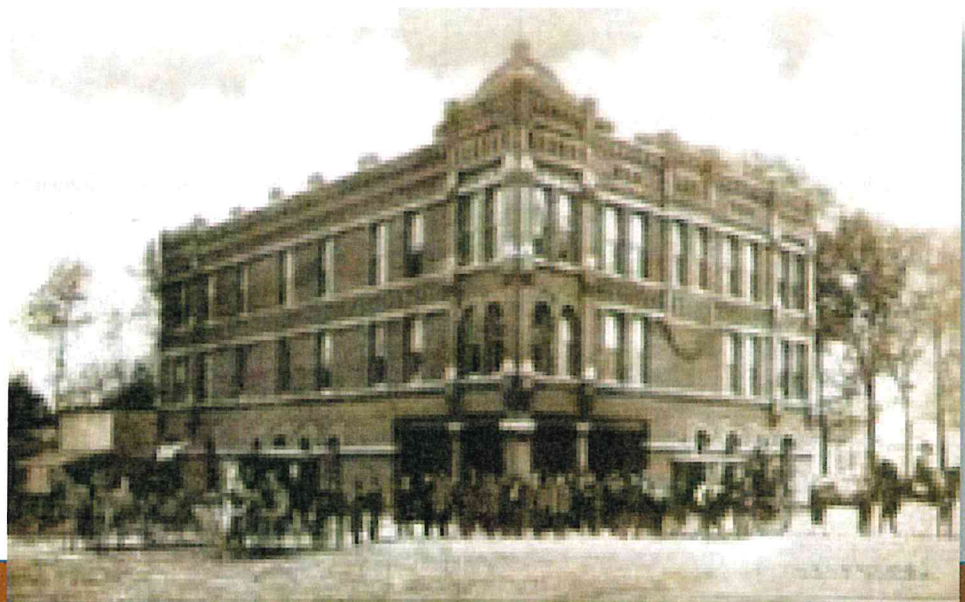


Okfuskee County Oklahoma Long Range Transportation Plan

LRTP

5/10/2017
CORTPO
2017-2040

*Florence Hotel about 1907
Weleetka, Oklahoma*



Produced by:

Central Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization

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**Okfuskee County
Long Range Transportation Plan
2016-2040**

**CORTPO
In cooperation with:
The County of Okfuskee
The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
The Central Oklahoma Economic Development District
(COEDD) Council of Government**

The 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) was developed through a cooperative effort among CORTPO, member jurisdictions, the Oklahoma Association of Regional Councils (OARC), and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT).

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CORTPO Mission; Vision

A mission and vision were adopted by CORTPO for the purposes of planning for a sustainable regional transportation system.

A mission statement is a statement which is used as a way of communicating the purpose of the organization. A vision statement tends to be an aspirational description of what an organization would like to achieve or accomplish in the mid-term or long-term future. Together, these statements are intended to serve as clear guides for choosing current and future courses of action.

Mission

To work with public and private partners to develop and maintain the appropriate systems necessary for a safe, efficient, and convenient multi-modal transportation system that will effectively move people and goods on a coordinated transportation network that will advance and secure the economic prosperity and social equity for all residents, visitors, and businesses within the CORTPO region.

Vision

A comprehensive and coordinated multi-modal transportation environment based on the principles of inclusion, communications and innovation that will have the flexibility to respond to new technologies and methodologies to enhance the CORTPO region's position in the regional, national, and international markets as well as provide accessible and affordable transportation services and opportunities to all of the region's current and future residents.

*The current level of federal, state and local funds
will be inadequate to ensure long term maintenance
of roads, sidewalks, transit, and rail*

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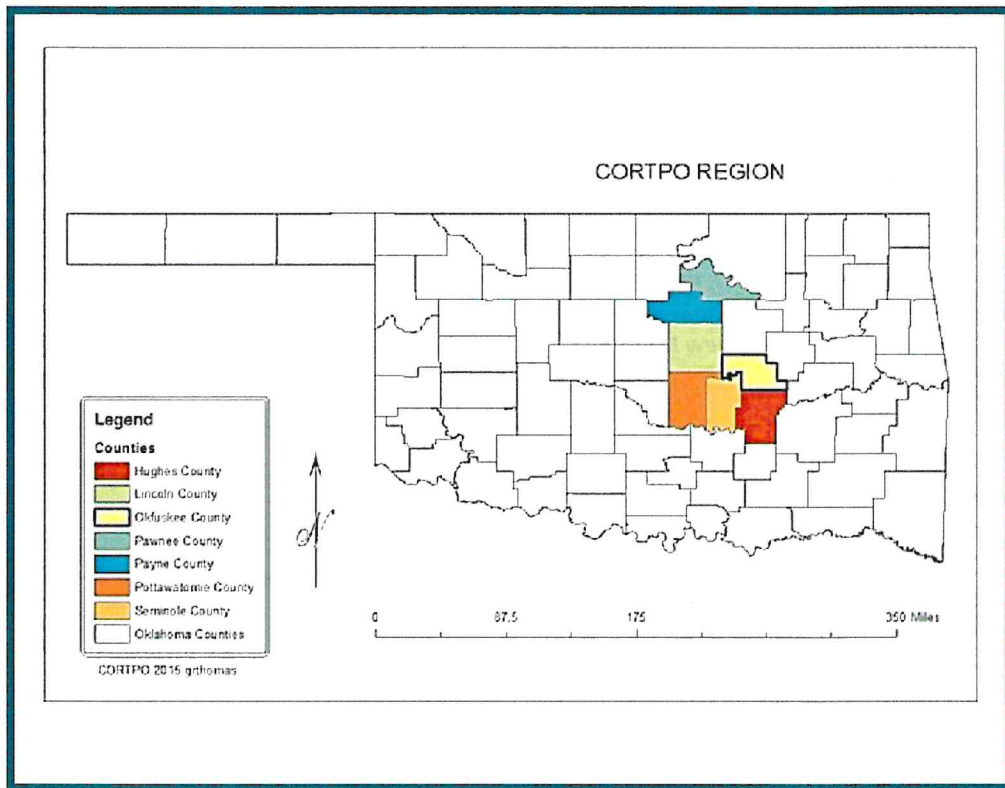
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Map 1

Summary Comments

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 purpose of the transportation system is to move people and goods in the safest and most efficient manner. Transportation must effectively allow individuals to conduct their personal lives, and provide for the efficient movement of goods to markets to support the county's economic vitality.

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

"Sustainability" goals of the Long-Range Transportation Plan include maintenance and preservation of the current system, enhanced economic vitality, improved mobility, connectivity, safety and security. Preservation, rehabilitation and enhanced access to rail are perceived as necessary to both economic goals and long term community resilience.

LRTP Updates

The transportation policies and projects recommended in the LRTP are intended to be implemented over the next two decades. Over the period of the LRTP, it will be necessary to update the demographics, refine the policies and continue data collection and analysis. A comprehensive update should occur every five (5) years.



The Okfuskee County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is the first transportation plan with a focus on small municipalities and unincorporated portions of Okfuskee County, Oklahoma

The LRTP identifies existing and projected transportation improvement needs and includes an assessment of the various modes of travel, issues, trends and challenges that may influence transportation in Okfuskee County over the next few decades.

The plan was developed through a cooperative effort among CORTPO, the member jurisdictions and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT).



