

Virtual Public Open House Summary



Oklahoma Department of Transportation

I-35: Interchange at SH-74 (Grant Street) in Purcell

McClain County, JP 32802(04)

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Executive Summary

This document summarizes the virtual public open house that was conducted for the I-35: Interchange at SH-74 (Grant Street) project in Purcell. The preferred alternative, which was recommended following the open house and completion of the Alternatives Analysis, is also presented in this document. According to the analysis, which included the evaluation of several performance measures, Alternative 3 is the preferred alternative and will be advanced for further design and environmental study. The project is an effort to add southbound access on I-35 between mileposts 91 and 95. The purpose of the virtual public open house was to present the proposed improvements to the interchange and obtain information from the public to further assist in the identification of critical social, economic and environmental effect that may result from the project.

Due to concerns about the spread of COVID-19, ODOT held a virtual public open house as opposed to an in-person open house. The public open house was held on-line between January 27 and February 10, 2021. Twenty-five members of the public signed in on the website, however, signing-in was not required. According to the website analytics, 578 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, then the interactive survey, and project alternatives. In total, one hundred twenty-three (123) written comments/questions were received during the virtual public open house, including two (2) agency comments, forty-seven (47) comments submitted via the website comment feature, thirty-two (32) mailed comments, five (5) emailed comments, three (3) comments on the interactive map, two (2) comments collected by ODOT after returning a phone call from a property owner, and thirty-two (32) comments collected on an ODOT Facebook post regarding the project. Eighteen (18) people submitted comments as part of the MetroQuest survey.

Agency comments included the following:

- The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) determined that no adverse environmental impacts under ODEQ jurisdiction are anticipated.
- The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) indicated that project does not appear to pose a hazard to safe and efficient use of navigable airspace.

One hundred twenty people submitted comments on the project; one person submitted two comments. The majority of the comments were in support of the project, with Alternative 3 as the most popular alternative. Those in favor also frequently recommended Alternative 1 and retaining the existing ramp. Those who were not in favor of the proposed project recommended other areas along I-35 that would be better suited for the new ramp. The majority of commenter concerns were about neighborhood impacts, traffic, access for emergency services, cost, and access to the new hospital location. Comments are tabulated in **Table E1**. Note that the number of comments in the table is greater than 120 because several people submitted comments with more than one concern/issue.

Table E1: Major Issues of Concern

Issue	# of Comments
In Favor/Neutral toward Proposed Project	87
Alternative 1	24
Alternative 2	4
Alternative 3	44
Keep Existing Ramp	16
Not in Favor of Proposed Project	35
Add On-Ramp to Existing Exit 95	19
Move New On/Off Ramps Closer to Hospital	6
Current Configuration Works	6
Add Ramps to SH-39 Intersection	3
Put New On/Off Ramps Somewhere Else (unspecified)	1
Extend 230 th St. to Green Ave.	2
Neighborhood Concerns	18
EMS Response	17
Traffic Concerns	15
Safety	12
New Hospital Access	10
Cost	9
Miscellaneous Questions/Suggestions	6
Schedule Concerns	2
Add Service Roads	1
Remove Existing Ramp	1

Responses to Comments

In Favor/Neutral toward Proposed Project:

Thank you for your comments.

Not in Favor of Proposed Project (Keep or Improve Existing Green Avenue Interchange):

- Adding on-ramp to existing Exit 95 was addressed in the Feasibility Study and was found to be more economical to add the single entrance ramp at SH-74(Grant Street) as provided in Alternative 1.
- Moving the interchange closer to the existing interchange would not be feasible. The proposed interchange at SH-74 meets the minimum spacing for interchanges per the design policy of the American Association of State Highway Officials.
- It has been determined the existing interchange does not provide adequate access to southbound I-35, hence, one of the reasons for the project.

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- Adding ramps at SH-74 was determined to provide the best opportunity to respond to incidents on I-35 and address the lack of southbound entrance at the Green Avenue interchange.
- Extending 230th Street was determined to be unfeasible and did not respond to the need of the project.

Neighborhood Concerns:

Improvements are planned for SH-74(Grant Street) between Westbrook Addition and Green Avenue to increase capacity, provide better access, and enhance safety.

EMS Response:

Thank you for your comments.

Traffic Concerns:

Improvements are planned for SH-74(Grant Street) and other local streets within the project limits to address the future traffic demands the interchange will introduce. Specifically, to address the traffic increase from the new hospital location signage will be included on I-35 to direct the public to use existing exit 95.

