

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Public Participation Plan (PPP) is to outline methods for encouraging citizens, affected organizations and other interested parties to be involved in and comment on development of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) long-range *Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan for the State of Oklahoma* (Statewide Plan); the *Statewide Transportation Improvement Program* (STIP); and the ongoing transportation planning process. Methods for encouraging involvement include providing access to plans, programs and their supporting materials, and opportunities to comment as the plan and program develops. The implementation of public participation activities is designed to meet the requirements under federal regulation 23 CFR 450.210 and the provisions of the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users* (SAFETEA-LU) that was signed into law on August 10, 2005.

The objective of this planning process is to:

- Establish a cooperative, continuous and comprehensive framework for making transportation investment decisions throughout the State.
- Achieve a more balanced transportation system.
- Optimize the present system's operation.
- Recognize key linkages among transportation modes, economic development, land use and planned growth.

The *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act* (ISTEA) of 1991 placed added emphasis on the importance of public involvement throughout the transportation planning process. ISTEA's successor legislation, *The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* (TEA-21) went a step further by encouraging a more proactive citizen participation process that mandates public access to complete information, timely public notice and early and continuing public involvement opportunities in developing plans. As part of efforts to accommodate ISTEA, TEA-21 and the most recent federal transportation legislation, SAFETEA-LU, ODOT proposes to implement approaches and elements to encourage public participation in the planning process.

STATEWIDE INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

When ISTEA was signed into law in 1991, there were provisions in the law that required each state to prepare a long range statewide transportation plan, with a minimum 20-year forecast period, that

provides for the development and implementation of the multimodal transportation system for the State. The long range plan was to required to consider and include, as applicable, elements and connections between public transportation, non-motorized modes, rail, commercial motor vehicle, waterway and aviation facilities with an emphasis on early and continuous public involvement. These provisions were reemphsized and in some cases strengthened by successor legislation, TEA-21 signed into law in 1998, and the current transportation legislation passed by Congress, SAFETEA-LU, that was signed into law by the President of the United States in 2005.

The *Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan for the State of Oklahoma* is the document that serves as a blueprint for developing the state's transportation system. It embraces all surface transportation modes; pedestrian, bicycle, port, rail, highways, commercial freight facilities, transit and surface access to airports. It also provides a basis for defining the funding program that implements the plan and is required to be updated on a five-year cycle.

The first Statewide Plan was prepared in 1995 and provided a vision of the statewide transportation system through the year 2020. The plan was updated in 2000, *Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan for the State of Oklahoma 2000 to 2025*, and again in 2005, *Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan for the State of Oklahoma 2005 to 2030* to ensure that the Department complies with new Federal requirements and incorporate comments and concerns regarding the states transportation system. The Statewide Plan will be updated in 2010, *Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan for the State of Oklahoma 2010 to 2035*, to continue and build upon the efforts of previous plans to help improve the state's transportation system.

STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a financially constrained program (fiscally constrained by identified year), updated on an annual basis, which identifies priority and regionally significant transportation projects based upon extensive statewide planning. These projects are to be implemented during the next four years. The STIP is not a final schedule of projects but is a "best estimate" at the time of STIP development.

The purpose of the STIP is to serve as a short range planning tool that identifies future transportation needs and assures that federal funds are spent on projects consistent with approved long range plans. It is required by federal transportation law that projects be listed on the STIP in order to be eligible to receive federal funding. All proposed federally funded projects must be included in the STIP in order to receive authorization of funds by both the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GUIDELINES AND ELEMENTS

It has long been a challenge to engage the public in the planning process, providing the means for people to have direct and meaningful impact with regard to the decision making process. The

following guidelines have been developed with the purpose of helping facilitate the public participation process and reflecting federal requirements designed to meet these goals:

- Build awareness among the general public and decision makers utilizing innovative methods and combinations of different public involvement techniques.
- Establish opportunities for early and continuing public involvement and provide adequate notice.
- Provide the public with timely information and reasonable access to technical and policy information utilized in the development of plans and programs.
- Provide the public a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed plan or program by utilizing methods, aside from traditional public meetings, such as direct mailings and web-based outreach strategies.
- Ensure the process complies with the requirements to identify the needs of the traditionally under served—low income, minorities, the elderly and disabled.
- Include a formal process that shows consideration to comments from public participants and responds to public input received during the planning and program development process.
- Ensure periodic review of the process.

