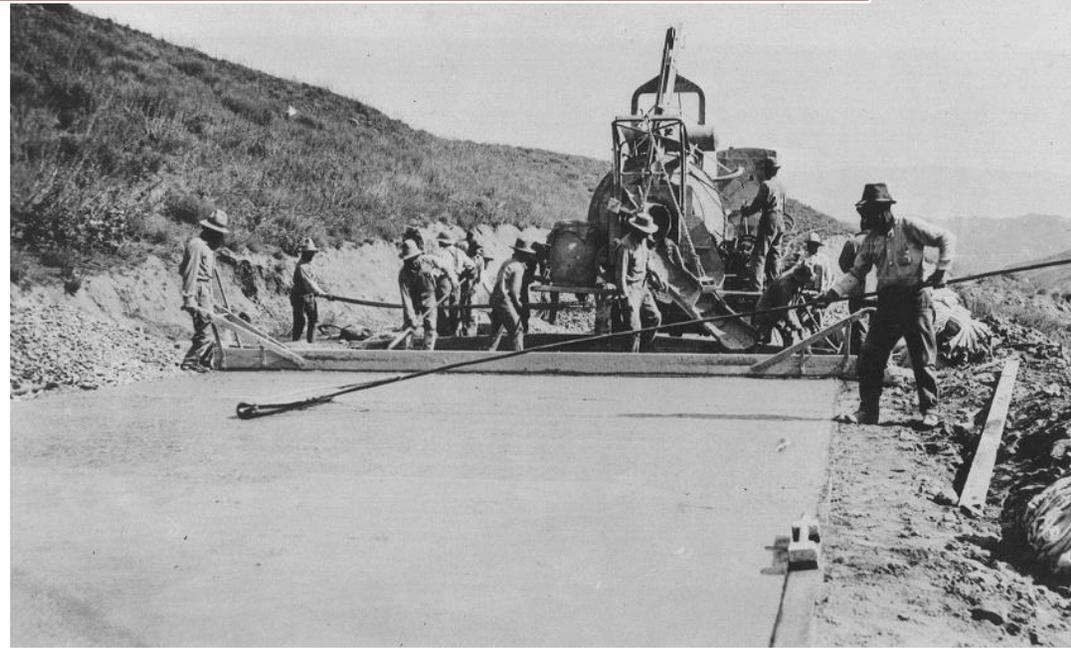


2040

Executive Summary Okfuskee LRTP



Okfuskee County

CORTPO

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*Cover Image:
Early Road-building efforts in Oklahoma
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Executive Summary

Transportation Planning for Rural Oklahoma

Transportation is fundamental to all aspects of community life. A healthy community and economy must have a transportation system that is stable, with sufficient funding for preservation, maintenance and needed improvement of all modes over time. Economic development, access to goods and services, housing, jobs, the economy and natural resource management are all based on the transportation system. Together, these factors determine the quality of life in a community.

The Okfuskee County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is the product of comprehensive study of data, community meetings, public surveys and planning research. Together, these efforts provided an opportunity for local stakeholders to assess the existing transportation system, consider needs, trends and alternatives, and identify specific priorities for the county and region in the context of sound planning principles.

Funding

The primary challenge to improving transportation in Okfuskee County is to secure adequate funding. The current level of federal, state and local funds will be inadequate to ensure long term maintenance of roads, rail, and transit. For that reason, it will be necessary to find additional funding in order to maintain or improve current service levels and accommodate the needs of the residential and business communities over the period of this Plan.

Sustainability

Long-term sustainability and resilience in transportation are needed to ensure that people and the economy can continue to function in the event of disaster or unpredictable future conditions.

Goals supporting sustainability in the Long-Range Transportation Plan include maintenance and preservation of the current system, enhanced economic vitality, improved mobility, connectivity, safety and security. Transit, pedestrian safety, accommodations for bicycle travel all contribute to the resilience of a community.