Data Sources

Demographic and Employment data. The Decennial Census has long been the accepted standard for demographic planning analysis. Due to the length of time since the 2010 Census, changes in Census Bureau practices, and the limitations of the data collected, we must increasingly rely on American Community Survey (ACS) data products published by the Census Bureau at one, three and five year intervals, in this case the 2011-2015 ACS data.

Other Census products were employed in this report for analytic purposes, including Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) data from Census Transportation Planning Products (CTPP), which sometimes carry a different date. An additional source of employment data was the 2012 East Central Workforce Investment Area Profile and Report. The ECWIA publications offer helpful labor force assessments and commute patterns.

Therefore, while all the data comes together to present a comprehensive picture of the demographic and employment situation in Okfuskee County, we ask the reader to forgive slight inconsistencies in hard numbers.

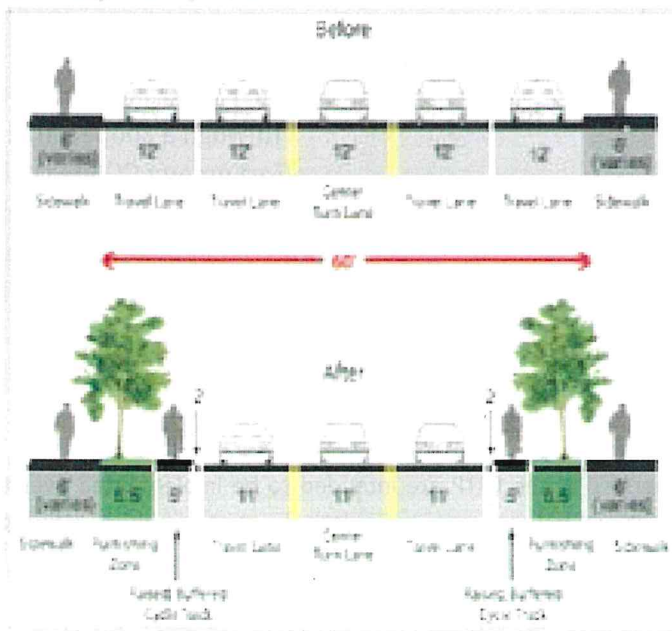
A Policy and Project Plan

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 (Road Diet) See figure 1, below.

Proposed projects include intersection improvements, integration of bicycle and pedestrian signage with road projects, safe access, modernized crosswalks and studies to be conducted. A listing of proposed projects is included below.

Figure 1

Concept Graphics



A reallocation of existing space can be a relatively low-cost way to accommodate bicyclists and improve pedestrian safety.

Variations of this method could be applied to rural 4 lane roads as well as city streets. In a rural setting, pedestrian and buffer space could be eliminated, while improved rumble strip placement adds safety

Graphic source: (McKission, 2012)

Identified Project Locations

Community Comment	Problem	State Road
SH 27 underpass, under I-40 safety	Too narrow for Peds and bikes	SH 27 under I-40
Intersection of Woody Guthrie/Columbia St	Problem intersection	SH 27; 56; 62
Intersection of SH 62 & Boley Town exit	Problem intersection	SH 62
School crossing Date St and SH 27	Needs stoplight and/or crosswalk	SH 27
I-40 ramps need stoplights (Okemah)	Needs stoplight and/or crosswalk	I-40 Ramp
Repave SH 56 thru town; Add crosswalks	Surface repair & crosswalks	SH 56
Add shoulders to the Highways	Needs shoulders	2-lane no-shldr
SH 75 from Weleetka to I-40	Too narrow, needs shoulders	SH 75
Bikes on SH 56; 27 & SH 9	Needs shoulders and signage	SH 56; 27 & SH 9
Need an exit off I-40 at Mi 222, to hospital	Improved access	I-40
Road from Boley to Prague (SH 62)	Maintenance & Preservation	SH 62
SH 75 from Weleetka to I-40	Maintenance & Preservation	SH 75
Section 26 on North side of 62 highway; dirt washed from the bridge	Maintenance & Preservation	Bridge SH 62

Table 1

Rumble Strip Placement

In addition to providing enhanced safety at a relatively low cost, appropriate rumble strip placement adds sustainability and resilience to the regional transportation system. FHWA has published guidelines for rumble strip design. Placement on or near the right edgeline can provide additional seconds of warning to both drivers and bicyclists traveling in the same direction that a vehicle has strayed over the edgeline. Proper placement of rumble strips also provides a wider riding surface between the roadway and the unimproved roadside (ditch). FHWA information and a graphic illustrating preferred placement of rumble strips is shown in Appendix 5.10.




 Poor rumble strip placement
 negatively impacts the utility of the
 shoulder


Chapter 1: Introduction; Key Issues & Goals

Background Information

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

In June of 2006, Rural Planning Organizations of America (RPO America) was established. Rural Transportation Planning Organizations facilitate local involvement in the statewide transportation planning process at the regional level, provide technical assistance to local governments, and assist with public involvement in the planning process and other tasks. Congress recognized the new national organization as “dedicated to improving the planning and development of America’s rural transportation network.” The group supports the coordination, management, and planning of national rural transportation systems, as well as the linking of rural community economic development initiatives with state and local transportation programs.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation worked with the Federal Highway Administration to allocate a portion of the federal State Planning & Research (SPR) funding to the Oklahoma Association of Regional Councils (OARC) to fund rural transportation planning projects. The Central Oklahoma Economic Development District (COEDD) was selected to participate. Other participating Regional Councils of Governments are NODA, SWODA, ASCOG and Grand Gateway

In October of 2009, the COEDD board created the Central Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CORTPO) by Resolution #09-04. The CORTPO Region is composed of a seven county area, and includes Hughes, Lincoln, Okfuskee, Payne, Pawnee, Pottawatomie, and Seminole Counties (Map 1). CORTPO will develop transportation plans for each county, which will ultimately result in a Regional Plan. The region is predominately rural, with the majority of the population being within the incorporated cities of Seminole, Shawnee, Stillwater, and Tecumseh.

The development of this Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) provides an opportunity for the community to identify priorities for Okfuskee County in context of the greater CORTPO region.



OKFUSKEE Major highways	
	Interstate 40
	U.S. Highway 62
	U.S. Highway 75
	State Highway 48
	State Highway 56

Purpose of the Plan

The Okfuskee County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) may be used to assist the community in focusing limited transportation funds on projects that provide the best return on investments, by developing realistic goals based on analysis of data and input from the community. By establishing the year 2040 as the planning horizon, the community is looking toward long range strategies to accommodate community needs over a significant period.

The transportation plan will provide a guide for the development of a safer, more efficient transportation network among population centers through both long-term transportation system objectives and short-term implementation of policies and projects. Realistic assessment of short range steps toward long range goals will support local fiscal planning and provide for long term coordination with state or federally funded transportation projects within the County.

