

# APPENDIX C

## MINUTES

### Environmental Advisory Committee Long-Range Transportation Plan Development Monday, February 9, 2004 Commission Room, Transportation Building

#### I. Welcome and Introductions

Dawn Sullivan, Planning & Research Division Engineer, Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) started the meeting and introduced the sponsors. Self-introductions of attendees followed. An attendance list with organizations and email addresses is attached. Attendance: 29.

#### II. Introduction to the Long-Range Transportation Planning Process

##### A. The Metropolitan Area Long-Range Transportation Planning Process

Linda Koenig, Division Director, Transportation Planning & Data Services, Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG), provided an overview of the metropolitan area transportation planning process including a discussion on social, economic, and environmental considerations in this process. Ms. Koenig stated that ACOG appreciated the information sharing that was already occurring with regard to social, environmental, economic and transportation data; and encouraged further collaboration between ODOT and the MPOs.

Handout: "Attachment 5: Potential Social, Environmental, and Economic Impacts", excerpt from FY 2000 UPWP Report 101(5), *Evaluation of Social/Economic/Environmental Impacts of 2025 OCARTS Plan*. October 2000.

##### B. The Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan

Roger Saunders, Project Manager for the Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan in the Strategic Planning Branch, Planning & Research Division, ODOT, provided an overview of the statewide transportation planning process and elements of the Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan. The nature of environmental documentation in both previous Plans in 1995 and 2000 was discussed.

Handouts: "Basic Elements", Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan; "Idealized Sequence for ODOT Transportation Planning Process: RE: Highways"; Chapter 11, "The Environment of Oklahoma" from the *1995 Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan*.

### C. Federal Role and Perspective

Isaac Akem, Community Planner, Oklahoma Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), provided an overview of the FHWA role in the transportation planning process. FHWA assistance in planning for local and state partners was emphasized.

## III. Advisory Committee Functions

Dawn Sullivan lead an open forum discussion on the following topics.

### A. Environmental Considerations/Analyses in the Long-Range Planning Process

Discussion ensued on the availability of any methods/models/data to analyze social, economic, and environmental (SEE) impacts at the broad or “global” level of the metropolitan and statewide transportation planning process. Mr. Saunders pointed out that ODOT knew of no such method except for air quality modeling currently underway at the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ). Mr. Saunders subsequently explained that this model can replicate current air quality conditions and predict emissions for a specified area in the state (on the scale of kilometers) for specified future time periods (5, 10, 15, years etc.). Discussion ensued on the following:

- It was suggested a western vs. eastern or a regional approach to SEE issues might be useful with differing approaches and issues per region.
- Some SEE data is sensitive to publication like archaeological/historical sites and threatened/endangered species.
- Some SEE data is a reflection on where studies have been done more than a true reflection of the distribution of the resource; this is particularly true for cultural resources like archaeological/historical sites.
- Land use is important to understanding secondary and cumulative impacts of development; however, no method was discussed on how to analyze this.
- Use of Sensitive Habitat Areas (like karst areas) was discussed. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation is developing information on these areas but it is as yet not complete and some information may be sensitive to publication.
- Substate Planning Districts have economic plans available for helping with economic impacts.
- Use of the National Hazard Plan being developed by the Office of Emergency Management, Civil Defense, may provide some information on hazards (environmental and security) to be encountered in transportation planning. This Plan

is not yet fully developed.

- Information on industrial development is available from the Substate Planning Districts especially in the form of location of industrial parks. The need for transportation services to these parks may figure in transportation planning. The Oklahoma Department of Commerce also has a Capital Improvements Planning database that could be used.

- The Oklahoma Water Resources Board and the ODEQ are working on mapping the water quality of the State's waters and this information would, when completed, be useful for transportation planning.

Summary: other than the ODEQ air quality model, no available method to analyze statewide and metropolitan area SEE impacts was identified. There is much work and developing data on SEE resources for use in describing and providing an information base for updating the SEE sections of the statewide and metropolitan long-range transportation plans and use in subsequent steps in the transportation planning process. It was also noted that some ODOT and Metropolitan Planning Organization data may be useful for other agencies. Agencies requested that ODOT let them know of developments/models that other states may develop if ODOT learns of these.

