

# **Virtual Open House Public Meeting Summary**

## **I-35 in Love County**

**From mile marker 3.2 north 1.5 miles to mile marker 4.7; JP 31896(07)  
Future widening project  
From mile marker 5.7 north 2.0 miles to mile marker 7.7; JP 35728(04)**

**Virtual Open House Held August 29, 2023 through September 12, 2023**

**Weblink:**

[www.odot.org/I35LoveCo.](http://www.odot.org/I35LoveCo)

**Prepared by:**



**Date:**

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) held a virtual open house public meeting for I-35 in Love County. The I-35 roadway improvements are from mile marker 3.2 north to mile marker 7.7. These are two separate construction projects separated by 1.0 mile, which has another I-35 interchange and widening project currently programmed. The purpose of the open house public meeting was to present the proposed design for these segments of I-35 and obtain public input to aid ODOT in moving forward with the completion of the environmental studies, design, and construction. The purpose and need of the projects are to improve the operational capacity of I-35 to accommodate existing and future traffic volumes, improve safety, and enhance local and regional connectivity.

The virtual open house public meeting was held from August 29, 2023 through September 12, 2023 and was web-based. The virtual materials included a mock room that you can move through. At Station 1 there was a welcome board, on the table was a sign-in, download pamphlet, download FAQ, leave a comment, and download comment form. Station 2 provided an interactive map and a board that had a map of the I-35 roadway projects and status of projects programmed from the Texas State line north to Marietta in Oklahoma. Station 3 provided the project overview. Station 4 provided the environmental overview and noise study. Station 5 provided the next steps. Lastly, Station 6 provided the public comment process and contact information.

The site was visited 174 times from August 29, 2023 through September 12, 2023. Now that the open house public meeting has concluded, the meeting material can be found at: <http://www.odot.org/publicmeetings>.

The virtual open house public meeting had seven (7) participants that signed into the meeting, no phone calls were received, four (4) written comments were received on the webpage. The webpage comments have been grouped into broad categories as listed below. Some commenters had more than one comment per category:

<u># Of Comments</u>	<u>General Category</u>
1	I-35 projects going to take place simultaneously with the US Hwy 77?
2	Against the proposal on widening the in the area proposed.
1	Approve and support ODOT's I-35 in Love County Project.

One (1) agency letter response was received and is summarized in Section 5.0.

Based on the comments received, the project as planned will move forward

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes a virtual open house public meeting conducted for I-35 in Love County. The I-35 roadway improvements are from mile marker 3.2 north to mile marker 7.7. These are two separate construction projects separated by 1.0 mile, which has another I-35 interchange and widening project currently programmed. The purpose of the open house public meeting was to present the proposed design for these segments of I-35 and obtain public input to aid ODOT in moving forward with the completion of the environmental studies, design, and construction.

I-35 is an arterial corridor connecting multiple states and carries large volumes of commercial traffic. Due to the expected future traffic volumes in this area, this roadway is being designed from the existing two lanes of traffic in each direction to three lanes of traffic in each direction. The purpose and need of the projects are to improve the operational capacity of I-35 to accommodate existing and future traffic volumes, improve safety, and enhance local and regional connectivity.

There are two roadway construction projects, which will widen I-35 from 4 to 6 lanes. Project one consists of I-35 beginning at mile marker 3.2 extending north 1.5 miles ending at mile marker 4.7. Project two consists of I-35 beginning at mile marker 5.7 extending north 2.0 miles ending at mile marker 7.7. In-between the two proposed roadway construction projects, is an existing interchange at I-35 and SH-153, which has already completed final design and is scheduled for construction in 2027. The I-35/SH-153 interchange improvements include bridge replacement and the widening of I-35 mainline from mile marker 4.7 to mile marker 5.7 to accommodate for the future widening I-35 projects.

The proposed improvement for both I-35 projects consist of widening I-35 from the existing two (2) lanes in each direction to the proposed three (3) lanes of traffic in each direction. One (1) 12-ft. wide lane in each direction will be added to the outside of the existing highway resulting in a six (6) lane interstate with full control of access. The inside shoulders will be widened and reconstructed to 10-ft. wide. The outside shoulder will be reconstructed to 10-ft. wide.

From mile marker 3.2 to mile marker 4.7 the future six-lane open section facility will consist of a 40-ft. wide paved median with median barrier wall at the center. From mile marker 5.7 to 7.7 the future six lane open section facility will consist of a variable width with a grass median.

Improvements will occur along the existing alignment, with no new right-of-way being acquired. The road will remain open, and construction phased to maintain two lanes of traffic in each direction. Construction will be completed in two separate construction projects, which are both currently scheduled to begin construction in 2027.

No additional right-of-way is needed for either project.

## 3.0 OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC MEETING

### 3.1 MEETING NOTIFICATION

Thirty-seven (37) property owners were identified adjacent to the study area, consisting of 31 owners for the two projects, and 6 owners for the existing middle project. These owners were notified of the virtual open house public meeting by both a postcard in the mail and by direct mail. The City of Thackerville and Chickasaw Nation were included as landowners. The area is a mix of undeveloped land, scattered residential housing and commercial. Eight (8) utility companies located within the project area were also notified of the virtual open house public meeting.

