

# **Public Meeting Summary**

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**Oklahoma Department of Transportation**

**I-44 Corridor Study, I-244 to Arkansas River  
Tulsa County, JP 32728(04)**

**January 11, 2018**



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## **1.0 Introduction**

This document summarizes the public meeting conducted for the I-44 Corridor Study from I-244 to the Arkansas River in Tulsa County [JP 32728(04)]. The purpose of this meeting was to present the results of the I-44 Corridor Study to the public and obtain input. The study includes I-44 from just east of the I-244 junction, extending east approximately 2.8 miles to the Riverside Drive/Peoria Drive Interchange, and US-75 from the recently improved section south of 61<sup>st</sup> Street, extending north approximately 2.7 miles to just south of 41<sup>st</sup> Street. The purpose of the study is to identify a preferred solution to improve safety, reduce congestion, and improve passenger and freight mobility in the I-44 corridor.

## **2.0 Public Meeting**

### **2.1 Public Involvement Plan**

A Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was prepared for this project to ensure effective community engagement, particularly of traditionally underserved populations (low-income and minority populations). The PIP identified the locations of these populations and included methods specifically intended to reach these groups.

### **2.2 Meeting Notification**

Notice of the public meeting was sent by letter to the Governor's office, Indian Tribes, state and federal resource agencies, elected officials (federal and state), Tulsa County Commissioners, the cities of Tulsa, Jenks, Sapulpa, and Glenpool, the Indian Nations Council of Governments (INCOG), the Tulsa Regional Chamber of Commerce, River Parks Authority, Oklahoma Trucking Association, local school districts, emergency service providers, churches, and medical facilities in the study area. 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 11, 2017. Notice of the public meeting was also sent by letter to all property and utility owners in the study area on October 11, 2017. A flyer announcing the meeting was hand-delivered to all homes and businesses within the study area on October 17, 2017.

### **2.3 Meeting Information and Format**

The public meeting was held on November 2, 2017, at 6:00 PM at the Daniel Webster High School Auditorium at 1919 W. 40<sup>th</sup> Street in Tulsa, OK. One hundred seventy-four (174) people signed in for the meeting, including Tulsa City Councilmember Jeannie Cue and representatives from ODOT, Garver, City of Tulsa, Tulsa County Commissioner Karen Keith's office, INCOG, Tulsa City County Library, Tulsa Public Schools, area businesses, local media, and members of the public.

Mr. Joe Brutsche, ODOT Project Manager, opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. Garver then gave a presentation about the study, followed by an open question and answer period facilitated by Mr. Randle White, ODOT Division 8 Engineer. ODOT and Garver staff were available following the formal presentation for one-on-one and small group discussions with the public. Display boards showing the study location and preferred alternative were available for public viewing in two locations. A handout including a description of the study, the purpose of the study, and showing the preferred alternative for



the project was available in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese. The public and agency comment period was open until November 16, 2017.

## 2.4 Summary of Written Comments

Four (4) written comments from agencies and eighteen (18) written comments from the public were received both during and after the public meeting. ODOT responses to the comments are shown in italics after each comment.

### 2.4.1 Agency Comments and Responses

The **Cherokee Nation** does not foresee this project having impacts on Cherokee Nation cultural resources. The tribe requests that if cultural materials are discovered that they be consulted. The tribe also requests that ODOT consult with other Historic Preservation Offices regarding historic and prehistoric resources not contained in the Cherokee Nation databases.

*Response: Thank you for your comment. ODOT will continue to consult with the Cherokee Nation pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Officer, the Oklahoma State Archeologist, and other Native American tribes will also continue to be consulted.*

The **Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ)** stated that prior to beginning any construction activity disturbing more than one acre, a Notice of Intent (NOI) must be submitted and authorization under OKR10, construction stormwater, must be obtained. ODEQ attached a list of recommendations for general construction/improvement projects including following regulations related to plumbing codes, lead-based paint, asbestos, fugitive dust, solid waste, and Oklahoma Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (OPDES) permitting.