B. Advisory Function: What policies/practices should Metropolitan Planning Organizations and ODOT consider?

- The Substate Planning Districts requested a more transparent transportation project decision-making process for ODOT projects. This discussion centered on the following:

- how is one project more important than others and who decides this?
- ODOT should consider the input of the Substate Planning Districts
- information from ODOT officials and local elected officials should be made available to Substate Planning Districts. Substate Planning District representatives noted that monthly presentation at their meetings would be useful for information giving and receiving.

- Demographics and the impact of an aging population should be considered.

- The evolution of local economies (growth, stability, or no-growth) should be considered.

- The traffic volumes and growth of traffic to off-highway system locations such as tourist sites and industrial sites should be considered. Local officials do not have funds to improve these facilities.

- The ODOT National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process should be documented so that local and metropolitan entities and state agencies could better understand the process and know what steps will occur on projects affecting them. Identification of players in the process and the coordination steps involved was emphasized.
- Land use control was noted as one way to avoid conflicts for transportation projects. It was noted, however, that land use control was very difficult in Oklahoma.
- A question was asked if there was any method to “weight” SEE data as to one aspect being more important than another. ODOT responded that all SEE data was important and the importance of SEE impacts/issues varied from project to project.

#### C. GIS Data

- Availability of sensitive areas/resources (see previous discussion) to GIS application may be limited.
- Availability of tribal lands was discussed as a transportation planning consideration but no method is currently known where or how to get this information. It was also noted that tribal land was continually being developed with no known method to map this information. Coordination with Bureau of Indian Affairs was suggested.
- Water quality standards data is available.
- The Statewide GIS Council may be one source for information and working with the Office of Secretary of the Environment would also be one avenue for developing GIS resources.
- Representatives from the Oklahoma Historical Society noted they are compiling an internet-accessible data base of over 50,000 cultural resource properties in the State. This data base, however, is not in a GIS format.

#### D. Other

The questions was asked if ODOT got the information it needed from this meeting. ODOT responded that the major question of availability of methods/models for SEE analyses at this level of transportation planning had been answered at the current time. However, this meeting and coordination with agencies should be an on-going effort as GIS data bases are developed and completed and methods/models for “global” type planning are developed.

#### **IV. Future Committee Actions**

##### **A. Future meetings.**

The possibility of future meetings was left open. Attendees suggested that they first examine the minutes of this meeting and they would comment on the need for future meetings.

##### **B. Follow-up actions:**

- Agencies were asked to provide available GIS and other data base information currently available. This included the following:

- Oklahoma Water Resources Board: Water quality data.
- Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation: available and publishable habitat sensitive area data.

- Agencies were asked to comment on the need for future meetings.

Compiled by: Roger Saunders, Strategic Planning Branch, Planning & Research Division, ODOT.

**ATTENDANCE LIST**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING: FEBRUARY 9, 2004  
COMMISSION ROOM  
TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, OKLAHOMA CITY**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS</b>
Melvina Heisch	State Historic Preservation Office	mheisch@ok-history.mus.ok.us
Charles Wallis	State Historic Preservation Office	cwallis@ok-history.mus.ok.us
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Terri Sparks	Oklahoma Water Resources Board	TGSPARKS@owrb.state.ok.us
Julie Sanders	Lawton Metropolitan Planning Organization	jgsanders@cityof.lawton.ok.us
Deborah G. Jones	Lawton Metropolitan Planning Organization	dgjones@cityof.lawton.ok.us

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<b>Zach Taylor</b>	<b>Association of Central Oklahoma Governments</b>	<b>ztaylor@acogok.org</b>
<b>Miles Tolbert</b>	<b>Secretary of the Environment</b>	<b>mtolbert@owrb.state.ok.us</b>
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<b>Stuart Chai</b>	<b>City of Oklahoma City, Public Works</b>	<b>stuart.chai@okc.gov</b>
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<b>Linda Koenig</b>	<b>Association of Central Oklahoma Governments</b>	<b>lkoenig@acogok.org</b>
<b>David Streb</b>	<b>Assistant Director - Preconstruction, ODOT</b>	<b>dstreb@odot.org</b>
<b>Dawn Sullivan</b>	<b>Planning &amp; Research Division Engineer, ODOT</b>	<b><a href="mailto:dsullivan@odot.org">dsullivan@odot.org</a></b>
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## Comments on Minutes

Your minutes looked good. I didn't see where any changes were needed. So far as future meetings go, I think that OKC would like to attend but doesn't foresee the need for another soon to discuss any issues brought up at this meeting.