Twenty-six (26) invitation letters to the public meeting were mailed to various agencies and members of the public. The public officials meeting invitation list included ODOT Commissioners, Love County Commissioners, State and U.S. elected officials, Southern Oklahoma Development Authority, Thackerville Public School, Thackerville Police and Fire Departments, Gainesville Fire Department, and Tribal Nations.

Thirty-seven (37) property owners, eight (8) utility companies, and twenty-six (26) public officials were mailed a postcard, and/or letter dated August 28, 2023.

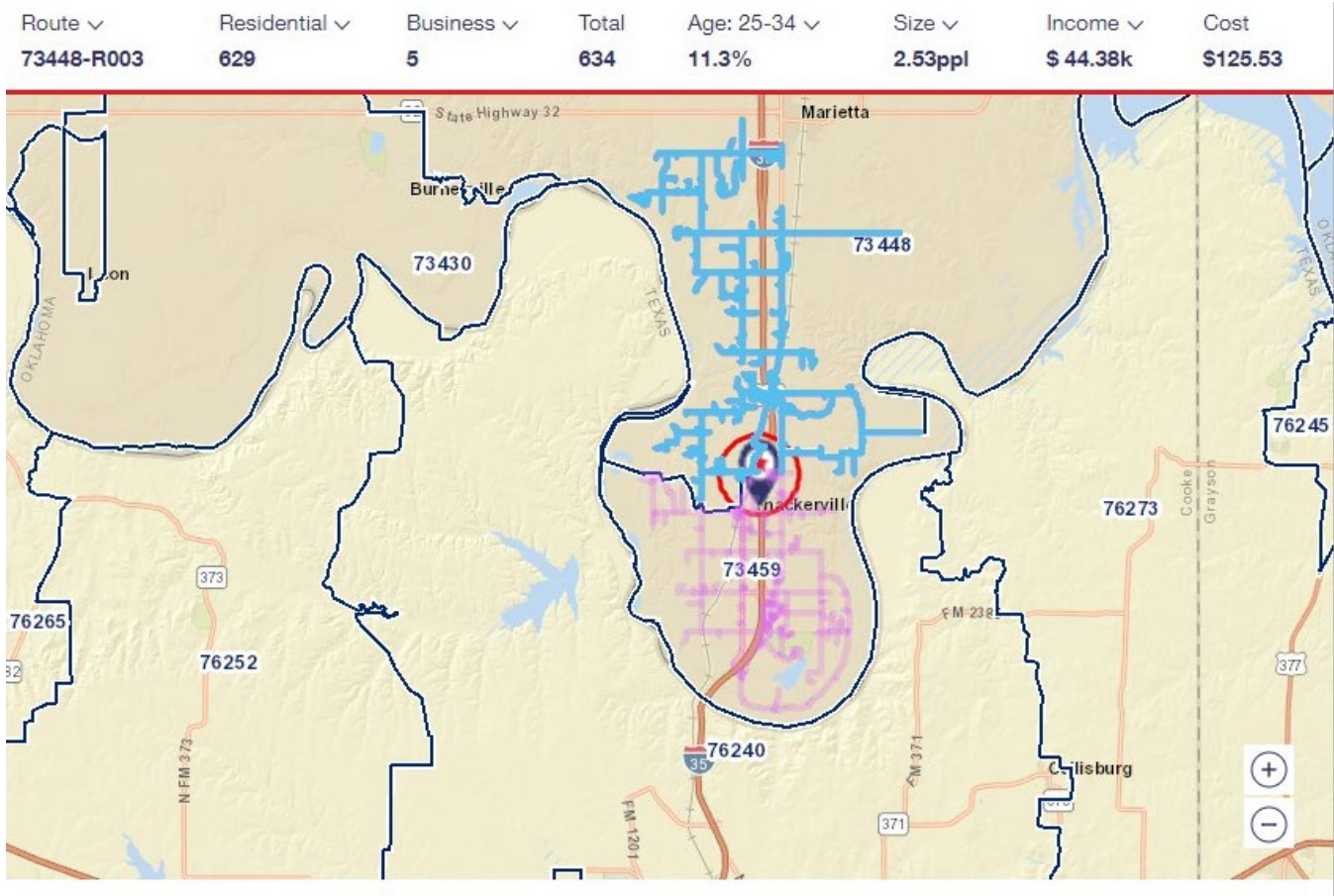
### 3.2 OUTREACH

Outreach was provided by direct mailing by the post office to two (2) mail delivery routes along the project area as noted in blue and purple on map 1. One-thousand-four-hundred-and-fifty (1,450) postcards were printed and mailed by Mercury Press Plus and direct mailed to the Post Office for distribution to routes.