Use the LRTP when:

Public repairs are planned, or new development is proposed

- ✓ Guiding Policy
- ✓ Project List
- ✓ Grant applications

Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed into law the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or "FAST Act." It is the first law enacted in over ten years that provides long-term funding certainty for surface transportation, meaning States and local governments can move forward with critical transportation projects, like new highways and transit lines, with the confidence that they will have a Federal partner over the long term. More information about the FAST Act is available in Appendix 1.1

Requirements

The LRTP has been developed by CORTPO in cooperation with the federal, tribal, state, county, and member governments, ODOT, FHWA and FTA. Federal requirements have been incorporated into the Okfuskee County LRTP, some of which are reproduced below:

The transportation plan must

- ✓ Address a twenty year planning horizon
- ✓ Identify needed pedestrian walkway and bicycle facilities
- ✓ Indicate, as appropriate, the transportation alternative activities within the area
- ✓ Include a financial plan that demonstrates the consistency of proposed transportation investments with sources of revenue already available

Planning Factors

The plan is intended to address the ten planning factors required by federal law 23 CFR 450.306 for the transportation planning process listed in Table 2 on the following page.

Planning Factors 23CFR 450.306

PLANNING FACTORS TO BE ADDRESSED IN NONMETROPOLITAN, METROPOLITAN AND STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING:

1. Support the economic vitality of the United States, the States, nonmetropolitan areas, and metropolitan areas, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
4. Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes, people and freight.
7. Promote efficient system management and operation.
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
9. Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation
10. Enhance travel and tourism

Table 2

Key Issues, Trends and Challenges

During the public participation process, the Okfuskee County community identified key issues, trends and challenges that have an impact on the function of the transportation system.

Concerns of the community

Comments received during the public participation survey indicate that Transit is needed. Preservation of existing infrastructure and road surface maintenance is a high priority in both the county road and city street systems. Pedestrian routes to schools and shopping may be insufficient. There are few existing accommodations for bicycle travel. Signage is perceived to be lacking or in need of repair.

Top Issues

- ✓ Funding limitation. Revenues continue to be limited to meet transportation system needs, while costs increase, especially for: County road maintenance, Transit, City street and sidewalk maintenance, preservation and improvement, Bridge rehabilitation or reconstruction
- ✓ Need for improved safety:
 - Pedestrian access to common destinations and schools
 - Increasing Bicycle traffic on rural roads
- ✓ There is little resiliency and sustainability incorporated into the existing system
- ✓ A need for improved: Local and regional transit, pedestrian, and bike accommodations, signage, sidewalks, benches, bike racks;

Trends

- ✓ Gradual population increase
- ✓ An increase in the proportion of residents over age 65 is projected
- ✓ Residents support local business and medical services
- ✓ Decay of existing infrastructure among all modes of transportation
- ✓ Increased Tribal influence on development and transportation in Oklahoma
- ✓ A national and regional economic shift towards increased demand for recreational travel amenities; Trails, sidewalks, bike racks, bike lanes
- ✓ FHWA policy has placed greater emphasis on improving transportation for “traditionally under-served” population groups such as:
 - Non-drivers of any age, including the elderly, low-wage workers and zero-vehicle households
 - Bicycle and pedestrian users of the system

Challenges

Funding

The primary challenge identified by this study is funding of all aspects of the transportation system. Revenue has fallen behind the investment needed to preserve and maintain the current system, therefore, additional funding will be needed to keep people and goods moving effectively over the next two decades. Increases in the proportion of the population over age 65 can be expected to result in additional demand for transit. Regional Rail service improvements would offer an alternative to trucked freight and reduce the wear on vulnerable state and county roads. Funding for increased Transit, maintenance and preservation of the existing roads, bridges and rail infrastructure must be the top priority of the long-range plan.

Maintenance and Preservation

COUNTY ROADS. The persistent challenge to the county road system is the cost of road maintenance; the daily costs of keeping more than 800 miles of roadway and signage in good condition.

SIDEWALKS AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY. Sidewalks and proper crosswalks throughout the region are absent or in a state of disrepair. The lack of safe paths to shopping, school and recreation is a common safety issue. Some Okfuskee County towns and cities have made efforts to improve pedestrian conditions. These efforts should be continued and supported in every population center.

RAIL. Some of the regional rail capacity has deteriorated to a point where the infrastructure is nearly lost. A great deal of research has been completed that demonstrates the value of rail infrastructure in central Oklahoma, and the direct economic benefits of existing and potential rail restoration investment in Okfuskee County and the CORTPO region. BNSF operates a rail line that passes through Weleetka. The station is still listed on the BNSF website as active.

The following paragraph is excerpted from the Federal Highway Administration document titled "Planning for Transportation in Rural Areas," that are relevant to Okfuskee County connections to the regional and national economy:

"Business decisions by rail companies have resulted in the abandonment of many rural branch lines. The result has been loss of rail freight service to these areas and increased trucking on the rural road system to compensate for this loss. Increased trucking on rural roads ultimately increases road maintenance needs and reduces the financial capability of the rural area and state to keep the roads in adequate condition. (FHWA PTR, 2001)"

The reader is directed to the *2013 Oklahoma Rail Infrastructure Report Card*; the *2012 Oklahoma Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan*; current FHWA and ODOT policy, and other print and web resources.



General maintenance and repairs are the key factors in keeping annual costs of road work low. According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), every \$1 spent to keep a road in good condition avoids \$6-\$14 needed later to rebuild the same road once it has deteriorated.



Demographic Trends

STABLE POPULATION AND ECONOMY. Okfuskee County is forecast to have a relatively stable population with a gradual increase over time. According to the public survey conducted in Okfuskee County, most people work and shop within 30 miles of home.

AGING. The projected number of people over age 65 in 2040, is expected to grow. In 2015, Oklahoma was home to more than 3.6 million people. Of these, more than 1 million (about 34 percent) were over age 50. In 2015, Okfuskee County, 16.7% of the population was over age 65, somewhat higher than the percentage for the rest of the State (14.2%). The US Administration on Aging (AoA) Report projected that by 2030, the over-65 group will make up 24% of the population in the state (AoA, 2014). If the balance holds true, Okfuskee County may expect an aging population in excess of 25% of population. For more information on changing demographics in the county also see Appendix 3.2.

Projected trends: Aging population in Oklahoma			
Year	2012	2020	2030
Age Group			
0 to 19	27.70%	27.80%	27.80%
20 to 39	25.90%	25.00%	24.70%
40 to 59	26.40%	24.20%	23.10%
60+	20.00%	23.10%	24.40%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (AoA, 2014)			

Table 3

CULTURAL TRENDS AND PERCEPTIONS. “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, as is the physical appearance of the visible infrastructure.

Other challenges that were identified by this study:

- ⇒ There has been limited integration of alternative mode facilities, environmental or sustainable transportation improvements within the current system
- ⇒ Safety and security for all legal road users has not been fully integrated into historic improvements
- ⇒ Improved integration of transportation goals with economic development goals could result in greater efficiencies in fiscal investment
- ⇒ Barriers to accessibility and mobility for under-served segments of the community – including able-bodied non-drivers – may have a negative impact on:
 - the local economy (customer access, worker stability)
 - perceptions of the quality of life available in Okfuskee County
 - Community health, safety and welfare

Goals, Objectives and Policies

The LRTP includes goals, objectives and policies to assist Okfuskee County in the planning and prioritization of transportation system investments.

GOALS

The goals of the LRTP were developed from meetings held with the general public, key stakeholders, Technical Committee members, Policy Board members and are based on the current planning guidelines published by the primary funding agencies – the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT). We applied the acronym *SMART* as a template for development of the objectives.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are specific, quantifiable steps towards the realization of community goals. Objectives should be *Specific and Measurable* and are more focused; typically more tangible statements related to attaining the set goals.

