



Project Description

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is proposing improvements to SH-18 in the city of Cushing, in the southeastern portion of Payne County, Oklahoma.

The southern terminus for the project begins at the SH-18/SH-33 junction in the City of Cushing and extends north 2.0 miles to EW690, otherwise known as Deep Rock Road. The existing section of SH-18 consists of two 12-foot-wide travel lanes with outside shoulders of varying widths and no inside shoulder. There are roadway ditches along most of the corridor.

The proposed improvements would add a 14-foot-wide third lane to serve as a center dual turn lane and inside and outside shoulders of widths varying between 2 feet and 8 feet (see example typical sections for greater detail). Improvements also include 5-foot sidewalks or space for future sidewalks, as well as curb and gutter throughout much of the corridor. A new parapet and guardrail will be installed on the existing bridge over Skull Creek. The purpose of the project is to improve through traffic flow. Additional Right-of-Way will be necessary. The roadway will remain open during construction.

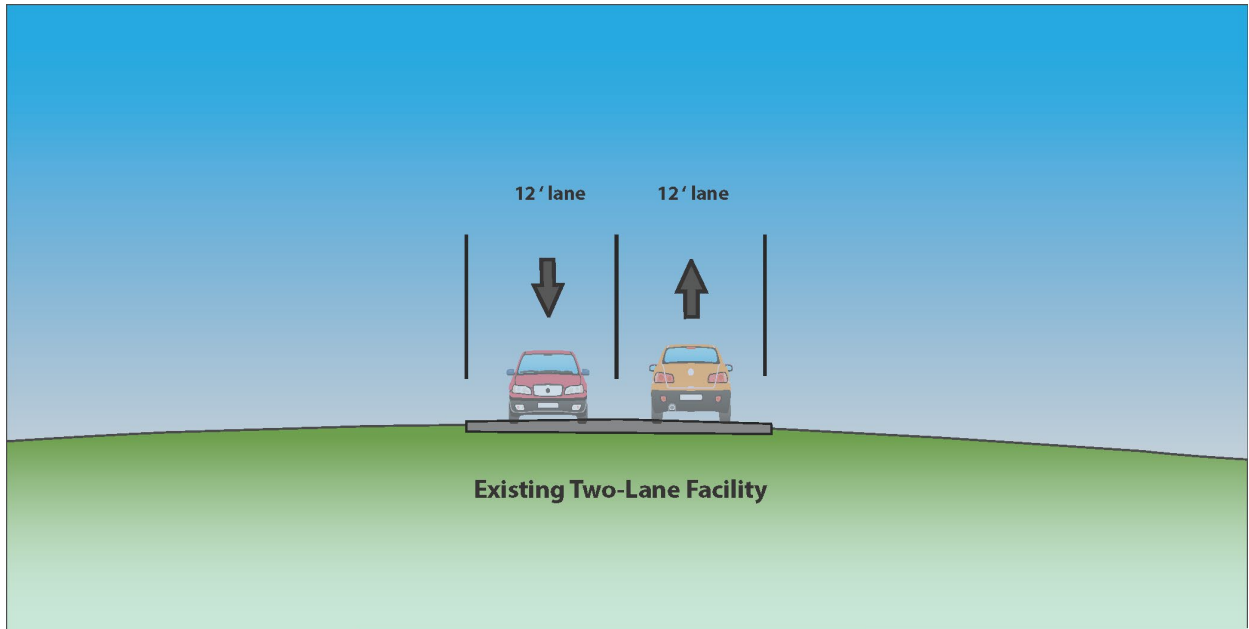
What is the purpose of the project?

The current Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) from 2020 is 5,000 vehicles per day (vpd) with a future 20-year AADT in 2040 of 6,500 vpd. There are no designated ADA compliant sidewalks and there are 11 local street connections, as well as 101 driveways. The project is needed to improve through traffic movement along SH-18.

