



October 26, 2017

Public Meeting Summary And Responses to Comments

Oklahoma Department of Transportation

**I-35 Corridor Study, Memorial Drive to 2nd Street
City of Edmond, Oklahoma County**

February 6, 2018



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Executive Summary

This document summarizes the stakeholder and public meetings conducted for the portion of the I-35 corridor study between Memorial Road and 2nd Street in the City of Edmond, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma. The purpose of these meetings was to present information about the proposed frontage road concepts to the stakeholders and the public and obtain input.

A stakeholder meeting was held to discuss the scope of the I-35 corridor study and to specifically present proposed frontage road concepts for the portion of the study between Memorial Road and 2nd Street. The meeting was held on August 1, 2017 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Edmond Community Center Banquet Room, 28 E. Main Street in Edmond, OK. Twenty-four (24) people signed in for the meeting, including representatives from ODOT, City of Edmond, Poe & Associates, Garver, and project stakeholders. Stakeholder questions were primarily related to construction schedule and timelines.

The public meeting was held on October 26, 2017 at 6:00 PM at the Downtown Edmond Community Center Auditorium, 28 E. Main Street, Edmond, OK. Ninety attendees signed in for the meeting, including representatives from ODOT, City of Edmond, ODOT’s consultants Poe & Associates and Garver, the media, and the public. The meeting included a presentation on the study from Poe & Associates. Representatives from ODOT, Poe & Associates, and Garver were available for discussion before and after the presentation. The comment period was open until November 9, 2017 with a total of 19 written comments received, including three (3) from agencies and sixteen (16) from members of the public. Agency responses are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Agency Comment Summary

Agency	Comment
Bureau of Land Management	No BLM lands or Federal minerals present. No BLM administered Indian mineral interests. No objections.
Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department	City of Edmond has a trail planned along Spring Creek, crossing under I-35. This trail is receiving federal funding from the RTP (Recreational Trails Program). There are no LWCF parks in the corridor.
Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority	The project is an overreaction – focus on frontage road between 2 nd and 15 th Streets. 1-way frontage roads will hurt businesses. Concerned with unnecessary construction impacts. Recommend waiting until this is needed then install additional traffic control devices.

Public comments included a few primary issues. Some individuals do not support the one-way frontage road concept, citing concerns that this would increase travel times, involve traveling through more signals, and be inconvenient. Some also expressed concerns about emergency vehicles reaching area hospitals. Some supported the one-way frontage road concept, believing it to be the safest option and best for future development. Others did not think the frontage roads need improvement. Table 2 summarizes the comments received. Note that the total number of comments in the table is greater than the number of comment forms submitted. This is because several people made more than one comment on a single form.





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Table 2: Public Comment Summary

Comment	# of Comments
Do Not Support the 1-Way Frontage Roads	7
Support the 1-Way Frontage Roads	3
Support the Improved 2-Way Frontage Roads	3
Concerns about Existing Traffic	4
Concerns about Cost	3
Consider Bicycle/Pedestrians	2
Thank you For Looking at This	2



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1.0 Introduction

This document summarizes the public meeting conducted for the I-35 corridor study in Oklahoma County. The purpose of the public meeting was to present information about proposed frontage road concepts for I-35 between Memorial Road and 2nd Street, and obtain input.

2.0 Stakeholder Meeting

ODOT and the City of Edmond held a stakeholder meeting on August 1, 2017 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Edmond Community Center Banquet Room, 28 E. Main Street in Edmond, OK. Twenty-four (24) people signed in for the meeting, including representatives from ODOT, City of Edmond, Poe & Associates, Garver, and project stakeholders.

Poe & Associates gave a power point presentation outlining the following:

- Purpose and Need for the Project
- Existing Conditions
- Frontage Road Concepts & Comparisons
- Timeline

A handout and comment form were also provided. Following the presentation, the floor was opened to questions and comments from stakeholders. Questions were primarily related to construction duration and timeframe. In addition, the City of Edmond met separately with the Mercy and Integris Hospitals and Edmond emergency service personnel.