To insure that the public is made a full partner in the planning process, ODOT has developed a proactive Public Participation Plan that:

- Provides the public with complete information on a timely basis.
- Gives the public input in key decisions.
- Contains early and ongoing opportunities for public involvement.

Beginning May 15, 2007, ODOT is making the Public Participation Plan available for a 45 day review period. Public comment and input is requested. Once comments are received, ODOT will review them, finalize the plan and make it available to the public. Copies of the Public Participation Plan are available from:

Oklahoma Department of Transportation
Planning & Research Division
Planning & Program Coordination Branch - Attention Mr. Joe Khatib
200 NE 21st Street
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105-3204
Phone (405) 522-1410
Fax (405) 521-6917
E-Mail Address: jkhatib@odot.org

Comments regarding the public participation plan may also be mailed to this address, faxed to the listed number or sent via e-mail to the listed e-mail address.

The key elements of the public participation plan may include:

- Newsletter/Mailings
- Media Releases
- Visualization Presentations/Techniques
- Local Community Involvement Meetings
- Interactive Internet Site

Newsletter/Mailings

ODOT may use a periodic newsletter to distribute information on the Department's transportation planning process, specifically focusing on the next Statewide Plan update. Mailings may also be used to provide information on upcoming meetings regarding the planning process.

Utilizing databases developed by the public involvement team, a number of organizations will be contacted to ensure compilation of a comprehensive database that will be used for public outreach. Among the organizations to be contacted are:

- Statewide News Media
- Oklahoma Municipal League (Local officials)
- Tribal Governments
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Association of County Commissioners
- Transportation Trade Associations
- Environmental Agencies and Groups
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways, bicycle transportation facilities, and the disabled.

Media Releases

ODOT will prepare media releases, brochures, and/or other publications explaining aspects of the transportation planning process, specifically focusing on activities for the next update of the

Statewide Plan and the STIP. Media releases will be distributed to statewide media outlets, including minority newspapers, and to Native American tribal governments.

Visualization Presentations/Techniques

ODOT will use a variety of visualization presentations/techniques to aid in the dissemination of information to the public. Techniques may include static maps, Powerpoint presentations, GIS presentations, computer modeling, charts, tables and other techniques to help the public develop an understanding of the process and information being presented.

Local Community Involvement Meetings

ODOT will attempt to partner with local community groups and identified stakeholders to schedule local meetings. The first round of meetings will review the most recent Statewide Plan, *Moving Oklahoma to 2030 - The Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan 2005 -2030*, findings and policies and request input on progress to date, new directions or any comments the public wishes to be considered. The second round of meetings will provide feedback on the initial input as well as preliminary recommendation for the 2010-2035 Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan. In addition, ODOT will strive to hold public meetings at times and locations convenient to the general public, including citizens that are physically disabled who need wheelchair accessibility and/or a sign language interpreter.

Interactive Internet Site

ODOT's website, at www.okladot.state.ok.us will include all published materials and utilize visual information to support all materials related to the development of the 2010-2035 Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, and other public involvement efforts of the Statewide planning process. Examples of such information include data and maps on the Statewide Transportation system; Data on the most recent Statewide Plan (2005 -2030); Summaries of current public input; Other avenues for public comments; and findings and recommendations for the new updated Statewide Plan (2010- 2035). In addition, the text will either be hyperlinked or available to download through Adobe PDF format.

COORDINATION WITH STAKE HOLDERS

In response to the need to reach all transportation users and providers, as well as support social, economic, environmental and energy goals, ODOT has developed several mechanisms for coordinating the updated Statewide Plan and the STIP with a number of stakeholders. These mechanisms are described below.

Coordination with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's)

An MPO is the body responsible for comprehensive transportation planning in the urban areas having a central city with a population over 50,000. Oklahoma has three MPO's - one in Oklahoma

City, Tulsa and Lawton. ODOT coordinates extensively with these groups and ensures that all aspects of their planning and programming initiatives are consistent with the updated Statewide Plan and STIP.

