Welcome to the virtual public open house for the US-277 Improvements Project in Elgin, we thank you for joining us.
In this presentation, we’ll cover several topics including the purpose of this open house and the project itself, the existing conditions of the roadway and the need for the project, an overview of the project, findings associated with the environmental studies, the estimated timeline for the project - including construction - and how to submit comments.
The purpose of this virtual open house is to provide information on the proposed improvements to US-277 in Elgin. We’ll also provide the findings from the various environmental studies conducted for the project, gather your input, and outline the next steps and schedule for this project. All comments and information we receive will be evaluated and incorporated into the project development process, so your input is very important to us. The comment submittal process will be explained in a later slide.
The US-277 project is located in Elgin in Comanche County in south central Oklahoma and depicted on this map with the green shading.
This graphic depicts the limits of the project study area within Comanche County in Elgin, Oklahoma. As you can see, the improvements will extend from the northbound H.E. Bailey Turnpike off ramp, east 0.4 miles to the US-277 and SH 17 Intersection.
Existing US-277 is a two lane-highway with paved shoulders. The roadway is an open section with no storm sewer or sidewalks. The annual average daily traffic is currently 12,100 vehicles per day and projected to be 17,000 vehicles per day in 2041.
The project is needed to address existing deficiencies along US-277, including congestion from turning traffic, drainage issues, poor pavement conditions, and a lack of pedestrian access. The purpose is to improve traffic flow within the project limits, facilitate left-turn movements, improve drainage, replace aging pavement, and accommodate pedestrians.
Project Description

- Improve traffic flow by reconstructing US-277 to a 3-lane curb and gutter section
- Extending the merge area between the H.E. Bailey Turnpike and through traffic
- Construct 2-way left turn lanes to provide safe access to adjacent developments
- Increase turning radius at SH 17
- Improve drainage through town by use of curbs and storm sewer
- Reconstruct aging pavement
- Provide ADA compliant sidewalks on both sides of US-277

Proposed improvements will consist of providing safe access to developments by reconstructing US-277 to a three-lane facility and replacing aging pavement. The roadway will consist of a mostly curb and gutter section with storm sewer systems to improve drainage. ADA compliant sidewalks will be also constructed on both sides of US-277 to better accommodate pedestrian traffic through Elgin.
This image shows the proposed US-277 typical section, with one 12-foot driving lane in each direction, and a 12-foot continuous left turn lane, as well as curb and gutter and 4- to 6-foot sidewalks on both sides of the roadway.
Pictured here is a rendering of the proposed project. A right turn lane is being introduced just east of Arvest Bank to accommodate traffic movements turning north onto the H.E. Bailey Turnpike. In most other locations, the roadway will consist of one 12-foot lane in each direction and a 12-foot two-way left turn lane.
Why is a three-lane roadway being constructed instead of a four- or five-lane roadway?

- Four-lane, undivided highways experience a number of crash types as traffic volumes increase, including rear-end and sideswipe crashes from the following conditions:
  - Differing speeds
  - Stopped vehicles attempting to make left turns
  - Frequently changing lanes

- A five-lane roadway with a two-way left-turn lane would require large amounts of R/W and would lead to the displacement of several businesses along US-277.

A three-lane roadway with a two-way left-turn lane is being considered over a four- or five-lane roadway for safety and right-of-way (R/W) reasons. Four-lane, undivided highways experience a number of crash types as traffic volumes increase, including rear-end and sideswipe crashes from differing speeds, stopped vehicles attempting to make left turns, and the need to frequently change lanes. A five-lane roadway with a two-way left-turn lane would require large amounts of R/W and would lead to the displacement of several businesses along US-277.
**Traffic Control Plan**

- Two lanes of traffic will be open at all times
- Access to businesses and homes will be maintained during construction
- Temporary signing and striping will be utilized during construction
- Temporary lane shifts will be utilized
- Flagging may be utilized as appropriate

Construction will require temporary shifting of traffic to widen US-277. However, two lanes of traffic will be open at all times throughout construction. Access to businesses and homes will also be maintained during construction.
When Federal Highway Administration funds are used for a transportation project like this one, there are typical environmental criteria that must be considered under the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA. These criteria include Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, and other community considerations.

Natural Resources considerations include Threatened and Endangered Species, Wetlands and Waters of the U.S., and Critical Water Resources.

Cultural Resources include properties and structures, archeological sites, and historic cemeteries that have been determined eligible for or are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, as well as sacred tribal properties.

Other resources that are considered include topics such as impacts to minority and low-income communities, as well as impacts to parks and recreation areas, prime farmland, air quality and traffic noise as appropriate. Hazardous waste sites and fuel storage tanks are also considered to identify potential environmental risks within and adjacent to the proposed right-of-way.
A United States Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit will be required for the proposed culvert extension along the unnamed tributary to Lake Ellsworth. No habitat for endangered and threatened species was identified. Measures will be taken to minimize potential impacts on migratory birds. No known cultural resources will be adversely affected. Three leaking underground storage tank sites were identified within the area of impact/right-of-way that warrant additional investigation.
The National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, document is scheduled to be completed by federal fiscal year 2022. The ODOT 8-year construction work plan currently has right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation scheduled for federal fiscal year 2025 but may advance ahead of schedule. Construction is expected to begin in federal fiscal year 2027 but may advance ahead of schedule. Please note that this schedule is dependent on funding and is subject to change. The current ODOT 8-year construction work plan can be found with the link shown here.
We value your input! Please submit your comments by August 17, 2021.
There are a number of ways you can provide your feedback:
You can download and submit a comment form at www.odot.org/US277Elgin.
Or you can submit your written comments by mail to:
Oklahoma Department of Transportation
Environmental Programs Division
200 NE 21st Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
Or, you can email your comments to environment@odot.org.
The comment period window will be open from August 3rd through August 17th, 2021.