

1.0 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) is charged with planning, constructing, and maintaining Oklahoma's surface transportation infrastructure, including the interstate system, the U.S. highway system, and the Oklahoma highway system. ODOT also manages state-owned freight railroads, and administers other multimodal programs, including passenger rail, rural public transit, and the waterways program.

Oklahoma is located in the South Central plains of the United States and is characterized by a diverse and growing demographic and economic base. Major industries in Oklahoma include oil and gas, agriculture, aerospace, and manufacturing. The state's population in 2016 was 3.9 million and is projected to exceed 4.2 million in 2025. The population growth is expected to be strong in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, the state's two large metropolitan areas. Low to moderate growth is forecast in the remainder of the state.¹ Employment growth is forecast in much of the state. Freight miles of travel are expected to fall in line with U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) projections and grow at a rate of slightly over 1 percent per year.²

1.2 PURPOSE

ODOT is developing this Oklahoma Freight Transportation Plan (OFTP or Plan) in order to provide a safe, reliable, and productive freight transportation system that will support the growing economy and population in the state. It will accomplish the following outcomes:

- Increase attention and focus on freight needs and opportunities.
- Improve coordination of freight planning across multiple modes.
- Provide guidance for other state and regional/metropolitan freight planning efforts.
- Obtain input from the public and private stakeholders regarding state freight planning.

This Plan was developed in a manner consistent with the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and implementing guidance issued by U.S. DOT. The FAST Act establishes a new funding category dedicated to freight—the National Highway Freight Program (NHFP)—and requires that states identify the use of NHFP funds within a state freight plan, which includes certain specified elements, and that is approved by U.S. DOT by December 4, 2017.

A statewide freight plan is required to address the following components (summarized from the FAST Act):

- Freight trends, needs, and issues
- Freight policies, strategies, and performance measures to guide investment
- When applicable, a list of critical rural and urban highway corridors; critical multimodal rural facilities and corridors
- Improved ability to meet national freight goals
- Intelligent transportation systems and other technologies and strategies to improve freight safety and efficiency
- Improvements that are required to reduce deterioration on heavy-vehicle routes

- Inventory of, and strategies for, facilities with freight mobility issues (e.g., freight bottlenecks)
- Strategies for congestion or delay caused by freight
- Freight investment element with priority projects
- Consultation with a Freight Advisory Committee

1.3 VISION AND GOALS

1.3.1 Guiding Freight Vision Statement

This OFTP is part of a broad policy context. ODOT has a set of established transportation goals, policies, and strategies—formulated in the state’s long-range transportation plan (LRTP) and in other documents—which this OFTP supports. Additionally, this OFTP must conform to and demonstrate the achievement of national freight goals as set forth in federal legislation. To accomplish both missions—and as an expression of purpose for the management of the freight system in the state—this OFTP embraces the following Freight Vision Statement for Oklahoma:

Oklahoma will continue to provide for the safe, reliable and productive performance of our multimodal freight system as a mainstay of our economy and an essential supplier of goods to our people.

This Freight Vision Statement recognizes that Oklahoma’s freight transportation system is multimodal in nature, and is important for supporting the state’s economy and supplying the essential needs of its residents, workers, and visitors.

1.3.2 Freight Plan Context

This OFTP exists in a broad planning context. In addition to the national freight plans and goals, this OFTP was guided by the Oklahoma LRTP. It was also informed by the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, which incorporates metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs, ODOT’s 8 Year Construction Work Plan, and numerous regional and metropolitan transportation plans from around the state. Finally, this OFTP was developed in coordination with the Oklahoma State Rail Plan: 2018–2021, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

1.3.3 ODOT Responsibilities and Freight Partners

As mentioned earlier, ODOT is responsible for Oklahoma’s surface transportation infrastructure, including the interstate system, the U.S. highway system, and the Oklahoma highway system. The network that encompasses these three highway groups is sometimes referred to as the State Highway System, and this network is the beginning framework for developing this OFTP. As this Plan proceeds, certain highways will be highlighted for their importance to freight transportation. In the freight arena, ODOT also oversees state-owned freight railroads and administers the waterways program. In relation to freight, ODOT works closely with railroad and port owners and operators to support intermodal connectivity and mobility for goods movement.

ODOT is an active partner in additional transportation functions that involve various federal and state agencies, local jurisdictions, and private businesses. Numerous public- and private-sector organizations must fulfill their roles and cooperate with each other to address the state’s transportation needs.

Federal and state agencies that are critical to supporting freight transportation efforts in Oklahoma include the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Railroad Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority. For freight transportation planning purposes, other critical agencies and organizations include, but are not limited to, airports, metropolitan planning organizations (MPO), Native American tribal entities, port authorities, railroad companies, and private-sector freight transportation businesses.

