

Public Open House Summary

Cimarron County JP 20941(04) - Grade, Drain and Surface US-385: Boise City Square and North Cimarron Avenue

This document summarizes the public open house conducted for the reconstruction of US-385 around the Boise City Square and extending north 0.7 miles along Cimarron Avenue in Cimarron County, Oklahoma. This is the second public meeting for the project. The first public meeting was held in July of 2015. The purpose of the first meeting was to provide information about the purpose and need for the project, existing conditions in the project area, and the proposed design alternatives, as well as to obtain input from the public about the proposed alternatives and their concerns. This second meeting was held in March of 2019. The purpose of this second Public Meeting was to present the proposed closure of the segment of US Highway 385/State Highway 3 extending north out of the square, during the construction project, and receive public comment.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is considering improvements to the Boise City Square, as well as US-385/State Highway 3 (Cimarron Avenue) extending north out of the square, in Boise City, Cimarron County. The purpose of this project is to improve the safety and drainage conditions on Boise City Square and to improve the pavement conditions on US-385/State Highway 3 (Cimarron Avenue). The project is currently scheduled to be let for construction in July 2019, which will necessitate closure of US Highway 385/State Highway 3 (Cimarron Avenue) extending north out of the square. It is anticipated the road closure will last approximately 180 working days. ODOT is considering using the following as a detour during the construction. Southbound – from US-385/SH-3 junction with US-287, proceed south on US-287 to the junction with US-64/SH-3, then west to the junction with US-385 at the Boise City Square (approximately 3.44 miles). Northbound – from US-385 junction with US-64/SH-3 at the Boise City Square, proceed east on US-64/SH-3 to the junction with US-287, then north to the junction with US-385/SH-3 (approximately 3.84 miles) - (**Appendix A**). While the state highway detour will be signed for the through state highway traffic, the local traffic will be able to utilize local county or city roads.

ODOT tasked a Consultant to develop alternatives for correcting the roadway deficiencies while taking into consideration construction costs, right-of-way and utility costs, and environmental constraints which include the Cimarron County Courthouse which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places is located in the center of the square.

- Alternative 1– was an improved square with both an inner and an outer square.
- Alternative 2– was a circle inner area with a circular outer roadway.
- Alternative 3– was an inner square around the courthouse with a circular outer roadway.

A Preliminary Engineering Study with the proposed alternatives was developed and presented to agencies and the public for comment. A stakeholder meeting was held on July 21, 2015 at Cimarron County Fair Building on N. Logan Avenue in Oklahoma. Based on the analysis, including agency and public comments, and consultation with the SHPO, a combination of Alternatives 1 and 3 was selected.

Property owner and stakeholder letters were mailed out for the project January 28, 2019. These letters

provided a short project explanation and brief description of the proposed detour, with an enclosed project location map and proposed detour map. The letter requested recipients provide input by February 5, 2019. This letter was sent to one hundred eight (108) property owners, stakeholders and state, federal and local government agencies. A copy of the road closure notification letter and the mailing list is included in **Appendix B**. Responses from the notification letter indicated that additional public outreach, in the form of an open house, was necessary to reconnect with the community since the original 2015 stakeholder meeting.

Notice of the open house was sent by flyer that was included in the Boise City residents' water bill. The flyer provided a brief description of the purpose and need for the project and an invitation to the open house. The flyer was accompanied by a project location map. Flyers were mailed with resident's water bill two weeks before the Open House. A copy of the flyer is included in **Appendix C**.

The Open House was held from 4:00 and 6:00 PM on March 12, 2019 at the Cimarron County Fair Building located on North Logan Avenue in Boise City, Oklahoma. The purpose of this Open House was to present the scheduled improvements and answer questions regarding construction sequence. The open house was a come and go meeting with no formal presentation. Forty-eight (48) attendees signed in for the meeting. Throughout the open house period, ODOT and consultant staff members were available for one-on-one and small group discussions. A copy of the sign-in sheets is included in **Appendix D**. A project brochure was provided to the public as a handout. Display boards showing the proposed improvements and road closure detour were available for public viewing. The display boards were very useful to the public to see the potential impacts to their property. The attendees were encouraged to fill out a written comment form. Copies of the meeting handout and display boards are included in **Appendix E**.

The attendees at the open house provided good feedback on the proposed design, with a few areas of concern. Many also had questions about how much right-of-way would be needed and how individual parcels would be affected by right-of-way acquisition. Comments heard at the meeting included the following general topics:

- Concern over the size of the driving path around the circle.
- Concern over the construction sequencing and traffic control during the sequencing, particularly within the town square
- Concern for courthouse parking when court is in session in June, as well as maintaining handicap parking during construction.
- Concern trucks and snowplow maneuvering about curbs and bollards, as well as oversize loads not being able to get around the square properly.
- How the proposed improvements would impact specific property owners

The comment period was open until March 26, 2019 with a total of seven (7) written comments received, including five (5) from agencies, one (1) from a church, and one (1) from members of the public.

Public comments were made regarding a variety of issues. The attendees were grateful to have the update on the planned improvements and an idea of the impacts to property. Those whose properties were not being impacted were relieved, while those property owners who were impacted by the planned improvements were encouraged to speak with ODOT staff. The open house format seemed to satisfied the community as not many written comments were received. **Table 1** summarizes both the written public

comments received and the verbal comments/questions from the public meeting.

Table 1: Public Comment Summary of both Written and Verbal Comments and ODOT Response			
Comments			ODOT Response
A	Several	Concern about the driving lane size around the courthouse square.	Design will not decrease the travel path at the critical points around the square.
B	6	How the proposed improvements would impact specific property owners and about property access during construction	Addressed at the meeting with individual property owners to their satisfaction.
C	4	Concern for courthouse parking when court is in session in June, as well as maintaining handicap parking during construction	Parking on the South East corner of the square has been obtained.
D	4	Concern trucks, snowplow, and oversize loads not being able to maneuver around curbs and bollards.	The proposed curb will be left as planned, and bollards have been removed from the design.
E	2	Concern about Emergency Management Services parking and ambulance bay access	ODOT has addressed the size of the drive into the ally as well as the size of the driveway into the EMS.
F	2	Approved of shortened crosswalks across the Circle	Thank you. The raised curb provided for traffic movement and pedestrian safety
G	2	Grateful for investment in the community	Thank you
H	1	Removing 2 large trees in from of the Baptist Church	Trees will be removed

Based on these comments, ODOT can move forward with final plan development. An ODOT follow-up meeting is not required.