

# HIGHLIGHTS



# Chapter 1 Highlights: Introduction to Oklahoma Freight Transportation Plan

ODOT is developing the Oklahoma Freight Transportation Plan (OFTP or the Plan) in order to provide a safe, reliable, and efficient freight transportation system that will support the growing economy and population in the state. It will accomplish the following outcomes:

- Increase attention and focus on freight needs and opportunities.
- Improve coordination of freight planning across multiple modes.
- Provide guidance for other state and regional/metropolitan freight planning efforts.
- Obtain input from the public and private stakeholders regarding state freight planning.

The Plan was developed in a manner consistent with the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). The FAST Act establishes a new funding category dedicated to freight—the National Highway Freight Program (NHFP)—and requires that states identify the use of NHFP funds within a state freight plan. Use of the NHFP funds is contingent on the Plan’s coverage of certain specified topics and approval by USDOT by December 2017. Plan products include a review of highway, freight rail, and waterway freight facilities, a bottleneck analysis, and a freight investment element identifying projects to be funded with NHFP funds.

The OFTP exists in a broad planning context. In addition to national freight plans and goals, the OFTP was guided by the Oklahoma Long Range Transportation Plan, which includes by reference the state’s metropolitan transportation plans. The Plan was also informed by the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which incorporates the metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs, ODOT’s 8 Year Construction Work Plan, and numerous regional and metropolitan transportation plans from around the state. The first four years of the 8 Year Construction Work Plan encompass the STIP four-year program. Finally, it was developed in coordination with the updated Statewide Rail Plan, which is expected to be completed in 2018.





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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Oklahoma is located in the south-central plains of the United States and is characterized by a diverse and growing demographic and economic base. Major industries in Oklahoma include oil and gas, agriculture, aerospace, and manufacturing. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) is charged with planning, constructing, and maintaining Oklahoma's surface transportation infrastructure, including the interstate system, the U.S. highway system, and the state highway system. ODOT also manages state-owned freight railroads, and administers other multimodal programs, including passenger rail, rural public transit, and the waterways program.

The state's population in 2016 was 3.9 million and is projected to exceed 4.2 million in 2025. The population growth is expected to be strong in Tulsa and Oklahoma City, the state's two large metropolitan areas. Low to moderate growth is expected in the remainder of the state. Employment growth is forecasted in much of the state. Freight miles of travel are expected to fall in line with U.S. DOT projections and grow slightly higher than one percent per year.

### 1.2 PURPOSE

ODOT is developing the Oklahoma Freight Transportation Plan (OFTP or the Plan) in order to provide a safe, reliable, and efficient freight transportation system that will support the growing economy and population in the state. It will accomplish the following outcomes:

- Increase attention and focus on freight needs and opportunities.
- Improve coordination of freight planning across multiple modes.
- Provide guidance for other state and regional/metropolitan freight planning efforts.
- Obtain input from the public and private stakeholders regarding state freight planning.

The Plan was developed in a manner consistent with the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). The FAST Act establishes a new funding category dedicated to freight—the National Highway Freight Program (NHFP)—and requires that states identify the use of NHFP funds within a state freight plan. Use of the NHFP funds is contingent on the Plan's coverage of certain specified topics and approval by USDOT by December 2017.

A statewide freight plan is required to address the following components according to the FAST Act:

- Freight trends, needs, and issues
- Freight policies, strategies, and performance measures to guide investment
- When applicable, a list of critical rural and urban highway corridors; critical multimodal rural facilities and corridors

- Improved ability to meet national freight goals
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and other technologies and strategies to improve freight safety and efficiency
- Improvements that are required to reduce deterioration on heavy-vehicle routes
- Inventory of, and strategies for, facilities with freight mobility issues (e.g., freight bottlenecks)
- Strategies for congestion or delay caused by freight
- Freight investment element with priority projects
- Consultation with a Freight Advisory Committee

### 1.2.1 FREIGHT VISION STATEMENT

The OFTP is part of a broad policy context. The State of Oklahoma has a set of established transportation goals, policies, and strategies—formulated in the state’s Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and in other documents—which the OFTP supports. Additionally, the OFTP must conform to, and demonstrate achievement of, national freight goals as set forth in federal legislation. To accomplish both missions—and as an expression of purpose for the management of the freight system in the state—the OFTP makes the following Freight Vision Statement for Oklahoma:

Oklahoma will continue to provide for the safe, reliable and productive performance of our multimodal freight system as a mainstay of our economy and an essential supplier of goods to our people.

This Freight Vision Statement recognizes that Oklahoma’s freight system is multimodal in nature, and is important for supporting the state’s economy and supplying the essential needs of its residents, workers, and visitors.