*Response: Once a construction project is defined, ODOT and its contractors will follow all requirements of OKR10.*

The **Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC)** reviewed the project and noted that it may pose a hazard to the safe and efficient use of navigable air space due to the proximity of Richard Lloyd Jones Jr. Airport. The OAC recommends that ODOT use the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) notice criteria tool to determine if a 7460-1 form needs to be filed with FAA.

*Response: Once a construction project is defined, ODOT will determine the need for the 7460-1 form and file with the FAA if required.*

The **City of Tulsa** requested that ODOT consider powder-coated black light posts to be consistent with I-44 on the east side of the Arkansas River.

*Response: ODOT does not have a programmed project at this time. ODOT is open to working with the City of Tulsa and the public on aesthetics for the corridor. The black powder coating would be a non-participating item that the City of Tulsa or other group(s) would fund.*

### 2.4.2 Public Comments

Eighteen (18) written comment forms from the public were received. Some comment forms included more than one comment. Comments and responses are summarized in Table 1 on the following pages:



Table 3: Public Comment Summary

Comment	# of Comments
<p><b>Concerns with Ramp Closures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These ramps provide access to and from homes and businesses which will be cut off</li> <li>• Closing these ramps will make my trips longer</li> <li>• Closing these ramps would negatively affect businesses and employees (difficult access would mean customers would go elsewhere)</li> <li>• Request keep the EB off-ramp to Skelly and WB on-ramp from 51<sup>st</sup> Street</li> <li>• Residents NW of I-44/US-75 use the on and off ramps near Waco daily</li> <li>• Closing the WB off ramp to 51<sup>st</sup> will increase traffic at the I-44 WB Elwood St. exit – which is a narrow road and not made for that amount of traffic. Also concern this will bring unwanted traffic through residential areas.</li> <li>• If traffic on WB I-44 backs up traffic will exit on Elwood and use 51<sup>st</sup> to avoid interchange – causing increased noise and traffic for residences on Lawton and Maybelle Ave.</li> <li>• Concerns that access for local residents is being sacrificed. Request off ramp for Union Avenue to reduce traffic through residential areas.</li> <li>• Concern that eliminating eastbound and westbound ramps will increase congestion at 33<sup>rd</sup> W. Avenue. This interchange is already congested. Signals are needed here.</li> <li>• Need a WB exit for Union/51<sup>st</sup> Street</li> </ul> <p><i>RESPONSE: Removal and/or relocation of some of the existing access points on I-44 is needed to improve safety and traffic flow. Currently the high number of access points means traffic does not have sufficient room to enter/exit the highway. The existing interchange configuration and the high traffic volumes are contributing to congestion on I-44 and US-75. Consolidating the access points will reduce congestion and make the highway safer in the future. Planned improvements on Union Avenue, the extension of 51<sup>st</sup> Street, and improvements at the I-44/33<sup>rd</sup> W. Avenue interchange will assist with circulating traffic to and from the newly configured access locations on I-44.</i></p>	<p>9</p>
<p><b>Consider Noise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is already loud and will only get louder</li> <li>• We have previously requested a noise study from ODOT</li> <li>• Sound wall will also increase safety</li> </ul>	<p>6</p>



