

# **OPEN HOUSE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT**

**Open House Date:  
November 9, 2023**

**WIDEN, RESURFACE & BRIDGE ON US-59 FROM APPROXIMATELY  
200 FT. NORTH OF SHELL BRANCH CREEK & EXTEND NORTH  
APPROXIMATELY 4.83 MILES TO WESTVILLE, OK**

**ADAIR COUNTY  
J/P No. 33461(04); Project No. J3-3461(004)PM**

Prepared for:



**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**

Prepared by:



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**February 14, 2024**

## **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As part of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) efforts to keep the public informed and involved in the decision-making process, a public Open House was held. The following is a generalized summary of the public involvement effort, the information provided as part of the outreach, and the comments and input received. ODOT responses to comments are also presented in this document.

### **1.1 OPEN HOUSE DATE & TIME**

November 9, 2023, 4:00 – 6:30 PM

### **1.2 OPEN HOUSE WEBSITE**

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

### **1.3 OPEN HOUSE WEBSITE AVAILABILITY**

November 2 – 16, 2023

### **1.4 PURPOSE OF VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE**

The purpose of the Open House was to present the proposed project, solicit input, and answer questions regarding construction activities, sequencing, and scheduling.

### **1.5 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

ODOT, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes to make safety improvements to US-59 beginning just north of the Shell Branch Creek bridge near Baron, OK and extending north approximately 5 miles to the US-62/US-59 Junction in Westville, OK. This is a continuation of the US-59 corridor improvement project (ODOT JP #30570(04)) which starts in Maryetta and extends north approximately five miles to just south of the Shell Branch Creek bridge near Baron, OK.

This segment of US-59 is a principal arterial US highway with two 12-foot-wide asphalt lanes and varying width shoulders. It has deteriorating pavement, narrow shoulders, poor traffic flow, and limited sight distances in places. Within the project extent, there is one bridge sized structure (NBI #01676) over an unnamed tributary to Shell Branch Creek. This structure is a reinforced concrete box bridge with 2 cells measuring 10 feet wide by 6 feet tall by 39 feet long. The box bridge is narrow with a 32-foot-wide roadway clearance. The 2022 traffic volume was 4,150 vehicles per day (vpd), which is projected to increase to 5,050 vpd by 2042.

### **1.6 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

ODOT is developing design plans for improving this segment of US-59 while taking into consideration the cost of construction, right-of-way and utilities impacts, and potential environmental concerns. Overall, the proposed improvements consist of widening and reconstructing the roadway. From just north of the Shell Branch Creek bridge and extending north for approximately 4.7 miles, the highway will be widened to create two 12-foot-wide driving lanes with 8-foot-wide shoulders. To improve traffic flow, an additional 12-foot-wide passing lane will be added in alternating north- and southbound directions. Just south of Schultz Drive in Westville, OK, the roadway will transition to a five-lane curb-and-gutter facility with four 12-foot-wide driving lanes and a 12-foot-wide center turning lane. Improvements will be made on the existing alignment and most of the widening will be symmetrical; however, some slight offsets will be necessary to improve safety, and to avoid utilities and environmentally sensitive areas.

Additionally, angled intersections, driveways and entrances will be realigned to be perpendicular, and steep hills and dips will be corrected to address limited sight distances. The box bridge over the tributary to Shell Branch Creek will be replaced and lengthened to create a 40-foot-wide roadway clearance.

The acquisition of new temporary and permanent right-of-way will be needed, and the relocation of utilities will occur. The highway will remain open during construction, and access to residences and businesses will be maintained throughout the project duration.

## 1.7 PUBLIC NOTICES

- ODOT mailed invitation letters to property and utility owners, various political entities, Native American Tribes, and other interested parties on November 2, 2023. These letters provided a short project description and included information about the Open House. Enclosed with the letter was a copy of the project location map.
- ODOT mailed Open House postcards using the US Postal Service’s “every door direct” mailing service to property and business owners on two mailing routes within the project area on November 2, 2023.
- ODOT mailed solicitation letters to various state and federal agencies on November 7, 2023. These letters provided a short project description and included information about the Open House and requested that recipients provide input by November 16, 2023. Enclosed with the letter was a copy of the project location and preliminary plans map.
- ODOT sent out a press release and general media announcements on November 7, 2023.

