

# Virtual Public Open House Summary

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**Oklahoma Department of Transportation**

**I-44/US-75 Interchange**

**Work Packages 2-5**

**Tulsa County, JP 33788(08)(09)(10)(11)**

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## Executive Summary

This document summarizes the virtual public open house conducted for the I-44/US-75 Interchange project in Tulsa County. The purpose of the public open house was to update the public on the status of Work Packages 2-5 to complete the reconstruction of the I-44/US-74 interchange, present the proposed design, right-of-way, and impacts, and obtain public input. The meeting included information on the project history, the need for the project, the proposed design of WP 2-5, right-of-way information, changes to access, environmental impacts, project schedule, and cost.

Due to concerns about the spread of COVID-19, ODOT held a virtual public open house. The public open house was held on-line between June 9 and June 30, 2021. Forty-one (41) people signed in on the website. However, sign-in was not required. According to the website analytics, 5,821 unique users viewed the website 12,389 times over the 21-day period. The “What is Being Built” page, containing the interactive map was the most frequently viewed page (6,428 views), followed by the open house home page, Work Package 2 page, and project schedule. In total, thirty (30) individuals submitted written comments/questions either through mail, email, or voice mail. No comments were left on the interactive map. Some people submitted multiple comments on a single form or email. In total, thirty-four (34) public comments were received. Comments from three agencies were also received.

Agency comments included the following:

- The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) asked if tribes had received information about the project and if so, which tribes.
- The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) indicated that project does not appear to pose a hazard to safe and efficient use of navigable airspace.
- The Tulsa River Parks Authority requested that the Turkey Mountain Master Plan be considered in project planning and design. Specifically, room for a trail under US-75 along Mooser Creek was requested.

Almost two-thirds (65%) of the comments received fell into one of four categories: 1) in favor of the project, 2) concerns or questions about noise, 3) concerns or questions about right-of-way acquisition, or 4) concerns about WP 1 construction. The remaining 35% of the comments were classified as “other”, not fitting into general topics. Comments are tabulated in **Table ES1**.

**Table ES1: Comment Summary**

<b>Comment Topic</b>	<b># of Comments</b>
<b><i>Approve of or Like the Project</i></b>	<b>7</b>
Flyover ramps will be safer and handle more traffic	
Improvements are needed	
Wish some work could be done at night	
Will benefit the city and the state	
Project is long overdue	
The sooner the better – I’ve waited decades	
This project is the most progressive ever attempted – we have needed it for so long	
<b><i>Questions or Concerns about Noise</i></b>	<b>6</b>
If our home won’t be acquired how will noise and vibrations be addressed?	
Noise is a problem during rush hour, especially during fall and winter when trees don’t provide a barrier. Trucks use their jake brakes near 33 <sup>rd</sup> W. Avenue. Will a barrier be built?	
Will a barrier be provided after completion if noise is an issue?	
Will there be a sound wall between Union and 33 <sup>rd</sup> W. Avenue on the north and south of I-44?	
The noise study was done in 2019. Noise has increased since then. Will there be a new study? Does ODOT really poll the homeowners to see if we want the wall and build it only if 51% approve?	
Please build a sound wall on westbound I-44 from the Arkansas River to US-75 – there is a neighborhood west of the dealership that needs protection from noise.	
<b><i>Questions or Concerns about Right-of-Way Acquisition</i></b>	<b>6</b>
Will my home be acquired? (4)	
When will acquisition start?	
Concerns about offer made to Red Fork Lodge.	
Will utility easements require homes to be acquired?	
<b><i>Comments Regarding Work Package 1</i></b>	<b>3</b>
Project is causing additional traffic on 33 <sup>rd</sup> W. Avenue. They drive over the speed limit and block intersections and cause potholes. This needs to be patrolled.	
Union bridge was scheduled after 33 <sup>rd</sup> W. Avenue. Info says Union bridge is under construction but they are doing the cloverleaf. Seems like WP1 should come before WP5.	
Too late – already done.	
<b><i>Other</i></b>	<b>12</b>
Why is the I-44 eastbound to US-75 northbound ramp remaining as a loop?	