Safety:

Thank you for your comment. See response for Neighborhood concerns.

New Hospital Access:

Thank you for your comment. The new location will be considered in future analysis.

Cost:

Thank you for your comment.

Miscellaneous Questions/Suggestions:

Thank you for your comment. Suggestions will be considered moving forward.

Schedule Concerns:

Construction phasing will be provided to minimize impacts and delays during construction.

Add Service Roads:

Service Roads create significant impact to adjacent properties to I-35. Mobility in the area suggests service roads are not needed. Level of service of the existing network functions adequately.

Remove Existing Ramp:

Thank you for your comment.

Introduction

This document summarizes the virtual public open house conducted for the I-35: Interchange at SH-74 (Grant Street) project in Purcell. The purpose of the virtual public open house was to present the proposed improvements to the interchange and obtain information from the public to further assist in the identification of critical social, economic, and environmental effect that may result from the project. This report also documents the preferred alternative, which was recommended following the open house and the Draft Alternatives Analysis, which was completed in July 2021.

Virtual Public Open House

Virtual Open House Notification

Notice of the virtual public open house was sent by USPS mail to elected officials (federal, state, and local), property owners, and utility owners in the study area. The mailing included a project pamphlet with information on how to access the virtual public meeting. The pamphlet also included brief information about the project, the purpose and need, and the proposed construction schedule and cost. A comment form and self-addressed stamped envelope were included. The pamphlet also included a map of the proposed alternatives and a letter from ODOT. Opportunity for Spanish translation was provided. No translation was requested. Pamphlets were mailed on January 27, 2021. The pamphlets were also delivered using the USPS Every Door Direct Mail service to 1,457 addresses covering the project study area and adjacent populations. A copy of the pamphlet, mailing lists, and direct mail information is included in **Appendix A**.

ODOT also advertised the meeting via social media. A Facebook post was published on January 30, 2021. A media release was also sent to all local media.

Meeting Information and Format

The virtual public open house was held online between January 27 and February 10, 2021. The website address was www.odot.org/I35Purcell. Twenty-five people signed in on the website. However, sign-in was not required. According to the website analytics, 578 unique users viewed the website over the 16-day period. After the home page, the presentation was the most frequently viewed page, followed by the alternatives exhibits and the interactive map. A copy of the summary analytics and list of the website sign-in are included in Appendix B. Prints of the website pages and the posted materials are included in Appendix C. The website included the following pages:

- Homepage with brief background about the project, the virtual open house, a telephone number contact, submission of written comments, and instructions for ADA accommodations.
- Sign-in and Handout – a form for signing in and a PDF copy of the notification pamphlet.
- Interactive Survey – a Metroquest survey was embedded into the website, and a link was provided directly to the survey website.
- Project Alternative – a brief description of Alternatives 1, 2 and 3.
- Project History – a discussion of the history of the project, including a feasibility study conducted by the City of Purcell and ODOT, which led to the identification of the three alternatives presented at the virtual open house.
- Meeting Presentation – a presentation describing the proposed project. A video with a voiceover and a PDF with the voiceover script were provided.

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- Interactive Map – an ArcGIS online map showing the alternatives. The interactive map included a comment feature.
- Right of Way Information – links to the ODOT Property Rights Brochure and ODOT Relocation Brochure.
- Frequently Asked Questions – a list of common questions about the project.
- Submit a Comment – online form to submit a comment as well as a PDF of the comment form to download and mail.

Agency Solicitation

Agency solicitation letters were mailed on January 27, 2021. These letters provided a short project description and included information about the virtual public open house and requested that recipients provide input by February 10, 2021. Enclosed with the letter was a copy of the project location map. The letter was sent to state and federal resource agencies and Indian Tribes. A copy of the agency solicitation letter and the mailing list is included in **Appendix D**.

Interactive Survey

The website included a link to an interactive online survey about the I-35: Interchange at SH-74 (Grant Street) project. Hosted by MetroQuest, this survey asked questions about people’s preferences and priorities for the interchange alternatives. The survey also gathered demographic information. Seventy-two (72) people participated in the online MetroQuest survey and there were 186 total visits. The number of responses to each question varied. Results are discussed below. Copies of the MetroQuest results are included in **Appendix E**.

Screen 1 – Welcome

This screen welcomed the participants to the survey and provided some overview information about the project. No data was collected on this screen. This screen had 186 views.

