

Public Hearing Summary



Oklahoma Department of Transportation

US-75 at Preston Road

Okmulgee County, ODOT JP 30571(04)

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Executive Summary

This document summarizes the public hearing that was conducted for the US-75 at Preston Road Intersection Improvements project in Preston, Okmulgee County, Oklahoma. The purpose of public hearing was to present the Environmental Assessment (EA) findings, including the purpose and need, alternatives considered, agency coordination and public involvement, and the social, economic and environmental impacts of the build alternative (proposed project). The public was also provided an opportunity to record verbal statements and provide written comments.

The public hearing was held in person on November 9, 2021 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 9, 2021, at the Preston School Cafeteria at 10061 Old Highway 75, Preston, Oklahoma, 74456. The first hour of the meeting was an open house format, with exhibits available to view. A brief presentation was made followed by an opportunity for public comment. Following the presentation and public comment period, the open house format continued until 7:30 p.m. Handouts with information on the purpose and overview of the project were made available to meeting attendees at the sign-in table. Project team members were stationed at several tables and boards with the Environmental Assessment, design plans and constraints mapping for the project to allow for review and facilitate any questions and comments from meeting attendees. A conceptual 3D animation of the proposed improvements was playing on a laptop in the cafeteria and ran on a continuous loop for the duration of the meeting. Comment cards for written comments were available for attendees. In addition, all meeting materials presented at the open house were made available for public viewing on the ODOT website.

Written comments were accepted for 15 days before and after the date of the public hearing. Fifty-three members of the public and ten staff signed in for the public hearing. Of the 53 attendees, six attendees (or approximately 11%) checked the voluntary box on the sign-in sheet as Native American. All others either identified as white or left that portion of the sign-in sheet blank. Two comment forms, one mailed letter and a voice mail were received during the comment period. Additionally, eight verbal comments were recorded during the hearing. These comments have been summarized by issue in **Table E-1**, but general feedback is provided below.

Notification letters to stakeholders were mailed on October 25, 2021. Postcard invitations to the public hearing were sent to area residences through Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) on October 25th, 2021. Notices of availability of the draft Environmental Assessment and the Public Hearing were published in the Okmulgee Times on October 20, 2021 and November 5, 2021. Solicitation letters including notification of the availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) were mailed to the appropriate local, state, and federal resource agencies on October 25, 2021. Two agency comments were received and included the following:

- The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) indicated that the project does not appear to pose a hazard to safe and efficient use of navigable airspace.
- The Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC) indicated that following review of the project Environmental Assessment and with the understanding that potentially impacted streams have already been identified, the Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC) provided general comments about the project. The organization expressed concerns about disturbance to riparian

areas and siltation problems, as well as stream disturbances/redesign and drainage. The OCC also offered suggestions to minimize potential impacts.

Of the 12 public comments received, the majority pertained to property acquisition/ displacements, safety concerns and other roadways. Additionally, two of the comments raised during the hearing pertain to access across the Burlington North Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad in the event of an emergency. It was noted that track maintenance and emergency situations have resulted in temporary loss of access at this location in the past. Under existing conditions, in the event of a closure, residents on Nixon Street, and those to the north, have alternative access to Preston Road and direct access to US-75 via Risenhoover Ave to the south. Under the Build Alternative, both access points would be eliminated.

Table E-1 summarizes the comments received. Please note that the number of concerns identified is greater than actual number of comments, because, in a few cases, more than one concern was included in a single comment.

Table E-1: Major Issues of Concern

Issue	# of Comments
Access	2
Safety	3
Safety (off-site)	1
Property Concerns & Relocations	5
Detour	3
ODOT Coordination	1

Responses to Comments

Access

Thank you for your comment. It was noted that track maintenance and emergency situations have resulted in temporary loss of access at this location in the past. Under existing conditions, in the event of a closure, residents on Nixon Street, and those to the north, have alternative access to Preston Road and direct access to US-75 via Risenhoover Ave to the south. Under the Build Alternative, both access points would be eliminated.

As mitigation for this access consideration, ODOT will be adding a north-south connection (Nixon Street) east of the railroad between Nixon Street and Preston Road. This connection has been incorporated into the design plans and has been documented in a mitigation memo.

Safety

Thank you for your comment. ODOT had preliminarily evaluated stop light and profile changes at this location and reached the conclusion that constructing a grade separated interchange would be the best option.

Off-site Safety

It is possible motorists traveling beyond Preston may choose to use alternate routes during construction; however, access will be maintained for this project via the on-site detour and a signed off-site detour is not proposed. Comments and concerns regarding stop signs, repairs to curves and speed limits on local roads beyond the limits of this project will be referred to the County Commissioner for their consideration.

Property Concerns and Relocations

Proposed right-of-way (ROW) as currently shown depicts the ROW limits currently anticipated for the project. Details about property impacts will not be fully known until design plans have been finalized, which should be later this month (February 2022). Once plans are finalized, if your existing property is required, ODOT will obtain an independent appraisal and present a fair market value offer for your property. Right-of-way acquisition for this project is anticipated to start in 2022.

Detour

Preston Road is anticipated to be closed to traffic for approximately nine to 12 months. While Preston Road is closed to traffic, detours will be used to maintain access. From areas west of Preston, motorists would be able to access US-75 in one of two ways. Motorists could access Nixon Street to cross the railroad tracks and use the temporary detour onto US-75 to proceed north or south on US-75. This route will be two-way and therefore, also provide motorists travelling northbound and southbound on US-75 access to Preston. Alternatively, motorists could utilize Old Highway 75, which runs generally parallel to US-75, to access US-75 via Celia Barryhill Road approximately 2.25 miles south of Preston. Similarly, US-75 NB traffic could access Preston via this route. Motorists from the east would be detoured onto the newly constructed NS-220 Road. Access to northbound and southbound US75 will be maintained using the existing tie-in or NS-220 Road and US-75.

ODOT Coordination

Thank you for your comment. ODOT appreciates public feedback on this project.