Oklahoma City Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Oklahoma City area is the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG), whose study area for the Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS) includes:

- The southwest portion of Logan County and the City of Guthrie.
- All of Oklahoma County, including Oklahoma City and its suburbs.
- The northern Portion of Cleveland County including Norman, Moore, Purcell and Noble.
- The northwest portion of Grady County Including Tuttle.
- The northeast portion of McClain County including Newcastle, Blanchard and Goldsby.
- The eastern portion of Canadian County including Mustang, Yukon and Piedmont.

Tulsa Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Tulsa area is the Indian Nation Council of Governments (INCOG), whose study area includes :

- All of Tulsa County, including the City of Tulsa and its suburbs.
- The eastern portion of Creek County, including Sapulpa and Keifer.
- The southeastern portion of Osage County, including Skiatook and SandSprings
- The southwestern portion of Rogers County including Catoosa, Claremore and Verdigris.
- The northeastern portion of Wagoner County, including Cowesta

Lawton Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Lawton area is the Lawton Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (LMAPC) whose study area includes:

- The City of Lawton
- Portions of Comanche County

Coordination with Federal Agencies

ODOT will coordinate the development and update of the Statewide Plan with a number of federal agencies through direct solicitation requests and requests for involvement in meetings. These federal agencies include:

- U. S. Military Installations: These vary in size in the State of Oklahoma from Tinker Air Force Base, located in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area to the McAlester Army Depot, located in southeastern Oklahoma. The base commanders or their representatives will be contacted to inform them of scheduled public involvement activities and seek their participation.
- Environmental Resource Agencies such as the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management and the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Transportation Agencies such as the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Aviation Administration.
- National Parks: The National Park Service will be contacted in regard to issues pertaining to land use, recreation areas and scenic sites.
- United States Army Corps of Engineers: The Corps will be contacted for input with regard to water resource planning.

Coordination with State Agencies

ODOT will coordinate the development and update of Statewide Plan with a number of state agencies through direct solicitation requests and requests for involvement in meetings. These agencies include:

- Oklahoma Department of Commerce
- Oklahoma Department of Agriculture
- Oklahoma Department of Human Services
- Oklahoma Water Resources Board
- Oklahoma Department of Tourism
- Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
- Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
- Oklahoma State Historical Society

Oklahoma Association of Regional Councils

The State of Oklahoma has 11 substate districts serving as regional planning agencies. These districts provide coordination with rural areas. Coordination efforts for the Statewide Plan will be conducted through direct solicitation requests and requests for involvement in meetings.

Local Coordination

ODOT will coordinate the development and update of Statewide Plan with a number of local agencies and entities through direct solicitation requests and requests for involvement in meetings. These various local entities include:

- Elected Officials: Both City and County officials will be notified of public involvement activities in their area. Their assistance will be sought in publicizing the activities, providing input and encouraging community input.
- Economic Development Organizations: Economic development is handled at the local level by a variety of agencies. In some instances, it is the city that handles this function, while in other cases the responsibility falls to the Chamber of Commerce or other identified agency. ODOT will make every effort to coordinate with local economic development programs for updating the Statewide Plan.
- Transit Operators: There are four transit systems operating in Oklahoma classified as urban transit operations. These operators are the Central Oklahoma Transit and Parking Authority (COTPA), which encompasses the Oklahoma City area; Cleveland Area Rapid Transit , which encompasses the Norman area; Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority(MTTA), which encompasses the Tulsa area; and the Lawton Area Transit System (LATS) which encompasses the Lawton area. There are currently 19 rural transit systems in operation across the State of Oklahoma as of FY 2006.
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities will be contacted and encouraged to participate during the update of the Statewide Plan.
- Representatives of the disabled will be contacted and encouraged to participate during the update of the Statewide Plan.

SUMMARY

With the updated public participation plan, the opportunity exists for the public to shape long-range transportation plans that will improve mobility, the quality of life and the environment. All citizens are encouraged to review the draft Public Participation Plan and provide ODOT with comments and attend the myriad of activities that will occur within the near future to help move the future of transportation in Oklahoma forward.