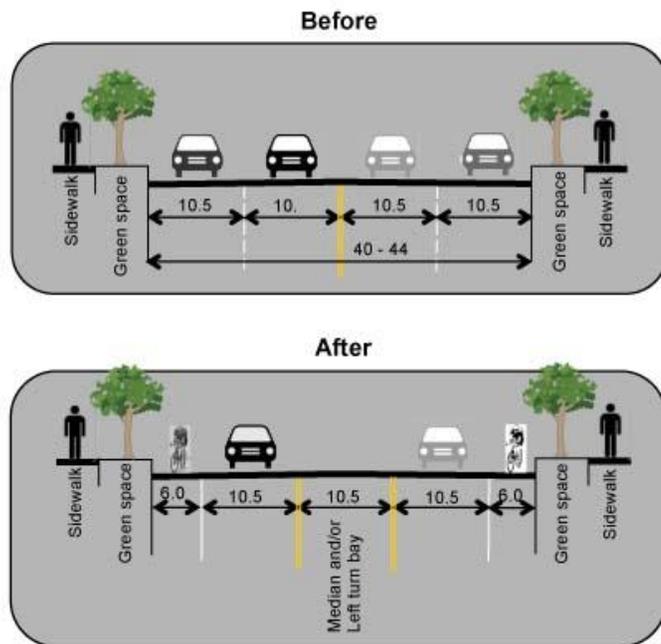
Near-total reliance on a single mode of transportation may be an insufficient foundation for a secure and healthy community.



Recreational trails can be used as safe routes for pedestrians when they are well planned to connect with common destinations as well as recreational areas

A Policy and Project Plan

Many of the transportation safety and access needs identified by the community can be addressed over time with a shift in policy to accommodate a wider range of modal options such as signage and painted line adjustment to existing pavement profiles. An example of the type of low cost changes that can be made is shown below. Many towns and cities have adopted this strategy, known as a “road diet.” The existing profile of a road can be reconfigured to include a center turn lane and two bike lanes. In addition to the improved accommodation for bikes, the conversion results in a reduction of potential points of contact among vehicles when those turning are isolated from through traffic.



Okfuskee County

Okfuskee County's historic economy has been based on the petroleum industry, ranching and farming. In the early 1900s the county had one-fourth of its surface covered with timber, and one-half was under cultivation in the production of cotton, corn, oats, hay, Kaffir corn (milo, sorghum). Today, agriculture and energy production continue to be the foundations of the local economy.

Population

The 2015 Census estimated population was 12,248, consistent with gradual growth. In the county, the population was spread out with 24.6% under the age of 18 and 16.3% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 40.5 years. The county enjoys a relatively diverse population, with 64.4% of people identifying as White, 19.7% Native American, 8.3% Black or African American, 0.2% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander and 6.5% of two or more races. 2.9% were Hispanic or Latino (of any race). Therefore, Okfuskee County has more people who identify as Black and Native American, and fewer Whites or Hispanics than does the state, in general.

Households and Income

There were 5,282 housing units, of which 928 (18%) are vacant for a total of 4,354 occupied dwelling units. Average household size is 2.52 persons per



dwelling. The 2015 median income for a household in the County was estimated at \$36,216, as compared to \$46,879 for the State of Oklahoma. About 24.8% of the population was below the poverty line.

Trends

Okfuskee County is forecast to have a relatively stable population with a gradual increase over time. The projected number of people over age 65 is expected to grow through the next two decades.

Cultural Trends. “Quality of life” is an economic issue that impacts the long-term social and fiscal health of a community. The availability of preferred educational, recreational and transportation options has a direct impact on where individuals choose to invest valuable business and family resources. Continuing efforts to develop the county as a great place to live and work is a fundamental component of economic attraction.

Public Comments

Public comments were collected at all stages of the planning process. All public comments received have been included in the plan. See Appendix 5.2 for a survey response summary and 5.2 for recorded public comments.

Concerns of the community

Comments received during the public participation survey indicated a need for increased preservation and maintenance of existing road and street surfaces throughout the county, and especially in small towns. Many comments indicate that improved access to transit is needed.