POLICIES

Policy statements and Action steps provide guidance for decisions that will help attain these goals and objectives. They are *Attainable and Relevant* in the twenty-year *Time* frame. Policies included in the plan were developed in coordination with member governments; partner agencies; technical committee and policy board members and are based on the current planning policies of the FHWA and ODOT.

Okfuskee County Goals

Goals for the Okfuskee County LRTP were developed from comments received from the public and are based on the ten planning factors required by federal law 23 CFR 450.306 for the transportation planning process. Table 4 identifies the goal categories for the LRTP. The full text of the goals, objectives and strategies developed for this plan are outlined below.

Goal Categories

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

Table 4

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1– Maximize Finance & Funding

GOAL STATEMENT: A fiscally balanced and sustainable transportation system

Objectives

- A. Consistent regional applications for all available transportation opportunities maximizes annual funding
- B. Local agencies, municipalities, tribal governments, state officials and private interests effectively collaborate in the pursuit and funding of transportation improvements
- 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

Goal 2 – Prioritize maintenance and preservation of existing infrastructure

GOAL STATEMENT: Preservation and maintenance of all components of the existing system will be prioritized over new construction to serve residential and commercial development within the region.

Objectives

- A. The current transportation system is maintained with stable funding
- B. Regional pavements are preserved through growth of intermodal rail freight
- C. New development is directed to appropriate roads and infrastructure
- D. Private companies with heavy truck traffic contribute to maintenance of vulnerable county roads

Goal 3 – Enhance Economic Vitality

GOAL STATEMENT: An integrated, multimodal transportation system promotes quality of life and economic development opportunities through enhancing the economic competitiveness of the region by improving access to jobs, education services, encouraging healthy neighborhoods and supporting business access to markets.

Objectives:

- A. Economic development is coordinated with strategic transportation investments
- B. Employers have assurance that the labor force has reliable transportation options
- C. Retail establishments are located within Town/City limits
- 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*
- F. Tourism provides annual revenue dedicated to low cost transportation improvements

Goal 4 – Improve Accessibility, Mobility, Connectivity

GOAL STATEMENT: Improve accessibility and mobility for Okfuskee County’s people and freight; Ensure regional connectivity; Support multiple modes of transportation

Objectives

- A. Funding is balanced among modes to ensure sustainable mobility solutions
- 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
- C. Reliable access to the transportation system is ensured for disadvantaged persons
- D. Transit is a preferred method of travel for a wider segment of the populace
- E. Bike routes are indicated with signage for improved regional mobility
- F. Park-and-ride lots are available in locations where potential ridership warrants
- G. Planning efforts result in continuous bikeways throughout the multi-county region
- 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

GOAL STATEMENT: *Safety:* All modes of transportation will provide transportation opportunities that are safe.

Security: Identify and protect critical transportation infrastructure from both natural hazards and human threats; incorporate strategies for improved resilience.

Objectives:

- A. Areas with higher collision rates are monitored and improvements are implemented
- B. Structurally deficient bridges are prioritized for repair or replacement
- C. Local site development standards address safety for all legal road users
- D. Bicyclists have improved safety in rural areas
- E. Persons using handicap mobility vehicles have off road access to common destinations
- F. Crosswalks have appropriate signage and visibility
- G. A transportation system which is sustainable and resilient supports long term needs
- H. Improved modal options reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles

*See Chapter 1; Strategies for Implementation; Activity & Projects
Chapter 6, Recommendations; Implementation; Policies.*

*Policies Actions and Projects have been summarized into a single table for easy
reference in Appendix 6*

Chapter 2: Current Conditions, Needs, and Funded Improvements

This chapter provides an assessment of current conditions that relate to transportation in Okfuskee County. Data and information included in this chapter were obtained from county, state and federal agencies or institutions.

Okfuskee County

The following information is sourced from the Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture, by Linda Wilson: The area now covered by Okfuskee County was occupied by the Quapaw and Osage tribes until 1825, when they ceded the land to the United States government. After the Civil War, free African American Creek remained in the area and founded all-black communities. These towns included Boley, Bookertee, Clearview, Chilesville, and Rusk. Okfuskee, a Creek town, grew up around Samuel Checote's trading post after the Civil War. Okfuskee County was created at statehood (1907) from the former Creek Nation, and Okemah was designated as the county seat. Today, the County is entirely within the jurisdiction of the Muscogee Creek Nation. (Map, Appendix 2.1.)

Oil and gas production began in the county in 1914, when the Prairie Oil and Gas Company completed a well near Paden. Other wells followed elsewhere in the county, creating a population boom that peaked in 1930 (Wilson, 2009). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 629 square miles, of which 619 square miles is land and 10 square miles (1.6%) is water.

Ecology

The county lies within the Sandstone Hills physiographic region and the Cross Timbers ecological region. The northeastern part is drained by the Deep Fork of the Canadian River, while the southern part is drained by the North Canadian River.

Economy

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 (a predecessor of today's milo and grain sorghums), and potatoes (Wilson, 2009).

Places

The county seat is Okemah. Other incorporated towns in the county include Bearden, Boley, Castle, Clearview, IXL, Paden and Weleetka. There are seven unincorporated communities; Last Chance, Mason, Micawber, Morse, Okfuskee, Pharoah, and Welty.

Okfuskee County Incorporated Municipalities

Population	2000	2010	Change
Bearden	140	133	-5%
Boley	1126	1184	5%
Castle	122	106	-13%
Clearview	56	48	-14%
IXL	59	51	-14%
Okemah	3038	3223	1%
Paden	446	461	3%
Weleetka	1014	998	-2%

Table 5

Population

As of the 2010 United States Census, there were 12,191 people residing in the county. The 2015 estimate is 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.

2015	State of OK	Okfuskee county
Race and Hispanic or Latino	%	%
Total population	100	100
One race	94.1	93.5
White	72.2	64.4
Black or African American	7.4	8.3
American Indian and Alaska Native	8.6	19.7
Two or More Races	5.9	6.5
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	8.9	2.9

Table 6

(2015 US Census Data)

Households

There were 4,354 households, of which 29.2% had children under the age of 18 living with them, and 14.5% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.52. Eight percent of the population in the county are housed in an institution; most are men at the John H. Lilley Correctional center near Boley. There were 5,282 housing units, of which 928 are vacant (17.6) for a total of 4,354 occupied dwelling units. Seventy-four percent 74.4% are owner occupied, 25.6% are rentals. Most vacant units are rental properties.

Okfuskee County Housing units		
Total:	5,282	
Urban:	1,443	27%
Rural	3,839	73%
Occupied housing units	4,354	82%
Vacant housing units	928	18%

Table 7

(2015 US Census Data)

Household income 2015 ACS		
Less than \$10,000	428	10.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	368	9.1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	644	15.9%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	530	13.1%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	635	15.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	638	15.8%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	450	11.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	241	6.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	73	1.8%
\$200,000 or more	41	1.0%
Median household income (dollars)	\$ 36,216	

Income

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, including 33.5% of those under age 18 and 16% of those aged 65 or over. Appendix 5.6 illustrates poverty by Census Tract.

Table 8

Dwelling Vacancy

The 2015 ACS estimates there were 5,282 housing units, of which 928 were vacant (17.6) for a total of 4,354 occupied dwelling units. Seventy-four percent 74.4% were owner occupied, 25.6% are rentals. Most vacant units are rental properties (US Census, 2015).