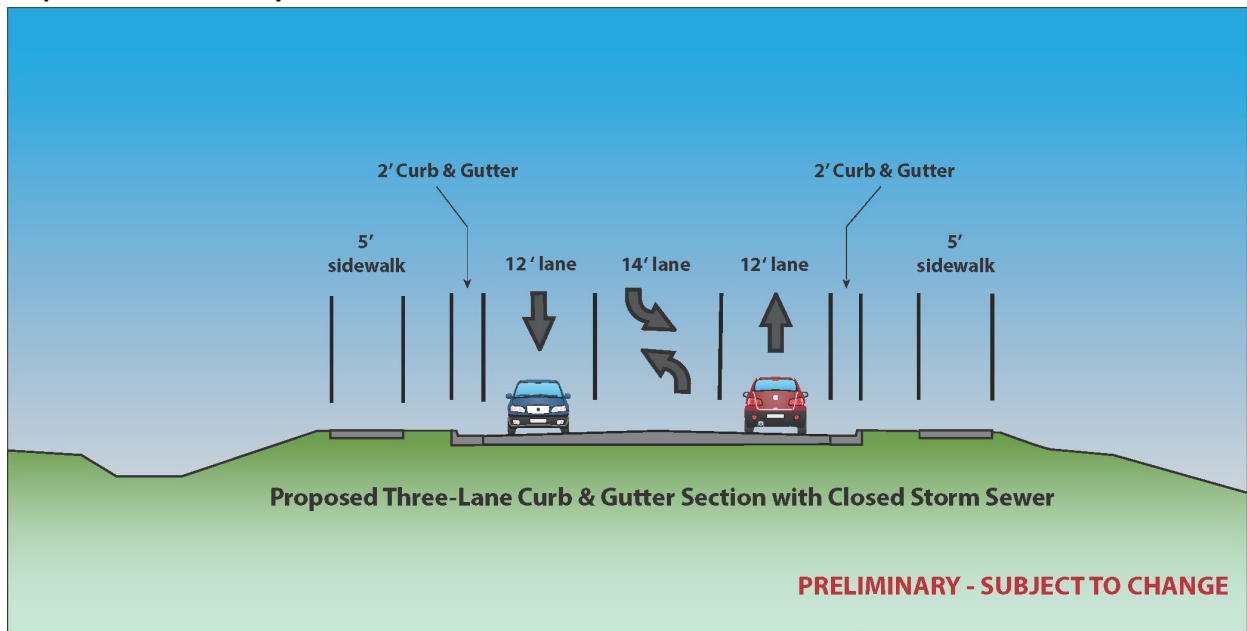
What is being built?

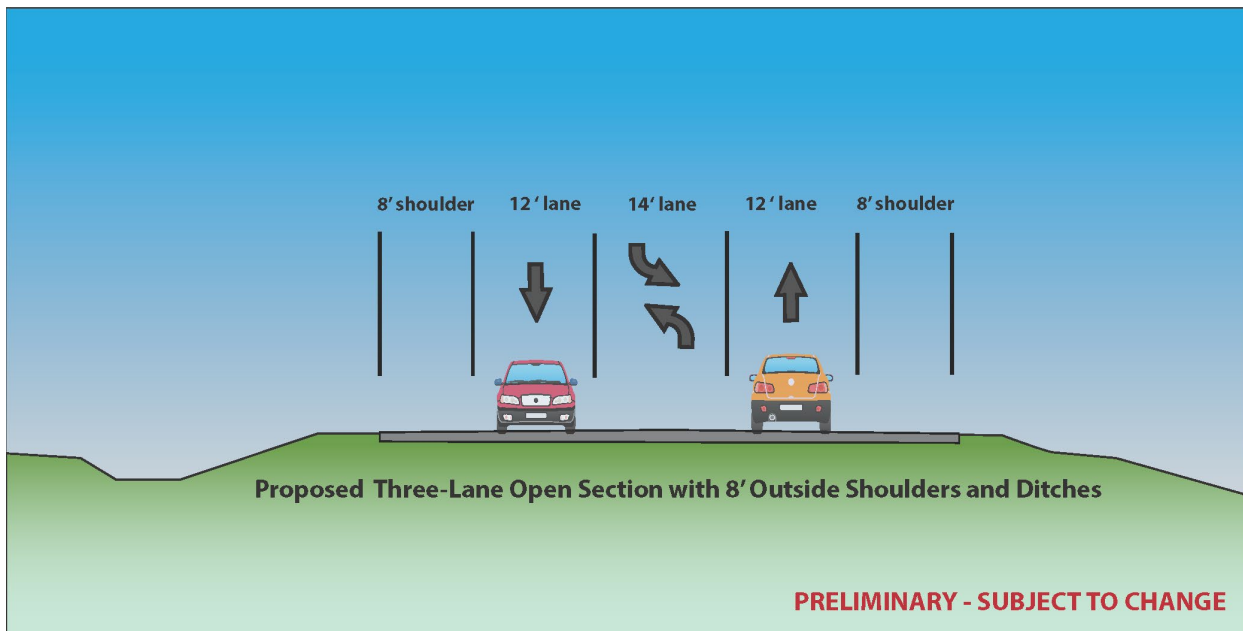
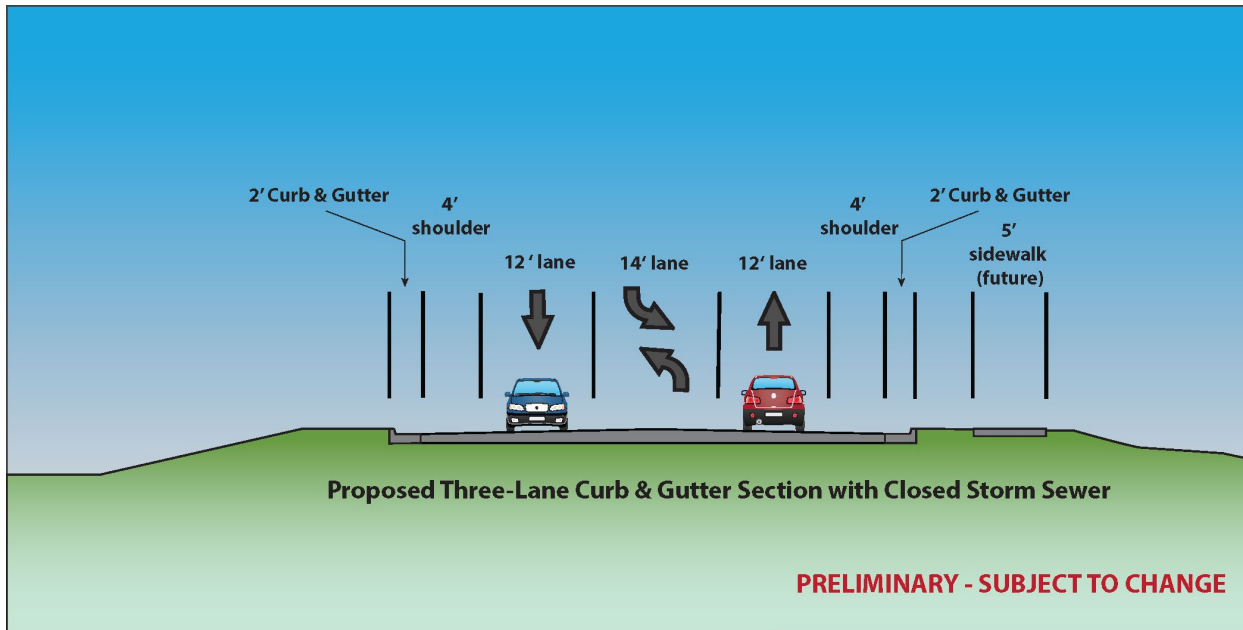
The project will convert the existing two-lane open ditch section of SH-18 into a three-lane curb and gutter facility with two 12 foot lanes in each direction and a 14 foot center dual turn lane. Curb and gutter is proposed through most of the corridor with the exception of one section at the north end of the project. Inside and outside shoulder widths will vary between 2 feet and 8 feet. Five-foot sidewalk is proposed for the southern half of the project, and space for future sidewalk is being included through the rest of the project, with the exception of approximately 1,000 feet at the northern end. A new parapet and guardrail for the existing Skull Creek bridge will be installed. See example illustrations below for the various proposed sections.