Other projects suggested were crosswalks to improve safety near schools and pedestrian improvements throughout the county. Improved bicycle safety and rehabilitating the appearance of public spaces and streets were suggested as pertinent to economic vitality and tourism. Several comments expressed concern that people using handicap-mobility vehicles may be forced onto State Highways when travelling from a residential area to a grocery store or other destination in the absence of sidewalks.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Network

The 2006-2010 American Community Survey showed that few people walked or rode bikes to work in Okfuskee County. While the proportion of the pedestrian and biking public in addition to workers has not been measured, it can be stated that those who prefer sustainable or healthy forms of transportation, low-income workers, students and other diverse non-driver adults would benefit from increased safety.

Public Transit

Low population densities in the county and the distances between activity centers complicate the delivery of public transportation in rural areas. Ki Bois Area Transit (KATS) provides demand-response transit service in the county.

Roadways

Most roads in Okfuskee County are two-lane roads. Interstate highway I-40 passes through the county. Okfuskee County roads are rated as being in relatively poor condition.

The Oklahoma DOT has assigned County roads an average score of 110 on the International Roughness Index (2014), a measure of pavement performance standards for good and acceptable ride. A score below 95 is in the good category.

Bridges

in 2005 highway pavements were deteriorating at a rate beyond the available funding to repair, let alone reconstruct, and more than 1,500 of Oklahoma highway bridges were *structurally deficient* or *functionally obsolete*. Therefore, much of the annual funding for road repairs and improvements in the ODOT 8-year Plan (2015-2022) is necessarily dedicated to bridge work.

Aging bridges are also scattered throughout the county on the County road system. One hundred three (103) of those bridges are structurally deficient, 11 are functionally obsolete by modern standards.



Walnut Creek Bridge,
Okfuskee County

Goals

The table below identifies the goal categories for the LRTP. A summary of the goals, objectives and strategies developed for this plan are outlined below.

Okfuskee County Goals

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Maximize Access to Funding | Provide a sound financial basis for the Transportation system |
| 2. Prioritize Maintenance and Preservation | Maintain and preserve existing infrastructure and services |
| 3. Enhance Economic Vitality | Maintain and enhance movement of freight and other economic development activities; Improve quality of life |
| 4. Improve Accessibility, Mobility and Connectivity | Improve accessibility and mobility of people and freight; Improve regional connectivity and continuity of roads, sidewalks, bike routes and rail |
| 5. Increase Safety and Security | Ensure high standards of safety in the transportation system, improve resilience for personal and economic security |

Okfuskee County Long Range Transportation Plan 2040

Goal 1 – Maximize Finance & Funding			
Objectives	Policy	Action steps	
A. Consistent regional applications for all available transportation opportunities maximizes annual funding	1.1 Preservation of existing levels of service among all modes of travel is the first priority	A.1.1	Monitor and apply for all available transportation grant opportunities each year
B. Local agencies, municipalities, tribal governments, state officials and private interests effectively collaborate in the pursuit and funding of transportation improvements	1.2 Continue to expand Multi-jurisdictional collaboration	A.1.2	Engage in long term Fiscal Planning to balance long-term transportation needs with sustainable solutions
C. Expansion of transportation modes that utilize private funding or have a higher proportion of user-borne costs, such as private roads and rail; fees for service	1.3 Allocate an annual portion of public employee labor to be used as in-kind funds for transportation grants	A.1.3	Explore and implement alternative funding opportunities used in other jurisdictions
Goal 2 – Prioritize maintenance and preservation of existing infrastructure			
Objectives	Policy	Action Steps	
A. The current transportation system is maintained with stable funding	2.1 Coordinate with State and Federal agencies to stabilize funding; ensure that current levels of service on roads, rail and transit systems, do not fail	A.2.1	Identify preferred development corridors and plan for preservation; Map
B. Regional pavements are preserved through growth of intermodal rail freight	2.2 Consistent investment in alternative modes to improve resilience	A.2.2	Evaluate and post weight limits on roads
C. New development is directed to appropriate roads and infrastructure	2.3 Use public-private agreements to maintain vulnerable county roads	A.2.3	Develop long-term strategies in coordination with industry, waste disposal and oil field companies to preserve and maintain vulnerable county roads
D. Private companies with heavy truck traffic collaborate to maintain vulnerable county roads			