1.3.4 Oklahoma Freight Goals

NATIONAL FREIGHT GOALS

National goals for freight are enumerated in the FAST Act and are summarized in **Table 1**. The Oklahoma freight goals are consistent with the national goals, as discussed next.

Table 1. National Freight Goals

-
1. Policies, operational improvements and investments for economic competitiveness; congestion and bottleneck reduction; reduced costs and improved year-round reliability; and productivity gain, especially by high-value job generators
 2. Safety, security, efficiency, and resilience – urban and rural
 3. Network state of good repair
 4. Economic efficiency and productivity of networks
 5. Improve short- and long-distance freight movement – across rural, rural-urban, and port/airport/gateway connections
 6. Flexibility for multistate corridor planning and organization
 7. Reduce environmental impacts
 8. Avoid burdens to state and local governments
-

Source: WSP adapted from <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/legislation.cfm>



Truckers regard highways as their factories and trucks as their work tools. We need highways to be improved so that the channels of commerce can work effectively.

—Oklahoma Trucking Association member

CONSISTENCY WITH STATE AND NATIONAL FREIGHT GOALS

Table 2 lists Oklahoma’s freight goals in the priority order determined by the Oklahoma Freight Advisory Committee (FAC). The table shows how freight goals correspond to an established LRTP goal area and to established national freight goals listed in Table 1.

Table 2. Oklahoma’s Freight Goals and Correspondence to Long-Range Transportation Plan Goals and National Freight Goals

LRTP Goal Area	OFTP Freight Goals	National Freight Goal #
Safe and Secure Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the safety and efficiency of freight movement and its interaction with other vehicles. ▪ Ensure the ability of urban and rural highways to safely accommodate growth in freight traffic. 	2
Infrastructure Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet freight transportation needs by maintaining the Oklahoma State Highway System in a state of good repair. ▪ Support the preservation of Oklahoma multimodal freight networks through appropriate policies and initiatives. 	3, 5
Mobility: Choice, Connectivity and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure the competitive performance of the Oklahoma freight system. ▪ Foster a diverse portfolio of modal choices for Oklahoma’s freight shippers and receivers in urban and rural areas. ▪ Support end-to-end operations of industry supply chains in Oklahoma markets for Oklahoma’s industries. 	1, 4
Economic Vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote competitive access to domestic and international markets for Oklahoma’s industries. ▪ Direct freight-related transportation investments to support the state’s economy. 	1, 4
Environmental Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the growth of Oklahoma clean energy by promoting clean fuel use by freight providers. ▪ Avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse environmental impacts related to freight transportation. 	7
Efficient Intermodal System Management and Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capitalize on federal funding and finance programs to aid investment in the freight transportation system. ▪ Coordinate freight corridor development programs with neighboring states. ▪ Safeguard industry supply chains by improving resiliency of the freight transportation system to withstand disruptions. 	2, 6, 8

Source: Oklahoma Freight Advisory Committee

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THIS PLAN

This Plan's base year is 2015. This means that much of the research and trend review looks back to the year 2015 as a consistent reference point. This Plan looks forward to a short-term (2018 through 2022) and long-term future (2023 through 2045) view. This Plan's products include a review of highway, freight rail, and waterway facilities, a bottleneck analysis, and a freight investment element identifying projects to be funded with NHFP funds. This OFTP is organized into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1 – Introduction**
 - Describes the purpose, requirements, and context for this Plan.
 - Outlines this Plan's vision and goals.
- **Chapter 2 – Oklahoma's Freight Story Today**
 - Reviews Oklahoma's current freight flows, major commodities and facilities by mode (highway, rail, marine and air).
 - Describes Oklahoma's multimodal freight assets.
 - Identifies conditions and challenges confronting Oklahoma's freight system today.
- **Chapter 3 – Outreach**
 - Describes stakeholder and public involvement in this Plan.
- **Chapter 4 – The Freight Future**
 - Outlines major economic, demographic, technology, and transportation trends affecting freight.
 - Reviews long-range freight forecasts.
 - Describes implications of transportation trends for the future of freight in Oklahoma.
- **Chapter 5 – Freight Bottlenecks and Mobility Issues**
 - Summarizes the results of analysis of truck bottlenecks, safety, maintenance and other issues affecting freight movement for all modes.
- **Chapter 6 – Moving Freight**
 - Presents proposed performance measures, improvement priorities, policies and strategies and projects.
 - Recommends projects for use of freight formula funds, 2018 through 2022.
 - Identifies freight-related projects expected to be underway, 2018 through 2022.
 - Recommends freight network designations.
- **Chapter 7 – Conclusion and Next Steps**
 - Outlines Oklahoma's commitment to incorporating freight into its decision-making process going forward.

A series of technical reports provides more details on the data analysis and results, and these reports will be available on ODOT's OFTP website <http://www.okstatefreightplan.com>.