Existing SH-18 Facility



Proposed SH-18 Facility





What if my property is affected?

ODOT will obtain an independent appraisal and present a fair market value offer for your property.

How will highway access change?

There will be no change to the current highway access. The existing roadway has unrestricted access and will continue to have unrestricted access. Access to businesses and residences will be provided by the additional center left turn lane. All existing driveways will be maintained with the project.

What is the timeframe for construction?

Construction is currently scheduled to begin in 2025. Construction will be sequenced in a manner which will allow for traffic and access to be maintained at all times. Additionally, temporary signage and striping will be utilized during construction as well as flagging, as appropriate.

Schedule is contingent upon funding and subject to change.

What will the project cost?

The ODOT 8-Year Construction plan notes that the entire project is programmed for \$6,510,000.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- ***What will the new speed limit be along this stretch of SH-18?***
 - The proposed roadway is being designed for 45-50 mph traffic. Currently, the speed limit varies from 40 mph near the southern terminus of the project (in Cushing) to 60 mph near the northern extent of the project. The speed limits within the corridor will not change.

- ***How does ODOT determine existing and future traffic numbers?***
 - Traffic counts are taken every two years on state highways. The existing traffic numbers reflect the current condition. The future traffic numbers are projected based on a multiplier developed for the area.

 - Annual average daily traffic (AADT) is a measure used primarily in transportation engineering. Traditionally, it is the total volume of vehicle traffic of a highway or road for a year divided by 365 days. Therefore, there are days when there is more traffic, but this is an average. AADT is a simple, but useful, measurement of how busy the road is.

- ***What is the process if ODOT needs some of my property?***
 - ODOT will obtain an independent appraisal and present a fair market value offer for your property. Click on the link for additional information about ODOT's policies regarding property rights.
link/attach ODOT Property Rights Brochure

- ***What if ODOT needs temporary access for construction or a maintenance easement from my property?***
 - Sometimes, ODOT will need temporary access or an easement to maintain the highway and drainage structures. Owners will be compensated for temporary right-of-way and for maintenance easements. In these cases, you will maintain ownership of the property. If your property will be affected, an ODOT-authorized agent will contact you.