3.0 Agency Solicitation

Initial agency solicitation letters were mailed on October 6, 2017. These letters provided the purpose of the study with a brief description of the frontage road concepts under consideration and an enclosed project location map. The letter included an invitation to the public meeting. This letter was sent to federal and state resource agencies.

4.0 Public Meeting

4.1 Meeting Notification

Notice of the public meeting was sent by letter to the Governor's office, elected officials (federal and state), Oklahoma County Commissioners, the City of Edmond, local school districts, emergency service providers, and medical facilities in the study area. In addition, all of the stakeholders (including businesses, churches, and hospitals) invited to or in attendance at the Stakeholder Meeting were also notified. The letter provided a brief description of the purpose and need for the study, and an invitation to the public meeting. The letter was accompanied by a project location map. Letters were mailed on October 6, 2017. Copies of the letter and mailing list are included in **Appendix C**. Notice of the public meeting was also sent by letter to all property owners and utility owners in the study area according to Oklahoma County Assessor information. Letters were mailed on October 6, 2017. In addition to the letters, printed flyers announcing the meeting were delivered to all homes and businesses in the vicinity of the corridor on October 12, 2017.



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4.2 Meeting Information and Format

The public meeting was held on October 26, 2017 at 6:00 PM at the Downtown Edmond Community Center, 28 E. Main Street in Edmond, OK. Ninety (90) people signed in for the meeting, including representatives from ODOT, Poe & Associates, Garver, City of Edmond, several business owners, and members of the public.

Mr. David Streb, Poe & Associates, opened the meeting with some general remarks and introductions. Mr. Streb then gave a presentation about the study, followed by an open question and answer period. ODOT, Poe & Associates, and Garver staff were then available for one-on-one and small group discussions. Aerial scroll maps showing the study area were available for public viewing. A handout with study information including the frontage road concepts discussed was provided to attendees. English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese versions of the handout were available.

The presentation covered:

- Purpose of the Meeting
- Purpose and Need for the Study
- General Project Information & Project Area Constraints
- Frontage Road Concepts
- Pros and Cons of Concepts
- Next Steps

4.3 Summary of Comments

Three (3) written comments from agencies and sixteen (16) written comments from the public were received both before and after the public meeting.

4.3.1 Agency Comments

Table 3 summarizes the comments received from agencies.

Table 3: Agency Comment Summary

Agency	Comment
Bureau of Land Management	No BLM lands or Federal minerals present. No BLM administered Indian mineral interests. No objections.
Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department	City of Edmond has a trail planned along Spring Creek, crossing under I-35. This trail is receiving federal funding from the RTP (Recreational Trails Program). There are no LWCF parks in the corridor.
Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority	The project is an overreaction – focus on frontage road between 2 nd and 15 th Streets. 1-way frontage roads will hurt businesses. Concerned with unnecessary construction impacts. Recommend waiting until this is needed then install additional traffic control devices.





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4.3.2 Public Comments

Public comments included a few primary issues. Some individuals expressed a concern with the one-way frontage road concept, fearing this would increase travel times, involve traveling through more signals, and be inconvenient. Some also expressed concerns about emergency vehicles reaching area hospitals. Some supported the one-way frontage road concept, believing it to be the safest option and best for future development. Others did not think the frontage roads need improvement. Table 4 summarizes the comments received. Note that the total number of comments in the table is greater than the number of comment forms submitted. This is because several people made more than one comment on a single form.

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Table 4: Public Comment Matrix