## 1.8 WEBSITE FORMAT

The Open House materials were available for public access online at [www.odot.org/publicmeetings](http://www.odot.org/publicmeetings) between November 2 and 16, 2023. The Open House homepage specified the date, time, and location the meeting was to be held, as well as the purpose of the proposed construction and the Open House, and provided a description and background of the proposed project. From the homepage, on-line visitors could select from the following downloads for detailed information:

- Postcard – A PDF copy of the Open House postcard mailed via Direct Mail.
- Pamphlet – A PDF copy of the Open House pamphlet.
- Public Meeting Handout – A PDF copy of the Open House handout.
- Concept Board North, Concept Board South, Overview Poster and Overview Rollout – Each selection allowed visitors to view PDF copies of the diagrams presented at the Open House.
- Environmental Information – A compilation of the findings of the detailed environmental studies.
- Frequently Asked Questions – A list of frequently asked questions regarding the project and their answers. (Refer to Appendix E for the materials presented.)
- Comment Form – The public was encouraged to participate in the public outreach process and were provided several methods for submitting comments regarding the project. This page provided the deadline and contact information for providing comments.

## 1.9 OPEN HOUSE FORMAT

At the public Open House, attendees were asked to add their name and contact information to a sign-in sheet. A handout was available to everyone, which described the project and illustrated the proposed project alignment. Presentation boards were set up, and personnel from ODOT, including the engineering design team, District 1, and Environmental Programs Division, were available to answer questions and take comments from the public. Attendees were encouraged to write their specific questions or concerns related to the project on the available Comment Form. (Refer to Appendix E for the materials presented and the meeting sign-in sheets.)

## 1.10 SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RESPONSES

In total, ODOT received input from one (1) agency, one (1) tribe, and six (6) specific property owners. The comments and responses associated with each media are presented in the following sections.

### 1.10.1 Property Owner Comments

COMMENTS	
GENERAL COMMENT CONTEXT	INPUT
Respondent 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Husband recently passed away and he was the only one listed on the property deed. She has hired an attorney and is in the process of getting things amended, but she expressed concern about how the proposed project would impact the issue.</li> </ul>
Respondent 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally happy with the proposed project.</li> </ul>
Respondent 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expressed that they thought the passing lane should start as soon as possible after the RCB bridge replacement due to the large hill to the north.</li> </ul>
Respondent 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requested a dedicated right turn lane at the Rural Water District Building (S 4724 Rd.) for southbound traffic.</li> </ul>
Respondent 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wanted to visit with ODOT-Right-of-Way to understand the relocation and compensation process.</li> </ul>
Respondent 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerned about their tree line (privacy trees) being taken out and the new right-of-way proximity to their shop building.</li> </ul>
Respondent 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Owns a small tract of land about 1.5 miles north of the start of the project on the west side. It is vacant land, and he would like to know what his options are and what would be left.</li> <li>States that after widening takes place, there would be no driveway to the property.</li> <li>ODOT representatives at the Open House were all very helpful and informative.</li> </ul>
Respondent 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could not attend the Open House due to work, but received information from neighbors that their homes would be directly impacted by the highway being redirected through their property, essentially making their residence unlivable.</li> <li>Would like more specific information as to exactly where the highway will be moved and when.</li> <li>Would like to know what ODOT's intentions are for their homes.</li> <li>Requested a detailed map of the current location of the existing highway and where exactly it will be moved, and GPS coordinates for the beginning and end of the new road to help make decisions about their future in the area.</li> <li>Just purchased this property six months ago.</li> <li>Concerned about daughter and other children having to change schools.</li> <li>Requests response from ODOT as soon as possible.</li> </ul>
Respondent 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approves of the proposed project.</li> <li>Widening US-59 from two to four lanes in each direction from the Shell Branch Creek Bridge to the US-62/US-59 intersection will improve safety, reduce congestion, and improve freight mobility.</li> </ul>

Respondent 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanked ODOT for improving Highway 59 and for providing the project information.</li> <li>• Moved to Adair in 2021 and has not felt safe driving on the curvy, one-lane roads in the area.</li> <li>• Others speed and pass for no reason on stretches of road that are highly dangerous and without good sight lines day or night, and no place to pull off the road safely.</li> <li>• Lighting is non-existent and paved road lines are almost invisible.</li> <li>• Too many people have died or been injured.</li> <li>• Says the improvements cannot come soon enough and she hopes the process goes well for everyone.</li> </ul>
Respondent 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exits driveway onto US-59 almost every day from the east side, not far from the top of the hill, and turns south to drive to the Baron Community Building. There is a double yellow line in the middle of the highway. Feels guilty crossing it to turn left across the northbound lane to enter the Community Building parking area, but does not know of any other options for entry to that area.</li> <li>• Believes the speed limit through the Baron area needs to be reduced to about 45 mph from the top of the hill (north of RWD #3 office) to the Baron Fork bridge. There is a lot of traffic entering and leaving the highway in that stretch, and the liability level is high.</li> <li>• Would like these issues to be evaluated and addressed now rather than waiting until the new roadwork is put in place.</li> </ul>

