

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT

**Open House Date:
April 11, 2024**

**GRADE, DRAIN, BRIDGE & SURFACE SH-9: FROM 1.0 MILE EAST OF
THE SH-2 JUNCTION, EAST 4.0 MILES**

**HASKELL COUNTY
J/P No. 33801(04); Project No. J3-3801(004)PM**

Prepared for:



**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**

Prepared by:



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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.

OPEN HOUSE DATE & TIME

April 11, 2024 from 4:00 – 6:30 PM

OPEN HOUSE LOCATION

Kiamichi Technology Center
1410 Old Military Road
Stigler, OK 74462

OPEN HOUSE WEBSITE

www.odot.org/publicmeetings

OPEN HOUSE WEBSITE AVAILABILITY

April 4 – April 18, 2024

PURPOSE OF OPEN HOUSE

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

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes to make safety improvements to SH-9 starting just east of the Kings Creek bridge outside of Whitefield and extending east 4 miles in Haskell County, OK. This segment of SH-9 is an open section minor arterial highway facility with two 12-foot-wide paved driving lanes and 3-foot-wide shoulders. Within the project area, there are angled intersections and drives, poor traffic flow, deteriorating pavement, narrow shoulders, and substandard sag curves. This stretch of SH-9 has one span bridge and five narrow reinforced concrete box (RCB) bridges listed on the National Bridge Inventory (NBIs #29187, #11605, #11607, #11934, #01301 & 11614). The 2023 traffic volume is 6,900 vehicles per day (vpd), which is projected to increase to 8,300 vpd by 2043.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

ODOT is developing design plans for reconstructing this segment of SH-9 while taking into consideration the cost of construction, right-of-way and utilities impacts, and potential environmental concerns. The proposed improvements consist of symmetrically widening and reconstructing the roadway on existing alignment to create two 12-foot-wide driving lanes with 10-foot-wide paved shoulders. To improve traffic flow, an alternating 12-foot-wide passing lane with a 4-foot-wide shoulder will be added along a 2-mile segment of the corridor. Angled intersections, driveways, and entrances will be realigned, and steep dips will be corrected to address limited sight distances. The RCB bridges will be lengthened to create 44-foot-wide roadway clearances.

The acquisition of new temporary or permanent right-of-way is anticipated, and the relocation of utilities is likely. The highway will remain open during construction.

PUBLIC NOTICES

- ODOT mailed Open House postcards using the US Postal Service’s “every door direct” mailing service to property and business owners on four mailing routes within the project area on March 21, 2024.
- ODOT mailed invitation letters to property and utility owners, various political entities, Native American Tribes, and other interested parties on March 21, 2024. 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 solicitation letters to various state and federal agencies on March 21, 2024. These letters provided a short project description and included information about the Open House and requested that recipients provide input by April 26, 2024. 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 April 5, 2024.

WEBSITE FORMAT

The Open House materials were available for public access online at www.odot.org/publicmeetings between April 4 and April 18, 2024. The Open House home page 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 home page, 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.
- Public Meeting Handout – A PDF copy of the Open House handout.
- Project Overview Map – An overview poster of the project area.
- Project Typical Section Figure – A poster illustrating the proposed typical sections for the project.
- Bridge A Plan & Profile Figure – A poster illustrating the proposed plan and profile for Bridge A.
- Project Rollout Exhibit – A rollout poster detailing the proposed project for its entire length.
- 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.
- 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.

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.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RESPONSES

In total, ODOT received input from three (3) agencies and eleven (11) specific property owners. The comments and responses associated with each media are presented in the following sections.