- Postal code 73459-R002 to 816 mail pieces (purple)
- Postal code 73448-R003 to 634 mail pieces (blue)

Direct mailing of pamphlets helps to ensure that individuals who are leasing property within the study area will get the information, as well as the property owners receiving notification through the mail. As the postal route serves a larger area, more people who use the I-35 roadway received the information, increasing the opportunity for input. The postcard also stated that a hard copy of the virtual open house materials could be requested by calling or e-mailing.

### Map 1: Direct Mail Routes



### 3.3 MEETING INFORMATION AND FORMAT

The virtual open house public meeting was held from August 29, 2023, to September 12, 2023. The materials for the virtual meeting can be found at ODOT’s web page at <https://oklahoma.gov/odot/programs-and-projects0/public-meetings-and-hearings0.html>. The virtual materials included a mock room that you can move through. At Station 1 there was a welcome board, on the table was a sign-in, download pamphlet, download FAQ, leave a comment, and down comment form. Station 2 provided an interactive map and a board that had a map of the I-35 roadway projects and status of projects programmed from the Texas State line north to Marietta in Oklahoma. Station 3 provided the project overview. Station 4 provided the environmental overview and noise study. Station 5 provided the next steps. Lastly, Station 6 provided the public comment process and contact information.

All comments were requested to be received on or before September 12, 2023. Written comments could be submitted by mail, email, or by use of an online comment form as described on the submit a comment page.

## 4.0 COMMENTS

### 4.1 PHONE CALL COMMENTS

None

### 4.2 WRITTEN COMMENTS

Four (4) written comments were received from the virtual open house meeting. One comment was repeated twice by the same person. These comments have been grouped into broad categories for ease of reading in the Table 1 below. An ODOT response has been added at the end of each general category. Copies of the citizen written comments are included in **Appendix C**.

<b>Table 1: Written Comments Received</b>	
<b>I-35 projects going to take place simultaneously with the US Hwy 77</b>	
1a	Are any of the I-35 projects going to take place simultaneously with the US Hwy 77 project planned in 2027?
<b>ODOT Response:</b> ODOT's plan is to minimize the simultaneous I-35 /US-77 construction as US-77 offers an important reliever route for I-35. When widening I-35 to 3 lanes in each direction, the contractor will be required to maintain two open lanes in each direction. There will be exceptions to this when a contractor is placing stripes and barrier wall, and they will be required to perform this work during off peak hours.	
<b>Against the proposal on widening the area in proposed</b>	
2a, 3a	I'm against the proposal on widening the area in proposed.
<b>ODOT Response:</b> Thank you for your comment. The purpose and need of the projects are to improve the operational capacity of I-35 to accommodate existing and future traffic volumes, improve safety, and enhance local and regional connectivity.	
<b>Approve and support ODOT's I-35 in Love County Project.</b>	
4a	I approve and support ODOT's I-35 in Love County Project. The aspect that I love about ODOT's I-35 in Love County Project is that I-35 will be widened from 2 to 3 lanes in each direction for a total of 6 lanes from MM 3.2 to MM 4.7 and from MM 5.7 to MM 7.7. The widening of I-35 will improve safety, reduce congestion, and improve freight mobility.
<b>ODOT Response:</b> Thank you for your comment. The purpose and need of the projects are to improve the operational capacity of I-35 to accommodate existing and future traffic volumes, improve safety, and enhance local and regional connectivity.	

## 5.0 AGENCY SOLICITATION LETTERS

Agency solicitation letters were dated and mailed August 29, 2023. These letters provided a short project description, and enclosed project location. The letter requested recipients provide input by September 12, 2023 and included a link to the project presentation information. This letter was sent to twenty-eight (28) State and Federal agencies including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A copy of the solicitation letter and the mailing list is included in **Appendix D**, while **Appendix E** contains the written agency comments received.

### 5.1 AGENCY COMMENTS AND ODOT RESPONSES

One (1) agency letter response was received and is summarized below along with an ODOT response.

1) The **Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)** stated no adverse environmental impacts under DEQ jurisdiction are anticipated for the project; however, please be aware of the following regulatory requirements:

A. Prior to beginning any construction activity disturbing more than one acre, you must submit an NOI and obtain authorization under OKR10, construction stormwater. If you need assistance, please contact DEQ's Stormwater Unit at (405) 702-6100.

B. It is unclear if water and wastewater utilities will need to be relocated as part of this project. Water and wastewater infrastructure projects that will require a construction permit from DEQ's Water Quality Division include the following:

- Construction of new water and wastewater treatment facilities;
- Modifications and upgrades to existing facilities;
- Construction of new water distribution and wastewater collection lines;
- Relocation of existing water distribution and wastewater collection lines.

Projects that do not require a construction permit include:

- Replacement of existing equipment with same type and size equipment;
- Replacement of existing water and wastewater lines with the same size line in the same location.

#### **ODOT Response:**

These comments are noted and ODOT will obtain authorization under OKR10, construction stormwater prior to construction.

## 6.0 SIGN IN

Seven people signed into the virtual meeting on the webpage.



## 7.0 WEB SITE DATA

The site was visited 174 times from August 29, 2023 to September 12, 2023.