A map in Appendix 2.2 shows the relative density of vacant dwellings by Block Group (BG). In and near the town of Boley, CT 807 BG 01 has a 25% DU Vacancy rate. CT 807 BG 2 (southwest of Boley), and CT 810 BG 2, (the rural area including Clearview around Weleetka) both have a DU Vacancy rate of about 21%. The town of Weleetka itself, has about 20 percent of homes vacant. In other words, throughout significant portions of Okfuskee County, one of every four or five houses was unoccupied at the time of the survey (US Census, 2015)

Registered Motor Vehicles

According to the Oklahoma Tax Commission, there were 6,166 personal, government, commercial, farm and business motor vehicles registered in Okfuskee County in 2015. When the number of vehicles is divided by the estimated 2015 population, the rate of ownership is about one vehicle for every two persons (.5 vehicles per person of any age). The historical figures are similar when population is taken into account (OTC, 2015).

Zero-vehicle Households

About 8% of households in the county have no vehicle. Census Tract 809 in the Okemah area has the highest percentage of zero-vehicle households, at 12%. The Weleetka area also reflects a relatively high number of households without transportation at 8%. See Appendix 2.4 for more information about zero-vehicle households.

VEHICLES AVAILABLE			
Occupied housing units	4354	# Hhd's	# People
No vehicle	8%	327	833

Table 9

Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ)

The Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) Program is used to produce Census Transportation Planning Products (CTPP). TAZ data are based on the 2010 US Census and are designed to allow planning agencies access to specific data for transportation system analysis and creation of geographic information layers suitable for planning purposes.

CORTPO uses Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) boundaries in analysis of socio-economic data. Geographically, the Census study area was subdivided into five TAZ which (in Okfuskee County) were equivalent to the Census Tracts (CT) (See Appendix 2.2) and numbered identically to the CT's. One of the tasks of this planning effort was to create more detailed TAZ, based on census block data for the rural areas of the state. Census data is organized by County, Census Tracts, Block Groups and the smallest units, Tabulation blocks. Forty-two (42) TAZ were created based on block data, each with populations numbering 200 to 400 people. See Appendix 2.3 for more information.

Major Employers

Crop and cattle agriculture have long been important to the county economy. Common agricultural products from the county today are sorghum, hay and cattle. Other crops have been cotton, wheat, corn, oats, and soybeans. Small poultry and cattle operations are common. The primary mode of transportation for shipping agricultural products into the national economy is by truck.

Okfuskee County is part of the East Central Workforce Investment Area (ECWIA). Most major employers are located in or near the City of Okemah. The East Central Workforce Investment Area (ECWIA) monitors job data for five counties: Hughes, Lincoln, Okfuskee, Pottawatomie, and Seminole counties. Okfuskee County represents about 6.6% of ECWIA jobs.

Of nineteen top employers listed by the ECWIA, the largest employer is a prison, five are governmental bodies, four are educational centers, and four are medical facilities. Two Casinos, two banks, a grocery store, and a retail fast food restaurant all rank in the top nineteen with 25 to 50 employees each. (OKCOMM, 2011).

Therefore, it appears that the largest employers in the county are engaged in services for people, as opposed to manufacturing or other industry, and much of the sales tax revenue is sourced from food sales and small retail businesses of less than 25 employees each. See Table p. 27, below.

Commuter Statistics

According to the 2011 WIA Economic Profile, there are a significant number of people who commute to work. For the most part, ECWIA workers live in the same county as their place of work. In Okfuskee County, 60% of workers are employed within the county. About 13% commute to Pottawatomie, Lincoln, Seminole or Hughes counties. Approximately 27% of working residents leave the ECWIA for employment; that percentage includes workers commuting north or east, to neighboring counties. Of course, a number of workers also commute into Okfuskee County from adjacent communities each day, resulting in a small net reduction in daytime population. See Appendix 2.2 for more information.



Three hundred twenty-seven (327) households in the county have no vehicle.

At an average household size of 2.6 persons, that means about

833 people have no transportation at home

- *uscensus ACS 2015*



Okfuskee County Major Employers			
Department Of Corrections	Boley	150-250	Government
Creek Nation Hospital	Okemah	150-250	Medical
Okemah Public Schools	Okemah	150-250	Education
Golden Pony Casino	Okemah	100-150	Casino
Okfuskee County	Okemah	50-100	Government
Muscogee Creek Nation/Casino	Okemah	50-100	Tribal government/casino
Weleetka Public Schools	Weleetka	50-100	Education
Okemah Care Center LLC	Okemah	25-50	Sr. living center
Boley Residential Care Home	Boley	25-50	Substance abuse treatment
City Of Okemah	Okemah	25-50	Government
Paden Public Schools	Paden	25-50	Education
Mason School District	Mason	25-50	Education
Thlopthlocco Tribal Town	Okemah	25-50	Tribal government
Stepping Stones Inc	Boley	25-50	Medical
Okemah National Bank	Okemah	25-50	Banking
Homeland Stores	Okemah	25-50	Retail
Newton Investments Inc	Okemah	25-50	Retail food
Citizens State Bank	Okemah	25-50	Banking
Dept Of Human Services	Okemah	25-50	Government

Table 10

(US Census Fact Finder, 2015)



Okemah Lake Recreation facilities include: Tent and camper spaces, 14 hookups with restrooms/showers, outdoor grills, pavilions available for retreats and family or church gatherings, restrooms, a swimming area, a playground for the kids, a boat dock and boat ramps.

County and Community Development

Changing land uses affect the flow of traffic throughout the community. Over recent decades, most residential and industrial growth has occurred in and near incorporated municipalities. This is a preferred development strategy which efficiently utilizes existing infrastructure.

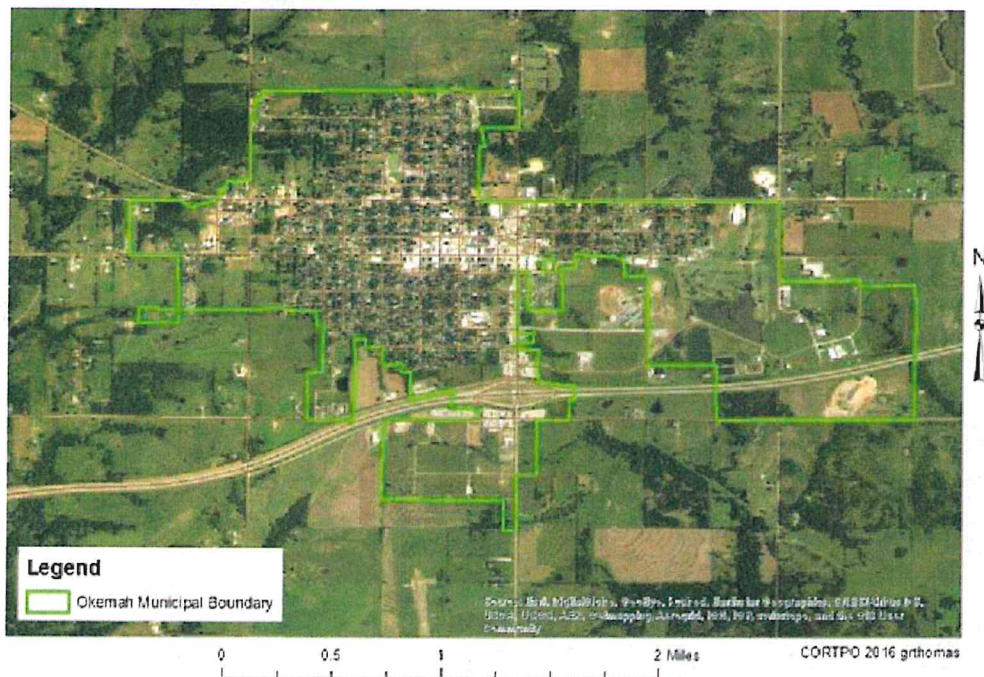
Growth within the towns of Okemah and Weleetka is guided by Zoning. Okfuskee County itself has no zoning or subdivision regulations; the county does regulate road standards for new development. Okemah is adjacent to I-40, providing ready access for freight.

