Road Safety Audit can be found here:

What a road safety audit is:

<https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rsa/>

The multi-modal study will be published in its entirety once it is completed. You can view the City of Stillwater's Multi-modal Transportation Policy here:

http://stillwater.org/files/master-plans/COS_MMTransPolicy_030716.pdf