<p><i>RESPONSE: Once ODOT advances a project to design, a noise study will be completed according to federal guidelines. If the noise study shows that walls are warranted according to federal criteria and meet federal and ODOT standards of feasible and reasonable, they will be considered for the project.</i></p>	
<p><b>Consider Pedestrians/Bicyclists</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is only partial sidewalk on W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street – walking is dangerous</li> <li>• Estimate of 50+ pedestrians on 51<sup>st</sup> Street daily</li> <li>• Consider sidewalks and bicycle lanes on 51<sup>st</sup> Street</li> <li>• Curbs and sidewalks are needed on streets near residential areas</li> <li>• How are pedestrians to cross I-44 and US-75?</li> <li>• Consider sidewalks on W. 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue</li> </ul> <p><i>RESPONSE: The addition of sidewalks on local roads will be further studied with in coordination with the City of Tulsa, as the project develops. Sidewalks and bicycle lanes are planned for Union Avenue, including on the new Union Avenue bridge across I-44.</i></p>	4
<p><b>Improvements are Needed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hope ODOT can find funding soon</li> <li>• Thank you for looking at this area</li> <li>• Glad to see 51<sup>st</sup> Street exit removed and relocated – it is dangerous</li> <li>• Traffic has increased over the last 20 years</li> </ul> <p><i>RESPONSE: Thank you for your comment.</i></p>	4
<p><b>Questions about Property</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will my property be needed?</li> <li>• Please contact me if my property is needed</li> <li>• Would like ODOT to buy my property</li> <li>• How will this impact my ability to sell my property?</li> <li>• Question about right-of-way lines shown</li> <li>• Concern that property will be rezoned in the future</li> <li>• Will property values and taxes go up or down?</li> </ul> <p><i>RESPONSE: What is currently developed is a conceptual plan for the corridor and does not include sufficient design detail to identify specific property impacts. Right-of-way shown is based on public data and is not field verified with survey. Once a project is defined and more design is completed, ODOT will complete detailed survey and contact affected property owners. ODOT does not place any restrictions on the sale or purchase of private property and does not</i></p>	4



<p>have authority over future zoning. Similarly property taxes are driven by many factors and it is difficult to predict how these will change in the future.</p>	
<p><b>Request for Additional Public Meetings as Projects are Funded</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the public be informed of new developments?</li> <li>• I trust you will have periodic updates.</li> </ul> <p><i>RESPONSE: Additional public meetings will be held as projects are programmed and advanced into design and construction.</i></p>	3
<p><b>Concern that West Tulsa Residents are Overlooked</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study is focused on through traffic and not residents</li> <li>• We need equal access to highways as the rest of Tulsa</li> <li>• Concern about begin isolated</li> <li>• We are not wanted on the east side of the river</li> </ul> <p><i>RESPONSE: The purpose of the improvements is to improve mobility and safety on I-44 and US-75. The study looked at many factors including how the improvements will affect area residents and businesses. While access to I-44 may change in the future, it is not the intent to limit the access of local neighborhoods, but to improve the safety of that access.</i></p>	3
<p><b>51<sup>st</sup> Street is not Adequate for all the Traffic and Trucks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not wide enough for trucks to turn – damage curbs and signs</li> </ul> <p><i>RESPONSE: The proposed improvements will be designed to accommodate the vehicles anticipated to utilize the roadways.</i></p>	2
<p><b>Concern with Speed Limits on 51<sup>st</sup> Street</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children walk to school on 51<sup>st</sup> Street</li> </ul> <p><i>RESPONSE: W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street is a City street, and the City of Tulsa will set the speed limit based on engineering studies.</i></p>	1
<p><b>Drainage is a problem on 51<sup>st</sup> Street</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent improvements included storm drain but there is no curb</li> <li>• Water flows over driveways, roads, and yards</li> </ul> <p><i>RESPONSE: W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street is a City street. ODOT will work with the City of Tulsa regarding the appropriate drainage during design.</i></p>	1
<p><b>Will there be Turn Lanes at 51<sup>st</sup>/Union and 51<sup>st</sup>/33<sup>rd</sup> W. Avenue?</b></p> <p><i>RESPONSE: Improvements along Union Avenue will include turn lanes at W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street and Skelly Avenue. The Union Avenue over I-44 project is currently programmed for construction in 2021. Studies are in progress regarding turn lane needs at W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street and 33<sup>rd</sup> W. Avenue. The I-44 over 33<sup>rd</sup> W. Avenue project is currently programmed for construction in 2021.</i></p>	1