Some areas are common destinations that may generate additional demands on the transportation system. Such activity-generators include grocery, retail, business and industrial sites, agencies, schools, universities, and recreation centers. The destinations in the county that draw the most concentrated traffic are in Okemah; the downtown, grocery and shopping strip. There is an industrial area on the east side of town.

In the aerial view of Okemah below, the light toned areas show the downtown area (which remains active) in the picture center and the strip North and South along Woody Guthrie Street. This concentrated development pattern is desirable to prevent infrastructure sprawl. However, sidewalks and crosswalks lack connectivity. State Highway 27 (Woody Guthrie Street) passes through a school zone and an underpass, connecting to a convenience store and Casino south of I-40. Pedestrians and persons using handicap-mobility vehicles must cross through the narrow underpass to access the south part of the city. See photos page 27.

Light toned areas show commercial, retail and industrial structures and concentration of pavement

Development In & Near Okemah





Sidewalks lack connectivity along a commercial strip on State Highway 27, Okemah



PEDESTRIANS

“Pedestrian” is a term intended to include both those who travel by walking and people using wheelchairs or handicap-mobility vehicles



Below: a narrow underpass places pedestrians in close proximity to vehicles. OK 27, on the south side of Okemah, connects the main residential and shopping areas to convenience stores and casino under I-40



Narrow passage

Physical Development Constraints, Development Conditions and Patterns

There are various factors that can affect whether a site is appropriate for development. Some of these conditions may include the location of water and sewer infrastructure, existing roads buildings and, land ownership and tribal jurisdictions, legally established rights of way, floodplains, wetland areas, habitats or regulations.

Environmental features

Okfuskee County is home to environmental features and natural resources which influence the transportation system. Gas and oil fields underlie much of the region. Protection of these and other resources must be an integral part of early project development, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other State and Federal laws.



*American Peregrine Falcon
Photo by Roy W Lowe USFWS*

The county has a gentle topography. This rolling topography, together with the presence of numerous streams and rivers, influenced the number of small county bridges that were originally built; many of which are now in need of rehabilitation and replacement. There is a very limited amount of floodplain area mapped by FEMA (1976/1987) in the County. Zone A flood hazard regions are identified at the NE and SW corners of the municipality of Castle. Check current flood maps.

Endangered Species

Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
Birds	Whooping crane	Grus americana	Endangered
Birds	American peregrine falcon	Falco peregrinus anatum	Recovery
Birds	Piping Plover	Charadrius melodus	Threatened
Birds	Least tern	Sterna antillarum	Endangered
Birds	Red knot	Calidris canutus rufa	Threatened
Insects	American burying beetle	Nicrophorus americanus	Endangered

Table 11

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

Site	Location
Boley Historic District	Boley
Guthrie, Woody, House	Okemah
Okemah Armory	Okemah
Okfuskee County Courthouse	Okemah
Weleetka Town Hall and Jail	Weleetka

Table 12

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. There are activity generators including workplace, shopping or medical destinations, which produce concentrations of transit need, where at least one end of a trip is concentrated enough that public transit may be feasible. The challenge is to establish stable funding, design efficient routes and schedule service such that the trip is attractive to the workers.

Ki Bois Area Transit (KATS) provides demand-response transit service for adults 18 years of age and older. The transit program operates in Okfuskee County from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday. The program operates from schedules, and due to heavy demand, rides must be scheduled well in advance of the need for service.

Highways

Interstate, US highways, State and county roads are the framework of mobility. The location and condition of state highways in the county may drive development decisions. Several two-lane no-shoulder roads in the county are identified as locations for ODOT improvements over the next few years. See Map Appendix 2.15. Most roads in Okfuskee County are two-lane roads. Map 2: Okfuskee County Cities, Towns and Highways on Page 12 above, illustrates the location of local and state roads. Interstate highway I-40 passes through the county. See Appendix 2.12 for Functional Classification of roads; Appendix 2.13 shows Traffic counts.

Truck Freight

Reliable freight transportation enables connections among business and markets in the County, in Oklahoma, the United States and the world economy. According to the 2015 ODOT report titled Freight and Goods Movement, freight activity has rebounded from an economic slump from 2008 to 2012, and is expected to continue to grow.

Highways are considered high volume truck corridors in locations where roadways have consistent truck volumes at or above 5,000 vehicles per day, or on facilities where truck traffic represents 40 percent or more of the total traffic. Interstate 40 is a high volume truck route through Okfuskee County as identified by ODOT. State Highway 1 and SH 9 each carry notable quantities of freight into, out of, and through Okfuskee County, as mapped by ODOT (ODOT FGM, 2015).



The 2012 ODOT document Freight Flows includes the following comments about trucked freight:

Almost two-thirds (65%) of all trucks traveling on the Oklahoma highway network have their origin and destination within the state.



An operational BNSF freight route passes through Okfuskee County as it runs between Ada and Sapulpa



Rail

The location of rail facilities in the county may influence development decisions. Connectivity of rail service in the CORTPO region deteriorated after the peak of rail service in the early twentieth century. In the last few decades, public and private rail investments have been made to preserve lines and restore service. See Appendix 2.9 for a map of railroad routes in Okfuskee County. Burlington Northern-Santa Fe freight transport passes through the southeast portion of the county. Additional information is included in Appendix 2.8.

Rail Freight

Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) operates freight shipping in Okfuskee County, passing through Weleetka. Freight movement by rail reduces truck traffic on the state's highways. One freight train can carry the same tonnage of goods using less fuel, than shipping by trucks. For that reason, shipping freight by rail also reduces emissions per ton of freight.

The orange line on the map indicates the operational BNSF line.



Aviation

The county is home to Okemah Municipal Airport. The Creek Nation Community Hospital operates a heliport for medical emergencies. A Map in Appendix 2.9 shows Airport and Rail.

Public Safety Issues

Transportation safety issues are based on a variety of factors, many of which cannot be addressed by local transportation system planning, but are under ODOT jurisdiction. ODOT has collected extensive data and identifies sites for improvements annually to improve safety conditions throughout the State.

The ODOT data in Table 2.1 depicts Okfuskee County Collision data from 2011 through 2015. There were a total of 761 reported vehicle accidents of all types over the 5 year period between 2011 and 2015 (inclusive). The number of all collisions per year has remained fairly steady since 2011 with a total of 156 crashes occurring in 2011, dropping to 135 in 2012, with 156 in 2013, 143 in 2014, and 171 in 2015.