Screen 2 – Priority Ranking

This screen presented a list of eight (8) priorities for the I-35 interchange at SH-74. Participants were asked to rank their top five priorities. The priorities included:

- Accessibility
- Safety
- Incident Management
- Connectivity
- Environmental Impacts
- Right-of-Way
- Cost
- Mobility

All of the priorities listed above were ranked in a participant’s top five at least once. Safety was most frequently ranked (42 times), followed by incident management (38), accessibility (37), connectivity (32), mobility (31), right-of-way (19), cost (15), and environmental impacts (12). Accessibility was ranked as the top priority most frequently, ranked first by 35% of the participants that ranked this item, safety was ranked first by 33% of the participants that ranked this item. **Figure 1** shows how frequently and where each topic was ranked by the participants.

Figure 1: Results of Screen 2

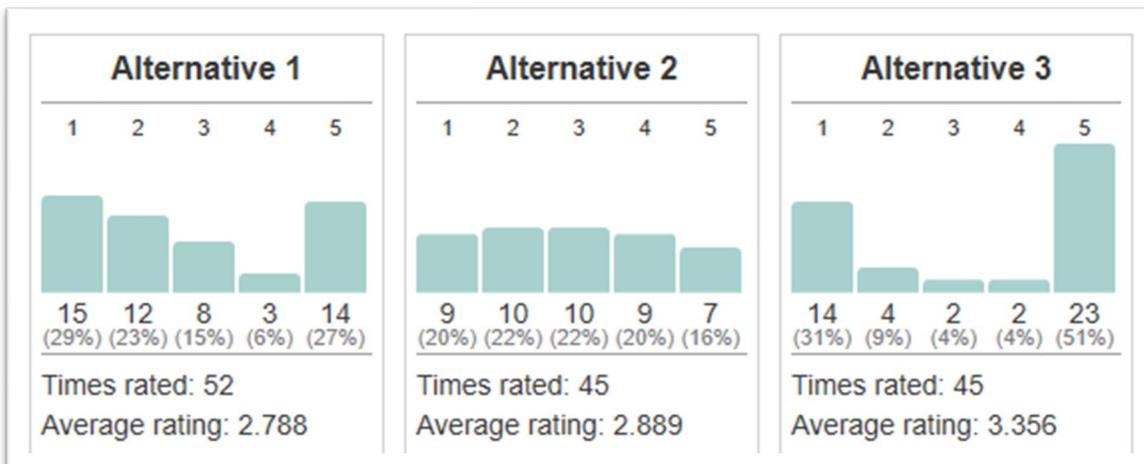


Screen 3 – Scenario Ranking

This screen presented the three alternatives proposed for the I-35 intersection at SH-74. Participants were given the opportunity to rate each alternative on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the worst option and 5 being the best option.

Alternative 3 had the highest average rating (3.356), followed by Alternative 2 (2.889), and Alternative 1 (2.788). **Figure 2** shows how each alternative was rated by participants.

Figure 2: Results of Screen 3



Screen 4 – Additional Questions

This screen presented the option to remove the existing northbound off-ramp from I-35 to North Green Avenue if Alternative 2 or 3 is chosen. The following are the questions asked and the responses:

- Do you regularly use the off-ramp to North Green Avenue?
 - Yes: 45
 - No: 10
- If Alternative 2 was chosen, would you prefer that the existing off-ramp to North Green Avenue was maintained or removed?
 - Maintained: 46
 - Removed: 6
- If Alternative 3 was chosen, would you prefer that the existing off-ramp to North Green Avenue was maintained or removed?
 - Maintained: 44
 - Removed: 8

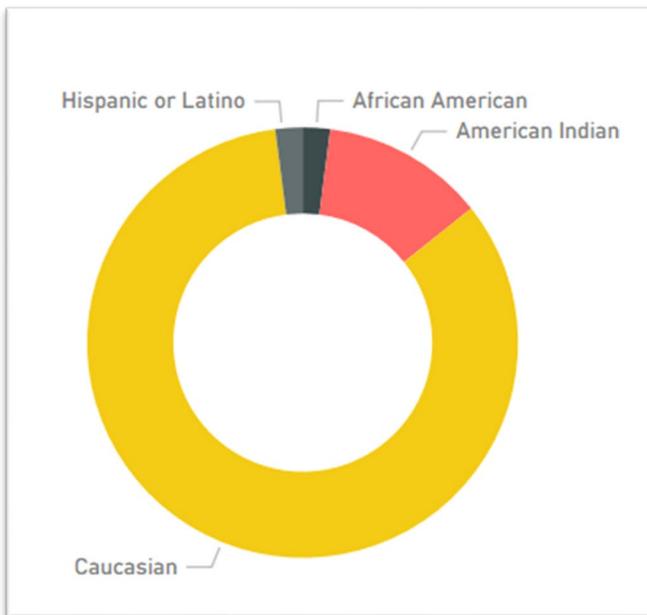
Screen 5 – Wrap Up

Screen 5 requested optional demographic and contact information.