<p><b>Concerns about Making 51<sup>st</sup> Street One-Way</b>  <i>RESPONSE: The one-way concept for 51<sup>st</sup> Street was considered. The current plan keeps W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street as a two-way roadway as it is today.</i></p>	1
<p><b>Don't Want to see 51<sup>st</sup> Street Extended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would cause increases in traffic through neighborhoods</li> <li>• Will be dangerous for pedestrians and children playing</li> <li>• Will cause crime to increase</li> <li>• Additional bridge required for 51<sup>st</sup> Street extension is an additional expense and an undue burden for ODOT to maintain.</li> </ul> <p><i>RESPONSE: After reconfiguration of some ramps to/from I-44 as well as eliminating underpass at 49<sup>th</sup> Street, the extension of 51<sup>st</sup> street would be needed to facilitate local traffic flow. Pedestrian accommodations will be studied during final design. The elimination of the US-75 overpass bridges of 49<sup>th</sup> Street will offset cost of construction of new bridges over 51<sup>st</sup>.</i></p>	1
<p><b>Thank you for the Meeting/Meeting was Informative</b>  <i>RESPONSE: Thank you for your comment.</i></p>	1
<p><b>Concern about Visibility on Access Roads</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard to see curbs</li> <li>• Paint medians with reflective paint</li> </ul> <p><i>RESPONSE: Items such as lighting and reflective paint on local streets would be something the City of Tulsa may consider.</i></p>	1
<p><b>Consider LED lighting on whole project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LED is more energy efficient than mercury vapor and high pressure sodium</li> <li>• Make access doors more theft-proof</li> </ul> <p><i>RESPONSE: Highway lighting is the responsibility of the City. Opportunities and alternatives for lighting will be discussed with the City of Tulsa during the design phase.</i></p>	1
<p><b>Concern about Ice on Flyover Ramps</b>  <i>RESPONSE: Snow and ice removal will be performed on these ramps in the same manner as this is accomplished on other ODOT facilities.</i></p>	1
<p><b>Who will Maintain 51<sup>st</sup> Street and Skelly Drive?</b>  <i>RESPONSE: The City of Tulsa is responsible for maintenance of city streets. W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street and Skelly Drive are city streets.</i></p>	1





<b>Will There be Interim Repairs to the I-44/US-75 ramps?</b> <i>RESPONSE: ODOT routine maintenance will address ramp repairs until interchange reconstruction projects are funded.</i>	1
<b>Consider a Diverging Diamond interchange</b> <i>RESPONSE: While a diverging diamond interchange can be very effective in certain circumstances, these types of interchanges require traffic signals and are more appropriate for interchanges with local roadways. Installing traffic signals at the I-44/US-75 interchange is not feasible. I-44 and US-75 are both freeways requiring a free-flowing interchange and a diverging diamond would not be able to accommodate the traffic demand. The other local interchanges at Union Avenue or 33<sup>rd</sup> W. Avenue do not have the available room to construct that type of layout without a significant impact to local developments.</i>	1
<b>Make the ramps at US-75 and 41<sup>st</sup> Street wider for trucks – they damage curbs</b> <i>RESPONSE: Improvements to the US-75/41<sup>st</sup> Street interchange are not part of the current study.</i>	1
<b>Don't like Exit at US-75/71<sup>st</sup> Street</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are too many lanes trying to merge/turn from 71<sup>st</sup> Street and US-75 into Tulsa Hills. Do not repeat this design.</li></ul> <i>RESPONSE: The proposed interchange at US-75 and 61<sup>st</sup> Street will be similar to the current configuration. This interchange will have fewer lanes than at 71<sup>st</sup> Street</i>	1
<b>Where will the Material Sites be?</b> <i>RESPONSE: The location of material sites has not yet been determined. Once a project is let for construction the contractor will determine the location of material sites.</i>	1