In comparison, for the State of Oklahoma during this time period, total crashes declined by 14%, and fatal crashes decreased by 14.5%. During the years 2011-2015, an average of two percent (2%) of Okfuskee County accidents resulted in death. About 1% of all accidents statewide result in fatality. Sixteen (16) vehicle accidents resulted in the deaths of 16 individuals in Okfuskee County over the five year period, 353 people were injured, and 322 collisions caused property damage only.

Okfuskee County Collisions 2011-2015

Okfuskee County Collision data, by Year																
Year	Highway				City Streets				County Roads				Total			
	Fat	Inj	PD	Tot	Fat	Inj	PD	Tot	Fat	Inj	PD	Tot	Fat	Inj	PD	Tot
2011	3	38	58	99		4	17	21	1	17	18	36	4	59	93	156
2012	3	27	63	93		1	12	13		17	12	29	3	45	87	135
2013	2	36	83	121		2	5	7	2	16	10	28	4	54	98	156
2014	1	36	58	95		4	17	21	3	17	7	27	4	57	82	143
2015	1	39	86	126		2	15	17		11	17	28	1	52	118	171
Total	10	176	348	534	0	13	66	79	6	78	64	148	16	267	478	761

Table 13 Source ODOT 2015 The above information is for informational purposes only and use is restricted under 23 USC 409.

Most collisions and nearly all fatalities happen on highways in rural areas, including along I-40 (see Map 13, Appendix 2). Of the 761 collisions that were analyzed for this plan, 534 (70%) were on highways. Nineteen percent (148 collisions) occurred in rural non-highway areas; 10% (79) – including one fatality – were documented on streets and highways within the city limits of Okemah; fifteen accidents (5%) occurred in Paden. The remaining collisions happened within Boley, Castle or Weleetka, each recording three or four accidents over a five year period.

More than 75% of collisions occurred during dry conditions; most happened during daylight hours in dry conditions (47%). Accidents seem to be spread fairly evenly among the hours of the day with the exception of peak traffic periods from 5 am to 8 am and from 4 pm to 6 pm. Friday was the most frequent day that accidents occurred (18%), followed by Wednesday, Tuesday, then Saturday, Monday and Sunday. The fewest collisions happened on Thursdays, at 12%, or 94 of all 761 accidents tracked.

Causes

Many accidents have no specific cause noted (34%). The primary driver error identified was unsafe speed, the cause of more than 18% of all collisions and 30% of fatalities. Following unsafe speed, about 15% of accidents were caused by inattention; 7.4% were failure to yield; whereas drunk or impaired driving came in at 6.6% of all causes of collision. Forty-four percent (7 of 16) of all fatal vehicle collisions were a result of collision with a fixed object. Five (31%) fatalities occurred as a result of vehicle rollover.

Pedestrian; Bicycle

Of total collisions over the five year period, 2 of the persons killed and one injured were pedestrians. Only two vehicle accidents involved bicyclists – one person was killed and one injured (.3% of total accidents).

Deteriorating Pavements and Deficient Bridges

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 the pavement performance standards for good and acceptable ride. A score below 95 is in the good category.

State transportation infrastructure investment did not increase between 1985 and 2005. According to the 2014 Update on Oklahoma Bridges and Highways published by ODOT, 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* (see Appendix C; Definitions).

The Oklahoma Legislature enacted legislation to begin to correct the problem. ODOT initiated a goal to have near zero structurally deficient bridges in Oklahoma by 2020, and has replaced or rehabilitated more than 1,000 bridges since January 2006. All such bridges on State highways are targeted for repair and replacement by the Oklahoma DOT over the next eight years. 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. See page 36, below, for scheduled improvements in the ODOT 8-year Plan.

Bridges

Aging bridges are scattered throughout the county. Structurally compromised bridges may be weight restricted. Some bridges may be structurally sound, but have narrow road beds which are considered functionally obsolete by modern standards.

Okfuskee County Bridges on the NBI		
Total Bridges	# Structurally Deficient	# Functionally Obsolete
228	103	11

Table 14

The National Bridge Inventory tracks all bridges that are more than 20 feet long. The NBI database records a total of 228 bridges in Okfuskee County. Of those, 114 are considered deficient or obsolete, most constructed during the 1920's and 1930's. These bridges are identified and categorized by sufficiency rating in Appendix 3.8

Structurally Deficient; Functionally Obsolete

One hundred three (103) of Okfuskee County bridges are structurally deficient, 11 are functionally obsolete; which can have a negative impact – not only on public resources and safety – but also on the development potential of properties in the county. .

A bridge is classified as structurally deficient if the deck, superstructure, substructure, or culvert is rated in "poor" condition. A bridge can also be classified as structurally deficient if its load carrying capacity is significantly below current design standards, or if a waterway frequently overtops the bridge during floods.

Functionally Deficient bridges have lane widths, shoulder widths, or vertical clearances that are not fully functional to serve current traffic demand. While it is not unsafe for all vehicles, older design features cannot adequately accommodate modern traffic volumes or vehicle sizes and weights.



In some cases, weight limits on county bridges may be too low to safely support Fire response vehicles, resulting in a situation where trucks may have to be indirectly routed in a fire emergency.

In the event of fire in a location that is not readily accessible to a fully loaded water tanker, water may have to be shuttled across the bridge.



Structurally Deficient and Functionally Obsolete Bridge over Walnut Creek, Okfuskee County

Side View



View from Road



Chapter 3: Future Conditions, Needs, & Planned Improvements

Population and Employment Projections

US Census data indicate total population is expected to remain stable or slightly growing. Other demographic factors remain stable.

Aging Population

The percentage of people in the general population from birth to adults age 44 has fallen, while the percentage of population between 45 and 75 years of age increased significantly between the 2000 and 2010 Census. While this change is not unexpected and is attributable to the aging status of people born during the post-WWII population spike (Baby Boomers), this demographic group will likely include many additional non-drivers over the next two decades. See Appendix 3.2.

Employment projection

The East Central WIA added +4,570 jobs between 2005 and 2010, growing by +7.1% over that time period. ECWIA is projected to add jobs between 2010 and 2020. Agriculture leads expected job growth in Okfuskee County, where farmers and ranchers are the fastest growing occupation, with farm managers and miscellaneous agricultural workers also making the top ten.

Both collectively and individually, job growth for all five counties exceeded the state's rate of job growth of +6.0% between 2005 and 2010, with the lone exception being Okfuskee County. In Okfuskee County the net rate of job growth was +1.5%. This was interpreted to indicate that while population in the county is stable, the rate of job growth has remained positive. Therefore, the rate of employment was carried forward to project a relatively stable employment situation through 2035.

Projected Growth Areas and new Housing

Residential, commercial and industrial growth is projected to continue to be concentrated in and near the Cities of Okemah and Weleetka. Some smaller communities have set aside areas that are appropriate for Industrial Park use. Each of these towns include housing which should be rehabilitated or demolished. Senior and Low-income housing units would contribute to the vitality of these communities and meet the needs of retired residents.

Highway improvements

Improvements planned for state roads in the county include upgrade of two-lane roads. ODOT has targeted specific 2-lane roads for the addition of shoulders, to improve safety on these roads. A map illustrating the location of these roads may be found in Appendix 2.15.