Forty-nine (49) participants responded to this section, although not every participant responded to each question. Demographics of the participants are as follows:

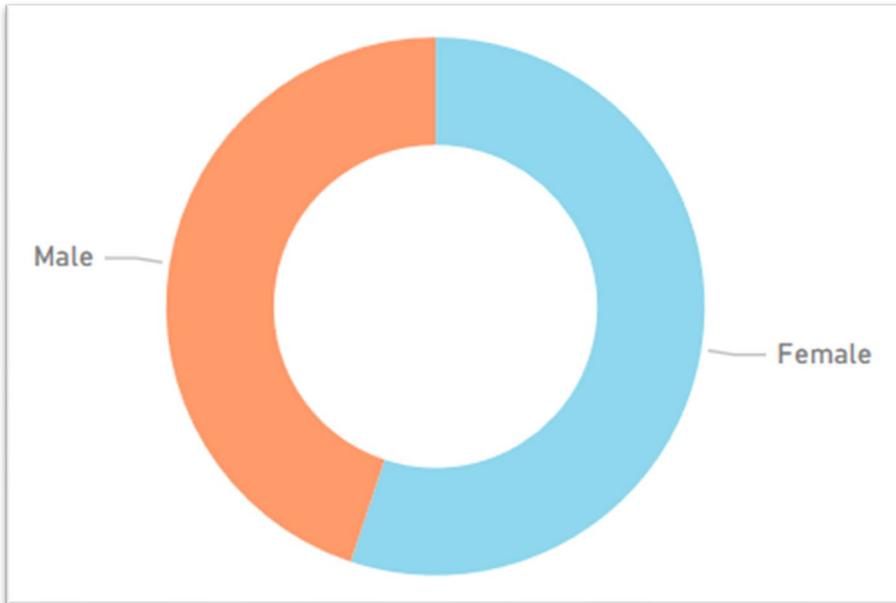
Ethnicity (49 respondents): The majority (84%) of respondents were Caucasian, followed by American Indian (12%), African American (2%), and Hispanic or Latino (2%), see **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Participant Ethnicity



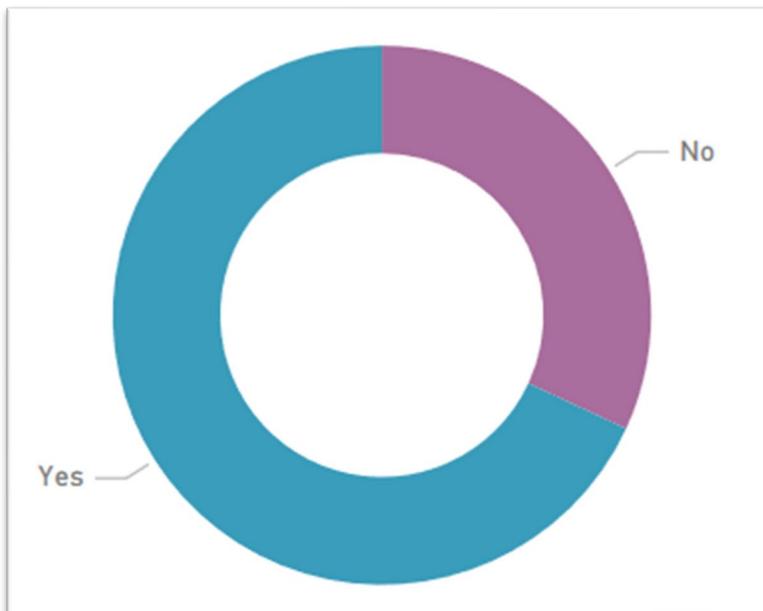
Gender (49 respondents): The majority of respondents identified as female (55%), with 45% identifying as male, see **Figure 4**.

Figure 4: Participant Gender



May We Contact You? (47 respondents): The majority of respondents agreed to contact from ODOT (68%), with 32% declining future contact from ODOT, see **Figure 5**. Additionally, 34 participants provided an email address.