Comment	# of Comments
Do Not Convert Frontage Roads to One-Way	7
Frontage roads don't need improvement/wait until we need it	3
This will be inconvenient	2
Concern about having to go through more stoplights	1
Concern about access to hospitals	1
Want easy access to future Spring Creek Trail	1
Concern about impacts to businesses	1
The concept is outdated	1
Support Improving the Two-Way Frontage Roads	4
Consider widening frontage roads	2
Lengthen all exit ramps, make them free flow and make them 2-lane	1
Extend frontage roads to Waterloo eventually	1
Add turn lanes at intersections	1
Support the One-Way Frontage Roads	3
We need the protected turnarounds	2
Safest option	1
Best for future development	1
Support 1-way frontage roads to Covell or Waterloo	1
Make sure frontage road traffic runs the same direction as I-35	1
Traffic is an Issue	4
Heavy traffic on I-35 from I-44 to Covell/Waterloo is an issue	1
Lane drop at 2 nd Street, southbound 15 th Street off-ramp causes merging problems	1
Trucks turning at 15 th Street/West Frontage Road cause back ups	1
People currently avoid 15 th Street and take 33 rd Instead due to traffic	1
Recommend traffic light at Frontage Rd/shopping entrance south of Buffalo Wild Wings (under Concept 2)	1
Need to study if 2 lanes on west frontage road is sufficient from 2 nd to 15 th	1
Intersection of 2 nd and Meline backs up – need a signal and turn bay	1
Most pressing issue is 15 th St. NB off ramp – change the stop condition to the frontage road – there is less traffic	1



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Comment	# of Comments
Thanks for the meeting/meeting was informative/ thank you for looking at this	2
How Much Will the Project/Study Cost?	3
With the budget is there enough money for this?	2
How much does ODOT spend on studies?	1
Consider bicycle lanes/sidewalks on frontage roads	2
Other	11
Widen I-35 to five lanes to Covell	1
Consider widening I-35 and adding an HOV lane	1
Rebuild and straighten 2 nd Street Bridge	1
Need a turn lane at 2 nd Street and Ridge Pointe – we were promised this by the former mayor	1
Need an exit to Memorial from JKT – current access is unsafe	1
Concern with sight distance at exit ramps to east frontage road – is unsafe	1
Consider noise walls	1
Need to repave I-35 and 2 nd Street	1
Consider access to the park with RVs and trailers	1
Need to maintain SB access to Integriss from 2 nd Street	1
Concerns about impacts during construction	1



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4.4 Responses to Comments

ODOT's responses to the general comment topics are summarized below.

Do Not Convert Frontage Roads to One-Way: Many of the comments received about the conversion of the frontage roads to one-way expressed concerns about increased travel times, having to travel through more signals, and inconvenience. While a one-way frontage road system may mean a longer distance to get from one place to another, it is anticipated that the travel time will be less than today in most cases. This is because the one-way frontage roads can carry more traffic, and the intersections with the cross-streets will operate more efficiently by eliminating one direction of travel. Drivers destined for businesses along the frontage roads will not have to pass through any traffic signals at the interchanges by using the protected turnarounds that bypass the intersections. For those drivers exiting I-35 to cross streets such as 2nd Street or 15th Street, there will be less delay and increased safety because traffic on the frontage road will not have to wait for traffic traveling in the opposite direction to make left turns, thus reducing potential conflicts. All of the traffic on the frontage road will be able to flow through the intersection at the same time, making left turns, right turns or traveling through the intersection. Most trips will require fewer traffic signals than today.

There is already significant traffic congestion occurring on I-35 and the frontage roads between Memorial and 2nd Street. This is only expected to get worse as traffic increases in the future. A one-way system will better accommodate the existing and future traffic on the frontage roads. The existing "buttonhook" style of ramp that requires traffic on the ramp to stop can be removed. A one-way ramp can be moved further away from the intersection so that more of the frontage road can be used for storage, which gets traffic back-ups off of I-35. Traffic backing up on to I-35 is a major traffic flow and safety concern and providing a solution to this is one of ODOT's top priorities. One-way ramps also prevent drivers from inadvertently turning the wrong way and colliding with vehicles on the ramp or even entering I-35 in the wrong direction. The one-way frontage roads also increase bicycle and pedestrian safety, as bicyclists and pedestrians crossing the frontage road only have to negotiate traffic traveling in one direction.

ODOT has made a concerted effort to reach out to the businesses, churches, and hospitals along the I-35 corridor. Through one-on-one and group meetings, ODOT has communicated the concept of the one-way frontage roads to these stakeholders and no major opposition has been heard. For residents, many of whom have lived in the area for many years, changes in travel patterns may feel inconvenient while they are new and unfamiliar. Within a relatively short amount of time, those drivers that use the system frequently will quickly adjust to the new pattern and will realize the benefits of a one-way system in travel time and safety. One-way systems are common in developed urban areas and can be found in many parts of Oklahoma and other states.