No	
It's slow and lots of wrecks happen	
Please include landscaping – not just grass	
Please make final ramps and barriers as wide as possible – driving in a “chute” is scary	
Please add bicycle accommodations to the Arkansas River bridge – a river crossing for non-motorized options is lacking in this area.	
Roads should be smoother	
Widening roads won't help traffic. We need passenger rail. If you are going to do a new intersection do single point urban interchange (SPUI), diverging diamond interchange (DDI), bowtie, or roundabouts – these improve traffic, look nice, and are safer for pedestrians.	
Concerned about how close to the road will be and runoff – my property floods after heavy rain	
Please replace 51 <sup>st</sup> Street between Lawton and Union – it is narrow	
The use of stop signs at cloverleaves is dangerous. Would be better to have a longer merge lane from westbound I-44 to southbound US-75.	
The open area in the southwest corner could be used for parking or a park or monument with a connection to Skelly.	
The roads in the neighborhoods are in poor condition and need repair.	

**Responses to Comments**

**Approve/Like the Project**

Thank you for your comment.

**Questions/Concerns about Noise**

ODOT completed Phase 1 of a two-phased noise study for the entire proposed I-44/US-75 interchange project. The noise study utilizes the FHWA Traffic Noise Model version 2.5 in accordance with FHWA 23 CFR 772 and complies with the ODOT Noise Policy dated July 13, 2011. Phase 2 of the noise study is ongoing.

The first phase was completed in 2019 that modeled the existing (2016) and future (design year 2045) noise levels based on roadway geometry, traffic volumes, terrain, and location of noise receptors such as homes, churches, and trails. The results of this modeling effort had identified where noise impacts will occur as result of the proposed improvements. Because the analysis of noise impacts is based on the future design and the anticipated future traffic volumes, increases in traffic between 2019 and 2021 would not affect the outcome of the study.

The second phase of the study involves conducting a preliminary analysis of noise walls based on the proposed design plans. For a noise wall to be considered, it must meet ODOT Noise Policy criteria for “feasibility” and “reasonableness.”

- “Feasibility” means it is possible to build the wall given site constraints such as drainage, safety, and utilities. A wall must also provide an acceptable reduction in noise levels to be considered feasible.
- “Reasonableness” means the wall is fair and affordable according to ODOT Noise Policy. This includes consideration of how much noise will be reduced and at how many locations, cost of the wall, and the property owners and residents’ desire for the wall.

As of May 2021, eleven (11) noise walls are being evaluated and/or considered. Each of the noise walls are utilizing the original 2019 noise model and the current preliminary design plans. The length and heights of the wall segments are being designed in an effort to provide the maximum benefit while staying under the reasonableness cost per benefited receptor. Walls that meet the reasonableness cost criteria will be considered as part of the project moving forward. Input from the affected property owners and residents will be considered before any wall is finalized. Due to feasibility constraints, not all impacted receptors can be evaluated for mitigation.

For those noise walls determined feasible and reasonable, the following is the general process in completing noise mitigation:

- 1) ODOT will contact all property owners and residents of the homes benefitted by the proposed noise walls. The primary method for notices will be by US mail.
- 2) ODOT will meet with the property owners and benefitted residents to present final details and to solicit the residents’ final views and opinions.
- 3) The decision on whether the wall is desired or not desired will be based on the preference provided by 51 percent or more of the benefitted property owners and residents that respond to the solicitation. Consideration of the wall will continue unless a simple majority of all distributed points are returned that indicates the balloted voters do not want the abatement measure.
- 4) The final determination on the noise wall will be shared with the property owners and residents by letter.

All other areas where noise walls were determined not feasible and/or reasonable will be shared to all affected property owners and residents by letter.

#### **Questions/Concerns about Right-of-Way Acquisition**

ODOT is currently in the process of evaluating the properties needed for the proposed improvements. Several homeowners have been contacted already. If your property or a portion of your property will be needed for the proposed project, you will be contacted by an ODOT Right-of-Way agent. This process is anticipated to continue through 2022.