Property Owner Comments

GENERAL COMMENTS	
GENERAL COMMENT CONTEXT	INPUT FROM ATTENDEES TO DESIGNERS & ODOT STAFF
Safety Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish Creek Road intersection safety was the major concern. • Concern was raised about rock trucks entering the highway. • Pedestrians and trucks both cross at ~STA. 330+00. • There is a school bus stop at ~STA. 185+00.
Design Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple attendees commented on the Fish Creek Road intersection design. They stated it is very dangerous and turn lanes are needed. • Requests to flatten the hills (line-of-sight issues). • Turn lanes are needed near both ends of the project. • Shift the passing lanes. • Lower design speed to 55 mph.
Right-of-Way Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees expressed interest in the right-of-way process and impacts to their property.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS	
INDIVIDUAL	INPUT TAKEN FROM COMMENT FORMS
Respondent 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need turn lanes at Fish Creek Road (at end of project).
Respondent 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish Creek and SH-9 needs a turn lane. • Owns a wrecker service and works a lot of crashes at this intersection, some fatalities.
Respondent 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fish Creek County Road entrance needs an entrance road to the right from Fish Creek and a left turn lane coming from the east. • The hill to the west needs to be lowered to be able to see oncoming traffic.
Respondent 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lives in Stigler. • Thrilled that ODOT is widening and improving the highway. • Concerned about project impacts to property.
Respondent 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please remove the hill before the Fish Creek turn off on HWY 9 so people can see if anyone is coming before advancing onto the highway. • Too many people have been injured or killed at the intersection, and it would be life-saving if ODOT could start the project in that area instead of the other end. • A stop light and turning lane would help tremendously.
Respondent 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lives just off HWY 9 and travels this road almost daily. • Disappointed that there is no proposed turn lane on HWY 9 where you turn onto Fish Creek Road. This is a dangerous turn and there have been many accidents at this site. • The speed accelerates too quickly coming west from Stigler. • The hill needs to be lowered coming from the west into Stigler approaching Fish Creek Road. • There needs to be a turn lane coming from the east out of Stigler where you turn onto Fish Creek Road. This is a very busy road. Accidents happen often at this turn. • This is the most urgent problem on this stretch of road.
Respondent 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owns property along SH-9, west of Stigler. Does not believe it is necessary for ODOT to need 20 ft. of additional frontage real estate from land owners on both the north and south sides of the highway. • Does not understand the necessity if ODOT is adding a middle lane. • After studying the photos and listening to comments, it is apparent that ODOT has not put much effort, thought, or planning into this project. • The most dangerous intersection (Fish Creek Road) that this project encompasses is not being addressed. Asks ODOT to check into the collision and fatality records of SH-9 and Fish Creek Road.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like ODOT to notify them about any meetings or correspondence by mail to their current address.
Respondent 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanked ODOT for its attention to this stretch of SH-9. • Has lived south of the intersection of SH-9 and Fish Creek Road for 35 years. There is a design/safety issue with the intersection that creates an imminent hazard. • Requests ODOT to strongly consider an on-ramp from Fish Creek Road on to SH-9 going to the east, and a turn lane from SH-9 to go south onto Fish Creek Road. • The hill on SH-9 west of this intersection is definitely too close and traffic too fast at the present time for anything to work safely except the suggestions provided. • There should also be a turn lane to exit south off SH-9 onto VFW Road.
Respondent 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water coming off this area behind their house on the west side of their property has washed out their fence and is creating a problem. When water goes under the highway, it is eating into the side of the highway and the concrete box is too small. At times, water runs over their driveway and has caused them to lose part of the driveway. Sometimes, water runs over the highway, causing issues with traffic. • Has a driveway permit to widen their driveway, but thinks it was designed with too small a tinhorn.
Respondent 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be a turn lane at every intersection. • It would not hurt to have a passing lane on the straight-of-ways.
Respondent 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biggest concern is the Fish Creek Road area. Was involved in a crash there. Needs an extra lane. • Concerned about the impacts on family's land by the old drive-in theater. • Safety is the biggest issue.

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
Project Appreciation	ODOT appreciates the comment of support.
Design & Safety Concerns	Improve Fish Creek Road Intersection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A left turn lane will be included at Fish Creek Road.
	Flatten the Hills Along SH-9 (line-of-sight issues): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The improvement at Fish Creek Road should resolve issues on the east end. • The vertical correction on the west end is addressed by the current design.
	Additional Turning Lanes at other Intersections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the design process, ODOT considers the need to improve intersections based on the latest highway safety design standards. • ODOT is considering an additional left turn lane at VFW Road.
	Lower Speed Limit to 55 mph: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ODOT will re-evaluate the speed limit once construction is complete.
Drainage Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The designer is reviewing the areas of concern.
Property Impacts & Right-of-Way Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right-of-way process is not anticipated until ~2026. • In general, an agent from ODOT's Right-of-Way Division will contact all affected property owners to discuss their specific situation and affected property. • More information, along with ODOT's Property Rights Brochure, can be found at ODOT's website. (https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/odot/documents/meetings/a2020/200605/property.pdf)

Public Official Comments

Before the start of the Open House, Oklahoma senators and representatives, five tribes associated with the project area, local officials, and other interested parties were mailed Public Invite letters to notify them of the Open House and invite them to participate. No responses were received.

PUBLIC OFFICIAL COMMENTS	
PUBLIC OFFICIAL	INPUT
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No responses were received.
	ODOT RESPONSE
	N/A

Agency Comments

Before the start of the Open House, several agencies were mailed solicitation letters requesting comments on the proposed project. Three (3) agencies responded. Individual comments are summarized below.

AGENCY COMMENTS	
AGENCY	INPUT
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) General Counsel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No environmental concerns under DEQ jurisdiction are anticipated. DEQ Recommended ODOT obtain a construction storm water permit (OKR10). 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.
	ODOT RESPONSE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
OK Aeronautics Commission (OAC) Aviation Program Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OAC stated that the potential project does not appear to pose a hazard to safe and efficient use of navigable airspace.
	ODOT RESPONSE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments noted.
Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) Oil & Gas Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not identify any wells, new permits, or intents near the proposed construction area. Closest well to HWY 9 is approximately 230 yards away in SEC. 17-9N-R20E.
	ODOT RESPONSE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments noted.

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.

SUMMARY OF ALL COMMENTS	
ISSUE / COMMENT / CONCERN	NUMBER OF SPECIFIC COMMENTS/RESPONSES
Total Number of Individual Commenters / Responders	14
Residential & Business Comments	11
Public Officials Comments and/or Tribal Comments	0
Agency Comments	3
Specifically Approve of Project / Provided Support for Project	2
Specifically Disapprove of Project	0
General Comment Categories	-
o Safety Concerns	6
o Drainage Concerns	1
o Property Impacts	1
o Design Suggestions	7