### 1.2.2 FREIGHT PLAN CONTEXT

#### HISTORY OF FREIGHT PLANNING IN OKLAHOMA

ODOT has always planned for the transport of people and goods, despite the fact that ODOT has not previously issued an OFTP. Evidence of efforts in the past ten years include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Oklahoma Ports of Entry Stations Study, 2008** – Ports of entry are locations at the state border where weight and safety inspections are conducted on commercial vehicles. Developed jointly for ODOT, the Oklahoma Corporation Commission and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, the 2008 Ports of Entry Study goals were to identify ways to do more truck safety inspections and reviews, employ technology to identify vehicles that may pose security threats without adversely affecting goods movement, and to employ better enforcement techniques to keep trucks operating within weight and safety limits. Ports of Entry help promote safety, mobility, and economic vitality with minimal impact on the ability of trucks to carry out commerce in and through the state.

- **Oklahoma Freight Flow Report 2012** – In 2012, ODOT conducted an analysis of freight flows within, through, and into and out of the State of Oklahoma. The analysis reviewed freight direction, tonnage, and value data for commercial vehicles, inland waterways, and freight railroads. Base year for analysis was 2009.
- **Oklahoma Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan, 2012** – The Oklahoma Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan was completed in April 2012 by ODOT’s Rail Programs Division. The Plan identified a number of projects, programs, and additional studies that would improve the movement of freight by rail in Oklahoma. The Plan also provided details on funding programs that could be used to support these recommendations.
- **Freight Summit, 2016** – A Freight Summit was held in Oklahoma in July 2016. This Summit provided both an opportunity for freight stakeholders to learn about the FAST Act emphasis on freight and to express hopes and concerns about the freight transportation system in Oklahoma. Hosted by the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce and the Oklahoma City and Tulsa area metropolitan planning organizations, approximately 45 individuals attended, including representatives from federal, state, and local governments, and trucking, railroad, ports, and business leaders from a variety of industry sectors.
- **Long Range Transportation Plan, 2015** – The OFTP utilizes a broad planning framework. In addition to national freight plans and goals, the OFTP was guided by the Oklahoma LRTP, which includes by reference the state’s metropolitan transportation plans. ODOT has adopted an LRTP every five years, beginning in 1995. The most recent—the Long Range Transportation Plan: 2015-2040—was adopted in August 2015. The LRTP includes a chapter on Freight Transportation and Economic Conditions, and a pilot study of using the National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS) to evaluate travel time on freight corridors. A Freight Advisory Committee was convened to assist with the development of the Plan.
- **State and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs and other Plans** – The Plan was also informed by the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) which incorporates the metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), ODOT’s 8-Year Construction Work Plan, and numerous regional and metropolitan transportation plans from around the state. The first four years of the 8-Year Construction Work Plan encompasses the four-year STIP. The STIP was developed in coordination with the updated Oklahoma State Rail Plan: 2018-2021 (OSRP). Both the 2018-2021 STIP and the OSRP are scheduled for completion in late 2017.

## ODOT RESPONSIBILITIES AND FREIGHT PARTNERS

As mentioned earlier, ODOT is responsible for Oklahoma’s surface transportation infrastructure, including the interstate system, the U.S. highway system, and the state highway system. The network that encompasses the interstate, U.S. and Oklahoma highways, is sometimes referred to as the “state highway system”, and this network is the beginning framework for developing the OFTP. As the Plan proceeds, certain highways will be highlighted for their importance to freight transportation. In the freight arena, ODOT also manages state-owned freight railroads and administers the waterways program. In relation to freight, ODOT works closely with railroad and port owners and operators to support intermodal connectivity and mobility for goods movement.

ODOT is an active partner in additional transportation functions that involve various federal and state agencies, local jurisdictions, and private businesses. Numerous public and private sector organizations must fulfill their roles and cooperate with each other to address the state’s transportation needs.

Federal and state agencies that are critical to supporting freight transportation efforts in Oklahoma include the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority. For freight transportation planning purposes, other critical agencies and organizations include, but are not limited to: airports, metropolitan planning organizations, Native American tribal entities, port authorities, railroad companies, and private sector freight transportation businesses.

ODOT is regionally organized with eight field divisions that correspond to Transportation Commissioner Districts and has its central administration office in Oklahoma City (**Figure 1-1**).

**Figure 1-1: ODOT Division Headquarters Information**



## 1.3 GOALS

### 1.3.1 OKLAHOMA FREIGHT GOALS

The Oklahoma freight goals, summarized in Table 1-1, are consistent with national freight goals, as enumerated in the FAST Act.

**Table 1-1: National Freight Goals**

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|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Policies, operational improvements and investments for economic competitiveness; congestion and bottleneck reduction; reduced costs and improved year-round reliability; and productivity gain, especially by high-value job generators</li><li>2. Safety, security, efficiency, and resilience – urban and rural</li><li>3. Network state of good repair</li><li>4. Economic efficiency and productivity of networks</li><li>5. Improve short and long distance freight movement – across rural, rural-urban, and port/airport/gateway connections</li><li>6. Flexibility for multistate corridor planning and organization</li><li>7. Reduce environmental impacts</li><li>8. Avoid burdens to state and local governments</li></ol> |
|---|

Source: WSP adapted from <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/legislation.cfm>

**CONSISTENCY BETWEEN STATE AND NATIONAL GOALS**

**Table 1-2** lists Oklahoma’s freight goals in the priority order determined by the Oklahoma Freight Advisory Committee. The table shows how freight goals correspond to an established LRTP goal area, and to one or more established national freight goals.