### 1.10.2 ODOT Responses to Property Owner Comments

The responses received were summarized and generically grouped into categories, each of which are presented below. Next to each comment is ODOT’s response.

ODOT RESPONSES TO ALL PUBLIC COMMENTS	
ISSUE/COMMENT/CONCERN	RESPONSE
Property & Right-of-Way Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ODOT’s right-of-way process is planned for FFY 2025 and the construction is planned for FFY 2029. During ODOT’s right-of-way process, specific property concerns can be discussed one on one with right-of-way agents. Design updates can be made based on these conversations.</li> </ul>
Specific US-59 Improvement Requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roadway speed limits are taken into consideration during design development. The designers will make sure the roadway design and speed limit are compatible and safe for drivers.</li> </ul>
Project Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ODOT appreciates the comments of support</li> </ul>

### 1.10.3 Public Official Comments

Before the start of the Open House, Oklahoma senators and representatives, four tribes associated with the project area, local officials, and other interested parties were mailed Public Invite letters to notify them of the Virtual Open House and invite them to participate. One (1) response was received. Individual comments are summarized below.

PUBLIC OFFICIAL COMMENTS	
AGENCY	INPUT
<b>Caddo Nation</b> Historic Preservation Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciates ODOT’s willingness to conduct proper consultation, pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.</li> <li>The project does not affect known cultural, traditional or sacred sites of interest to the Caddo Nation.</li> <li>The Caddo Nation has no objection to the project at this time.</li> </ul> In the event that an inadvertent discovery of potentially relevant cultural sites, funerary objects, or human remains occurs, The Caddo Nation requests that the project be immediately halted and the proper authorities contacted. The Caddo Nation will need to be notified of such a discovery within 24 hours.
	ODOT RESPONSE
	Comments noted.

### 1.10.4 Agency Comments

After the start of the Virtual Open House, several agencies were mailed solicitation letters requesting comments on the proposed project. Two (2) agencies responded. Individual comments are summarized below.

AGENCY COMMENTS	
AGENCY	INPUT
<b>Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)</b> General Counsel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No environmental concerns under DEQ jurisdiction are anticipated.</li> <li>DEQ Recommended ODOT obtain a construction storm water permit (OKR10).</li> <li>If USACE determines a Section 404 Permit is required, ODOT must obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from DEQ.</li> <li>If water or wastewater utilities will be re-located as part of this project, a construction permit from DEQ’s Water Quality Division may be required.</li> </ul>
	ODOT RESPONSE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The DEQ stated that ODOT should obtain a construction storm water permit authorization under OKR10. ODOT is aware of the permitting requirements and the process involved. ODOT requires construction contractors to obtain an OKR10 permit authorization (when applicable) prior to starting any construction activities.</li> </ul>
<b>OK Aeronautics Commission (OAC)</b> Aviation Program Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OAC wanted to remind ODOT of the obligation to comply with 14 CFR Part 77.13 regarding construction activity near federal airports.</li> <li>OAC did state that the potential project does not appear to pose a hazard to safe and efficient use of navigable airspace.</li> </ul>
	ODOT RESPONSE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments noted.</li> </ul>

### 1.10.5 Overall Comment Summary

All comments were compiled below. The table is designed to provide an overall summary of the input received with respect to project approval and the major issues of concern.

<b>SUMMARY OF ALL COMMENTS</b>	
<b>ISSUE / COMMENT / CONCERN</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COMMENTS/RESPONSES</b>
Total Number of Individual Commenters / Responders	9
Residential & Business Comments	6
Public Officials Comments and/or Tribal Comments	1
Agency Comments	2
Specifically Approve of Project / Provided Support for Project	3
Specifically Disapprove of Project	0
General Comment Categories	-
o Property Impacts / Right-of-Way Concerns	6
o Requests for specific improvements to US-59	4