#### **Questions/Concerns about Work Package 1 Construction**

Comments regarding the construction of Work Package 1 have been forwarded to the ODOT Resident Engineer in charge of this project. Impacts to traffic are anticipated to be temporary. Replacement of

the Union Avenue Bridge is included in Work Package 1. The contractor's schedule will determine when this bridge is removed and reconstructed.

**Other**

*Why is the I-44 eastbound to US-75 northbound ramp remaining as a loop?*

The I-44 eastbound to US-75 northbound movement has relatively low traffic volumes, as the majority of traffic going this direction takes I-244 rather than US-75. The loop configuration is anticipated to safely accommodate the future traffic for this movement. The loop will be reconstructed with a 15-foot-wide lane and 8-foot wide shoulder and new pavement.

*It's slow and lots of wrecks happen*

The project is anticipated to increase the safety and traffic flow through the interchange

*Please include landscaping – not just grass*

Due to the multi-level nature of the interchange, there will not be much opportunity for landscaping that would be visible to passing traffic. Maintenance of landscaping in this area would be challenging due to difficult access. Aesthetic designs are planned for bridge piers and railings, and on retaining walls. ODOT will continue to consider the aesthetics of the area in the project's final design.

*Please make final ramps and barriers as wide as possible – driving in a “chute” is scary*

Final ramps will be designed with minimum 12-foot-wide lanes and 8-foot-wide shoulders. In many cases the ramps and bridges will be wider to provide adequate sight distance.

*Please add bicycle accommodations to the Arkansas River bridge – a river crossing for non-motorized options is lacking in this area.*

Interstate facilities are not considered appropriate for shared bicycle/pedestrian use. A river crossing at this location is not included in the region's Master Bicycle Plan (Go Plan, [Go Plan Proposed Bicycle Facilities \(arcgis.com\)](#)). Bicycle crossings are provided at W. 71<sup>st</sup> Street approximately two miles south and will be included in the City of Tulsa's planned Gateway Bridge at the Gathering Place approximately two miles north.

*Roads should be smoother*

The existing pavement is in fair to poor condition. The proposed project will construct all new pavement which will improve the surface and rideability of the roadways.

*Widening roads won't help traffic. We need passenger rail. If you are going to do a new intersection do Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI), Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI), bowtie, or roundabouts – these improve traffic, look nice, and are safer for pedestrians.*

The I-44/US-75 interchange project is primarily intended to address safety and mobility, which are hindered by the existing cloverleaf interchange design and large number of on- and off-ramps. The

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interchange and intersection types mentioned (SPUI, DDI, etc.) are appropriate in specific situations and ODOT has implemented these elsewhere. However, these are not considered appropriate at a freeway-to-freeway interchange. The project does not preclude the implementation of passenger rail but passenger rail is not within the scope of this project.

*Concerned about how close to the road will be and runoff – my property floods after heavy rain*

The project will be designed to accommodate runoff. Drainage structures are designed to accommodate the design storm event of the controlling entity (State or City of Tulsa). The project will not increase flood risk and is anticipated to improve drainage.

*Please replace 51<sup>st</sup> Street between Lawton and Union – it is narrow*

The project will reconstruct W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street between S. Waco Ave. and the Arkansas River, including a new connection under US-75. W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street will have two 14-foot wide lanes and curb and gutter. Sidewalks will be provided on both sides of W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street west of US-75 to Union Avenue, and on the north side of W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street east of US-75.

*The use of stop signs at cloverleaves is dangerous. Would be better to have a longer merge lane from westbound I-44 to southbound US-75.*

No stop signs are proposed at the ramps of the final interchange. Stop signs at ramps may be used for temporary traffic control during construction. All merging distances have been designed to accommodate the anticipated traffic volumes and speeds.

*The open area in the southwest corner could be used for parking or a park or monument with a connection to Skelly.*

Public use of ODOT right-of-way under bridges is discouraged for safety reasons. As discussed above, comments about landscaping will be considered during final design.

Other comments not specifically related to the I-44/US-75 interchange project are not addressed here.