**Table 1-2: Oklahoma’s Freight Goals and Correspondence to Long Range Transportation Plan Goals and National Freight Goals**

LRTP Goal Area	OFTP Freight Goals	National Freight Goal #
Safe and Secure Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the safety and efficiency of freight movement and its interaction with other vehicles.</li> <li>▪ Ensure the ability of urban and rural highways to safely accommodate growth in freight traffic.</li> </ul>	2
Infrastructure Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meet freight transportation needs by maintaining the Oklahoma State Highway System in a state of good repair.</li> <li>▪ Support the preservation of Oklahoma multimodal freight networks through appropriate polices and initiatives.</li> </ul>	3, 5
Mobility: Choice, Connectivity and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure the competitive performance of the Oklahoma freight system.</li> <li>▪ Foster a diverse portfolio of modal choices for Oklahoma’s freight shippers and receivers in urban and rural areas.</li> <li>▪ Support end-to-end operations of industry supply chains in Oklahoma markets for Oklahoma’s industries.</li> </ul>	1, 4
Economic Vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote competitive access to domestic and international markets for Oklahoma’s industries.</li> <li>▪ Direct freight-related transportation investments to support the state’s economy.</li> </ul>	1, 4
Environmental Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support the growth of Oklahoma clean energy by promoting clean fuel use by freight providers.</li> <li>▪ Avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse environmental impacts related to freight transportation.</li> </ul>	7
Efficient Intermodal System Management and Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Capitalize on federal funding and finance programs to aid investment in the freight transportation system.</li> <li>▪ Coordinate freight corridor development programs with neighboring states.</li> <li>▪ Safeguard industry supply chains by improving resiliency of the freight transportation system to withstand disruptions.</li> </ul>	2, 6, 8

Source: Oklahoma Freight Advisory Committee

## 1.4 OVERVIEW OF PLAN PROCESS AND TIMEFRAME

The OFTP base year is 2015. The Plan considers short-term (2018–2022) and long-term future (through 2045) forecasts. A series of technical report chapters provides in-depth details on the data analysis, and is organized as shown below. Plan products include a review of highway, freight rail, and waterway facilities, a bottleneck analysis, and a freight investment element identifying projects to be funded with NHFP funds.

Chapter Number and Name	Task Purpose
<b>1: Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describes the Plan vision, goals, and purpose.</li> <li>▪ Explains roles of ODOT and its partners in Plan process.</li> </ul>
<b>2: Data Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describes data sources and resources used to develop the Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>3: Outreach and Plan Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engages public and private stakeholders and state agencies for sharing of information, guidance of plan development, and appropriate coordination of effort.</li> </ul>
<b>4: Facility Profiles, Trends, Opportunities &amp; Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Characterizes modal system, usage, and forecast freight growth for short term and long term.</li> <li>▪ Discusses market outlook on trends, challenges, and opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Incorporates stakeholder views.</li> </ul>
<b>5: Goals and Performance Measures, Policies and Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establishes direction and measurements of achievement.</li> <li>▪ Explains connection between goals and performance measures.</li> </ul>
<b>6: Network Designation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meets FAST Act requirements for National Highway Freight Network and National Multimodal Freight Network designations.</li> <li>▪ Identifies heavy haul routes.</li> </ul>
<b>7: Bottleneck Analysis and Mobility Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analyzes performance, conditions and risks related to growth.</li> <li>▪ Meets FAST Act requirements, and provides focus for investment recommendations.</li> <li>▪ Discusses issues related to heavy freight vehicles.</li> </ul>
<b>8: Improvement Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establishes economic context for conditions and performance.</li> <li>▪ Considers facility improvement options and operational and ITS alternatives.</li> <li>▪ Develops project prioritization criteria for use in Investment Element.</li> </ul>
<b>9: Freight Investment Element</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Documents cost estimates and available resources to guide investment plan.</li> <li>▪ Identifies freight projects, including prioritized projects for use of freight formula funds, for 2018–2022 within context of statewide direction for freight.</li> </ul>

## 1.5 CONCLUSION

The OFTP reflects consideration of the freight-related requirements included in the FAST Act, which was signed into law in December of 2015. Among its many stipulations, the FAST Act establishes necessary elements for a State Freight Plan, and mandates that the Plan be developed either as a stand-alone document or as part of the LRTP. Oklahoma has chosen the former path, and this technical document explains in detail how ODOTs efforts meet the FAST Act requirements. The Formal Plan Report will be a streamlined, easy-to-read report summarizing the highlights and conclusions of the Technical Reports.