Goal 3 – Enhance Economic Vitality		
Objectives	Policy	Action steps
A. Economic development is coordinated with strategic transportation investments		A.3.1 Publish a County map showing the location of existing infrastructure appropriate for residential and industrial development
B. Employers have assurance that the labor force has reliable transportation options	3.1 Support facilities and services that enable non-drivers to access typical destinations	A.3.2 Develop a prioritized plan for sidewalks and bicycle routes
C. Retail establishments are located within Town/City limits	3.2 Coordinate economic development with long-term regional connectivity and sustainability	A.3.3 Encourage Tourism with signage, websites, brochures and events to improve sales tax revenue
D. Reliable access to shopping and services is realistic for all residents		
E. Retail customers using all modes of travel are welcomed by Complete Streets strategies		
F. Tourism provides annual revenue for low cost transportation improvements		



Alternative modes of transportation support community resilience



Goal 4 – Improve Accessibility, Mobility, Connectivity			
Objectives	Policy	Action Steps	
A. Funding is balanced among modes to ensure sustainable mobility solutions	4.1 Recognize and respond to opportunities to include pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on or adjacent to state routes	A.4.1	Identify and minimize transportation barriers for non-drivers
B. Highway improvements are coordinated with other transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects and rail facilities according to the policies of the 2015-2040 ODOT LRTP	4.2 Integrate alternative transportation solutions into all new developments	A.4.2	Appoint an individual to act as a Railroad contact to improve industrial access to rail and facilitate the mobility of freight
C. Reliable access to the transportation system is ensured for disadvantaged persons	4.3 Choose transit when possible to support long term sustainability	A.4.3	Develop a proposed Bike route map with a focus on regional connectivity
D. Transit is a preferred method of travel for a wider segment of the populace		A.4.4	Add signage to direct Bike and Pedestrian travelers to preferred routes
E. Bike routes are indicated with signage for improved regional mobility		A.4.5	Plan and implement walkways and bike facilities in small town areas
F. Park-and-ride lots are available in locations where potential ridership warrants		A.4.6	Evaluate existing town sidewalks and pursue rehabilitation
G. Planning efforts result in continuous bikeways throughout the multi-county region		A.4.7	Designate specific areas as Park-and-Ride lots for commuters
H. Right of way (ROW) areas are preserved for transportation purposes; including abandoned, existing and future road and railroad corridors			

Goal 5 – Increase Safety & Security		
Objectives	Policy	Action Steps
A. Structurally deficient bridges are prioritized for repair or replacement		A.5.1 Prioritize bridge improvements where weight limits are too low for emergency vehicle response;
B. Local site development standards address safety for all legal road users	5.1 Promote the use of alternative modes of transportation to reduce dependency on single-occupancy vehicles	A.5.2 Map appropriate routes for tanker response according to bridge sufficiency ratings (see Appendix XXXX)
C. Bicyclists have improved safety in rural areas		A.5.3 Improved signage: alert motor vehicles to watch for bikes on the road;
D. Crosswalks have appropriate signage and visibility		A.5.4 Evaluate and prioritize crosswalks for improvement
E. Persons using handicap mobility vehicles have safe access to common destinations		A.5.5 Place rumble strips appropriately for enhanced safety between motorized vehicles and bikes using the shoulder in accordance with FHWA standards
F. A transportation system which is sustainable and resilient supports long term needs		A.5.6 Use signage to alert motorists to the possible presence of bicycles on the road
G. Improved modal options reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles		A.5.7 Evaluate and prioritize underpasses, overpasses and bridges for low-cost improvements for non-motor vehicle travel safety
		A.5.8 Incorporate sustainability and resiliency into transportation system projects

Thanks to You!

Thank you to all the citizens and community leaders in Okfuskee County who made vital contributions to this Community planning effort.

A special thanks to everyone who completed and returned a survey!

*This plan should be updated in five years.
Please consider what improvements you would like to see made at that time.*

We also would like to thank the:

*Federal Highway Administration
Oklahoma Department of Transportation
CORTPO Board
Technical Committee
and our Planning Staff*