Improve the Two-Way Frontage Roads: While improving the existing two-way frontage roads could provide short-term relief to some of traffic congestion issues, this concept does not provide a viable long-term solution. The existing "buttonhook" ramps are inefficient and do not accommodate the amount of traffic that wants to use them. Providing a free-flow right turn lane could help, but the ramps would likely still back up because left-turning traffic would still be required to stop. Traffic is expected to continue to back up on to I-35, which is a major traffic flow and safety concern. The buttonhook ramps also do not address the safety concerns with someone accidentally entering the ramp in the wrong direction.

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Widening the frontage roads and/or the ramps could not be accomplished without impacts to surrounding properties. Some improvements at the cross-street intersections with the frontage roads could be made, but again as traffic continues to grow, these improvements would ultimately prove inadequate. The one-way frontage road system can be accomplished within existing right-of-way and provides a long-term solution to the traffic and safety issues on I-35.

Support the One-Way Frontage Roads: The one-way frontage roads will improve safety and provide the most efficient solution for future traffic volumes and development. The frontage roads will carry traffic in the same direction as the mainline – i.e. the west frontage road will carry southbound traffic and the east frontage road will carry northbound traffic. The turn-arounds are an important aspect and allow traffic destined for frontage road businesses to avoid any traffic signals. The need for frontage roads north of 2nd Street is part of the overall I-35 corridor study and will be addressed in future meetings.

Existing Traffic is an Issue: Several comments expressed concern with areas of existing traffic congestion, including on I-35 as well as on 2nd Street and 15th Street and adjacent intersections. ODOT and the City of Edmond are aware of these existing issues and understand that these issues will continue to worsen in the future if no improvements are made. Improving the traffic flow on I-35 from Memorial Road to Waterloo Road, and the frontage roads is one of the primary purposes of the I-35 study. The study will include investigating the need for additional lanes on I-35. Implementing a one-way frontage road system will alleviate many of these concerns, as traffic will flow better on the frontage roads as well as on the east-west cross streets such as 15th Street and 2nd Street. Many of the existing trouble spots, such as the closely spaced intersections at I-35 and 2nd Street and backups onto I-35, will be alleviated by the conversion to one-way frontage roads. At this location, the future ramps would be located on the frontage roads and would not require separate intersections at 2nd Street. Other improvements such as additional signals on the frontage roads, or signals and turn lanes on the city streets would be studied in more detail as projects are identified and advanced in ODOT's and the City of Edmond's programs.

Thank You for the Meeting: - Thank you for your interest in the study. ODOT always welcomes public participation and feedback.

How Much Will this Study Cost: To date, ODOT has spent approximately \$250,000 on the I-35 corridor study from Memorial Road to 2nd Street. In general, study costs are only a small percentage of the ultimate construction cost of a project, but are critical in terms of defining the needs for a project, examining different potential solutions, involving the public, and documenting decisions for the future. Information from the study of the frontage roads will be used in the next phase of the study of I-35 mainline, ramp, and interchange improvements from the John Kilpatrick Turnpike to Waterloo Road.

Consider Bicycle Lanes/Sidewalks on the Frontage Roads: Generally, ODOT prefers that bicycles and pedestrians use local roads rather than interstates or frontage roads, due to the high traffic volumes and potential safety concerns. ODOT will work with the City of Edmond to accommodate any future pedestrian and bicycle facilities the city has planned, including the Spring Creek Trail now under construction.

Other Comments: Many of the "other" comments relate to specific requests for improvements on I-35 or the cross-streets. Specifics such as additional lanes on I-35, turn lanes on 2nd Street, and access to/from



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Memorial Drive will be the subject of future study phases. Once projects are identified and programmed for design and construction, detailed environmental studies, including noise studies, will be performed. Construction impacts are an important consideration and ODOT will minimize these as much as possible. The one-way frontage road system will minimize these impacts because the new ramps and turn-around bridges can be built while the existing roadways remain in service. Conversion to one-way could be done relatively quickly once the new ramps and bridges are in place.