Stuart Chai, P.E.  
Oklahoma City Public Works Department  
Traffic Management Division  
\* (405) 297-2003  
\* stuart.chai@okc.gov

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The minutes look fine to me based upon my recollection of the meeting. Under Section III.A. you had a question as to whether or not water quality GIS information was being developed by OSDH or ODEQ, and the answer is: ODEQ.

As for follow-up actions, there are two items noted in the minutes that might benefit from future meetings with the relevant state environmental agencies. First, if ODOT desires to build its GIS capability to better account for environmental and natural resource considerations within the long range planning process, then it might be wise to convene a meeting between ODOT and state environmental agency GIS professionals. Such a meeting would allow the agencies to identify the GIS information that is already available that might be of benefit to the transportation planning process. It would also allow the state environmental agencies to understand GIS needs from the transportation planning perspective and target GIS projects toward meeting some of those needs. The State GIS Council will be a critical tool in this exercise, as well.

Secondly, it was recommended at the February 9th meeting that the ODOT NEPA process be documented and that "players" be identified so that a well coordinated review process can be defined for transportation projects. We support this effort wholeheartedly and submit that a meeting with the relevant state environmental agencies might benefit ODOT in defining the process and players for its implementation of this Federally required review. Even though the process as defined by Federal regulation is fairly



prescriptive, there is still a good deal of discretion left to the States in determining how to accomplish the NEPA review. Once ODOT and the other agencies have developed a conceptual model for fulfilling the NEPA review on transportation projects, you may want to distribute it to the full Environmental Advisory Committee for review and input, as well. This might be justification enough for a future meeting of the Committee.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input on the state's long term transportation planning process. Oklahoma's environmental cabinet stands ready to assist and participate in the process in order to ensure that our mutual goals are met. Please feel free to contact me if you need further information or assistance, including help in coordinating meetings with the state environmental agencies.

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Mr Saunders,

I apologize for contacting you so late. The Sierra Club is a grassroots volunteer organization, so information doesn't always filter in a timely manner. One of our members received notice back in December of an advisory committee on social, economic and environmental considerations in the long-range transportation planning process. This notice came to my attention recently, after the initial meeting.

I currently serve as chairperson for the Conservation Committee of the local Sierra Club. It would seem appropriate for me to serve as the club's delegate to this committee if such a position is indeed still open.

Please contact me, whenever possible, to fill me in on the process and let me know what I can do to help. I appreciate the Department's effort in soliciting our input.

Sincerely,

James Martin  
Sierra Club, Cimarron Group  
Conservation Committee  
405-361-2373

Dear Mr. Martin:

Thank you for your interest in the Environmental Advisory Committee. Please find attached in a Wordperfect file, the preliminary minutes of the meeting of February 9, 2004. Please note these are preliminary and final minutes will be forthcoming shortly.

If you have any trouble opening the file, please let me know. If you have any questions concerning the notes or the process behind the Association of Central Oklahoma Government, Indian Nation Council of Governments, Lawton Metropolitan Planning Organization, Oklahoma Department of Transportation, and Federal Highway Administration processes for preparing long-range transportation plans, I will be glad to answer them or put you in touch with the correct person.

Roger Saunders  
Strategic Planning Branch  
Planning & Research Division  
Oklahoma Department of Transportation  
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Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
405-522-1410

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Mr. Saunders,

I received your letter addressed to the Tulsa District Corps of Engineers dated 22 December 2003, too late to attend the advisory committee meeting on 9 February 2004. Please address any future correspondence to me at the address below. Also, if its convenient, please send me any information you have from the meeting I missed. Thank you for help and I look forward to working with you.

Shane Charlson, PWS

Lead General Biologist

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Roger: Super minutes! You and Dawn did a great job orchestrating and facilitating the meeting. Appreciate being invited to participate.

Blaine

**"Blaine Smith"** <smit\_bl@ascog.org>

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Other comments related to incorrect email addresses and these have been corrected.