Figure 5: Contact Preferences



Additional Comments (17 respondents): Seventeen (17) additional comments were provided. Comments were about the following topics:

- Safety
- Project importance
- Traffic
- New hospital location
- Neighborhood concerns
- Request for new options to be considered

Interactive Map

The website included a link to an interactive map that showed the proposed locations for Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. The interactive map included the ability to capture comments. Three comments were left on the interactive map. Copies of the interactive map comments are included in **Appendix F**.

Summary of Comments and Responses

In total, one hundred twenty-three (123) written comments/questions were received during the virtual public open house, including two (2) agency comments, forty-seven (47) comments submitted via the website comment feature, thirty-two (32) mailed comments, five (5) emailed comments, three (3) comments on the interactive map, two (2) comments collected by ODOT after returning a phone call from a property owner, and thirty-two (32) comments collected on an ODOT Facebook post regarding the project. Eighteen (18) people submitted comments as part of the MetroQuest survey. Copies of the written comments are included in **Appendix G**.

Agency Comments

The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) determined that no adverse environmental impacts under ODEQ jurisdiction are anticipated, however, ODEQ recommends that prior to beginning any construction activity disrupting more than one acre, an NOI must be submitted to obtain authorization under OKR10. In addition, if water and/or wastewater utilities will need to be relocated as part of the project, a construction permit from ODEQ's Water Quality Division will be required. Additionally, any burning associated with land clearing operations must be conducted using an Air Curtain Incinerator.

Response: ODOT will require the contractor to obtain the appropriate contracts from ODEQ.

The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) indicated that the project does not appear to pose a hazard to safe and efficient use of navigable air space. The OAC recommended that ODOT use the FAA's notice criteria tool to determine if Form 7460-1 needs to be filed with the FAA. The OAC also requested that ODOT inform them if a Form 7460-1 is required, as additional permits may be needed.

Response: ODOT will file Form 7460-1, if required.

Public Comments

One hundred twenty people submitted comments on the project; one person submitted two comments. The majority of the comments were in support of the project, with Alternative 3 as the most popular alternative. Those in favor also frequently recommended Alternative 1 and retaining the existing ramp. Those who were not in favor of the proposed project recommended other areas along I-35 that would

be better suited for the new ramp. The majority of commenter concerns were about neighborhood impacts, traffic, access for emergency services, cost, and access to the new hospital location. Comments are tabulated in **Table 1**. Note that the number of comments in the table is greater than 120 because several people submitted comments with more than one concern/issue.

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- It has been determined the existing interchange does not provide adequate access to southbound I-35, hence, one of the reasons for the project.
- Adding ramps at SH-74 was determined to provide the best opportunity to respond to incidents on I-35 and address the lack of southbound entrance at the Green Avenue interchange.
- Extending 230th Street was determined to be unfeasible and did not respond to the need of the project.

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Safety:

Thank you for your comment. See response for Neighborhood concerns.

New Hospital Access:

Thank you for your comment. The new location will be considered in future analysis.

Cost:

Thank you for your comment.

Miscellaneous Questions/Suggestions:

Thank you for your comment. Suggestions will be considered moving forward.

Schedule Concerns:

Construction phasing will be provided to minimize impacts and delays during construction.

Add Service Roads:

Service Roads create significant impact to adjacent properties to I-35. Mobility in the area suggests service roads are not needed. Level of service of the existing network functions adequately.

Remove Existing Ramp:

Thank you for your comment.

Preferred Alternative

According to the Alternatives Analysis, Alternative 3, which includes full interchange access at W. Grant Street (SH-74), is the preferred alternative. The analysis included evaluation of several performance measures including mobility, incident management, and cost benefit. The analysis showed that Alternative 3 provides the highest monetary benefit value in terms of delay reduction and secondary crash reduction savings, would provide the fastest emergency response time and improve overall mobility, accessibility and connectivity across the City network. Further, Alternative 3 satisfies the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Policy on Access to the Interstate Systems (May 22, 2017) requiring that “the proposed access.... Will provide for all traffic movements”. The other two alternatives did not satisfy this consideration and requirement. The majority of the comments received at the virtual public meeting were in support of the project with Alternative 3 as the most popular alternative. Details regarding the Alternatives Analysis are included Alternatives Analysis Report dated September 2021. Alternative 3 will be advanced for further design and environmental study.