- ***When will ODOT start buying property?***
 - Right-of-way acquisition for this project is currently scheduled to start in FY 2023. The schedule is subject to change.

- ***When is construction scheduled to begin?***
 - Construction is scheduled to start in FY 2025. The schedule is subject to change.
- ***Are there other adjacent projects?***
 - There is a separate but adjacent widening and resurfacing project proposed that would begin where this proposed project ends, 2.0 miles north of SH-33, and extend 6.5 miles north to SH-51. Work on the adjacent project is also scheduled to begin in 2025.
- ***Will I keep access to my home and property during construction?***
 - Yes, access to home, businesses, and property adjacent to the project will be maintained during all phases of construction.

What is the environmental impact of the project?

The project is funded in part with funds through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); therefore, the project is required to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and several other federal environmental laws and executive orders. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) has completed several environmental studies and agency coordination as part of the project development process. These studies include:

- Tribal Consultation
- Identification of archeological resources, historic resources, and cemeteries (Cultural Resources) and evaluation of potential effects
- Delineation of Waters of the U.S. (streams and wetlands)
- Endangered and threatened species
- Hazardous Materials Initial Site Assessment

A summary of the findings associated with each of the resource areas is presented below. These studies will be incorporated into the environmental clearance (NEPA) document for the project.

Cultural Resources

A Cultural Resources Study was completed and concluded that no significant cultural resources were identified in the project area. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and the State Archaeologist is being conducted to obtain concurrence with the findings.

Tribal Consultation

The following tribes were consulted for input:

Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma

Osage Nation

Pawnee Nation

Sac & Fox Nation

United Keetowah Band of Cherokee

Wichita & Affiliated Tribes

Streams and Wetlands

There is one likely jurisdictional wetland (a total of 0.14 acre) and five likely jurisdictional streams and drainage features (for a total of 0.53 acre) within the project area. Jurisdictional status will be confirmed with the United States Army Corps of Engineers and impacts will be evaluated to identify the appropriate permit needs.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The study area contains potential habitat for the American Burying Beetle, migratory bird species and Bald Eagles. Coordination with the United State Fish and Wildlife Service has occurred and species-specific plan notes have been established and will be added to plans to minimize the potential for impacts.

Hazardous Waste

An initial site assessment was conducted. ODOT hazardous materials specialists will need to review 65% plans to determine whether any additional investigations or plan notes are needed to address any potential concerns along the corridor.

Floodplain

There is no mapped floodplain within the study area.

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice (EJ) communities are identified as areas containing predominantly minority populations and/or low-income populations. For this analysis, areas containing predominantly minority populations are defined as census blocks containing minority populations greater than the Oklahoma State average of 31.3 percent. Based on Census 2020 data, 1 of the 2 populated census blocks adjacent to the proposed project contains predominantly minority populations of greater than 31.3%.

Areas containing predominantly low-income populations are defined as census block groups with median household incomes at or below the current Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guideline for a family of four. In 2022, the HHS poverty guideline for a family of four is \$27,750. According to 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates, both of the populated census block groups along the corridor reflect median household incomes greater than the 2022 HHS poverty guideline.

LEP populations are defined as persons that speak English less than “very well.” LEP populations are identified using block group level data from the 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates. LEP populations in the individual census block groups adjacent to the corridor range from 0.0 to 2.6 percent of the total population five years of age and older. Of the 2,655 people (five years and older) within census block groups, 1.6 percent speak English less than “very well.” Based on this data, additional public outreach and/or translations for languages other than English is determined not to be warranted.

As reflected in current ACS data, the LEP percentage for the project area is low (less than 2.0 percent). However, LEP persons are given the opportunity for meaningful involvement in the NEPA process and may request translation services by emailing environment@odot.org or calling 405.325.3269.

How does ODOT use my feedback?

ODOT appreciates public comments and feedback as part of our project development process. Feedback from the public helps the project team better understand existing conditions and concerns. The input provided by the public is reviewed and considered as part of the project development process. Information about the virtual open house, materials, a summary of the comments and responses will be documented in the virtual open house summary report and posted on the ODOT Hearings and Meetings website.

How do I give my feedback?

You may provide written comments via email, or U.S. Mail. You may also submit a voice mail message using the number provided below. To submit the comment form by email please download the form. Use your Adobe Reader to fill out your information and leave your comment, then select the Submit by Email button. You can also fill out the form and send it as an email attachment if you are on a public computer or email your comments directly to environment@odot.org. If you do not have an Adobe Reader, you can download a free copy at <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

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