Bike and Pedestrian Routes

Pedestrian improvements have been initiated in the City of Okemah. The Town of Paden was awarded a TAP grant in 2016 for construction and rehabilitation of sidewalks and trails. Anecdotally, the incidence of bicyclists on both paved and gravel roads is increasing, consistent with national trends. There are no marked Bike routes in the County, and currently, no such routes have been identified.

Public Transportation

KATS transit consistently experiences high demand. Survey results indicate regular riders of the transit service are expressing a need for increased availability of trips, shorter advance scheduling timelines and an option for an interrupted trip (dropping a child off at day care on the way to work). Transit systems may encounter increased operational demand as the aging and low-income populations continue to grow.

Rail Improvements

According to the *2010–2035 Oklahoma Statewide Intermodal Plan*, rail demand is expected to grow at a 0.9 percent annual rate from 2015 to 2035, with the largest growth occurring on the Class I network in the center of the State. The viability of the existing BNSF service connecting Okfuskee County to the National Class I system, may support the economic desirability of local long-term rail improvements connecting freight to the national system.

Projected increases in rail freight will influence the preservation, maintenance and restoration of the regional rail infrastructure. Because public funding for transportation is so limited, it may be necessary to use jurisdictional collaboration and private funding to stabilize and improve local railways.

Two at-grade Railroad crossings in Weleetka have been identified for improvement as part of a \$100 million Rail Crossings Safety Initiative was announced in 2014 by the State of Oklahoma and ODOT. These projects can include improved signage and active warning systems such as flashing lights and gates that will lower to prevent traffic from crossing when trains are present, and audible alert devices (ODOT, 2015).

Projected Freight Routes

The Federal Highway Administration’s Office of Freight Management and Operations projects Oklahoma freight tonnage to, from, within and through the state on all transportation modes to increase about 1.3% per year over the 2015 to 2035 forecast period.

Highway freight tonnage is expected to increase its share of total freight tonnage from 51 percent in 2007 to 57 percent in 2035, driven mainly by strong growth in imports and exports. The State’s growth in exports is expected to be concentrated in agricultural products, durable goods, and live animals. Freight tonnage is also expected to grow fastest in areas of the State outside of the Oklahoma City and Tulsa Metropolitan Areas.

Annual truck traffic in Oklahoma on I-35, I-40, and I-44 is projected to grow at a 1.6-percent annual pace over the 2015 to 2035 forecast period. By 2035, roughly 13,000 and 14,500 trucks per day are expected to use I-35 and I-40, respectively, throughout the State; and 8,500 trucks are expected to use I-44. This compares with roughly 8,500, 9,500 and 5,300 vehicles in 2007. These forecasts further indicate an increase in truck traffic on the smaller highways that connect with the interstate network as well (ODOT NHS, 2010).



Bicycle tourism is a growing segment of the economy throughout the Midwest

“Gravel Grinders” is a local bike club whose members enjoy long bicycle trips on regional gravel roads!

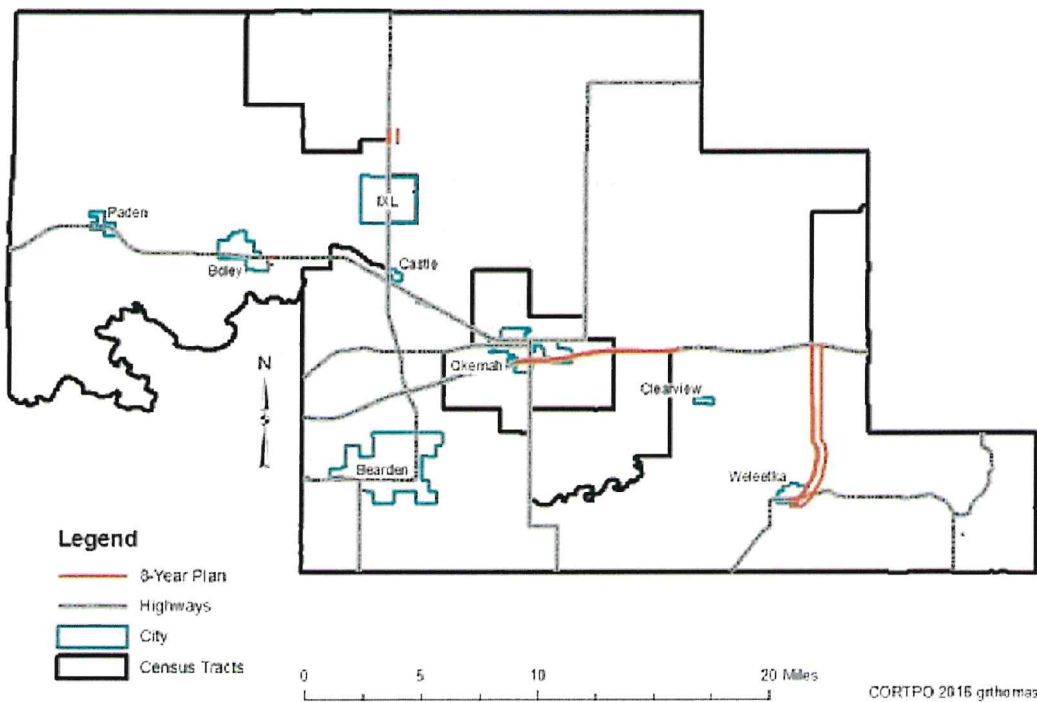
Aviation Review

No airport improvements or expansions are planned at this time.

Funded Improvements; 8-year Plan

Funded improvements are projects that have ODOT and local funding commitments through the year 2018. Projects included in the ODOT 8-year Construction Plan that are scheduled beyond a 3 or 4 year time frame are subject to occasional reordering of priorities and funding has not been committed to those projects.

ODOT 8-Year Plan Improvements Planned



County Improvements Roads & Bridges (CIRB)

Statewide, the CIRB 5 year plan includes replacement or rehabilitation of 439 County Bridges. This List includes 327 structurally deficient or functionally obsolete bridges. 52 Bridges in the CIRB plan are utilizing Recycled Crosstown Bridge Beams. Approximately 875 miles of County Roads will also be improved.

County Improvements Roads and Bridges 2017-2020 Division 3 – Okfuskee						
FY 2017						
31151(06)	CO BRGE	0.25 Mi	RIGHT OF WAY	CO BR ON EW-113 OVER UNNAMED CREEK, 1.0 MILE EAST, 1.8 MILES NORTH AND 0.2 MILES WEST OF BEARDEN (ROW FOR J/P 31151(04))	\$20,000	\$20,000
31151(07)	CO BRGE	0.25 Mi	UTILITIES	CO BR ON EW-113 OVER UNNAMED CREEK, 1.0 MILE EAST, 1.8 MILES NORTH AND 0.2 MILES WEST OF BEARDEN (UTIL FOR J/P 31151(04))	\$20,000	\$20,000
FY 2018						
30673(04)	CO RD	7.00 Mi	GRADE, DRAIN & SURFACE	GRADE, DRAIN AND SURFACE CO RD NS-377 BEG AT SH-56 EXTENDING NORTH 5.0 MILES TO EW-104 AND EW-102 BEG AT NS-377 EXTENDING EAST 2.0 MILES	\$2,416,246	\$2,416,246
31151(04)	CO BRGE	0.25 Mi	BRIDGE & APPROACHES	CO BR ON EW-113 OVER UNNAMED CREEK, 1.0 MILE EAST, 1.8 MILES NORTH AND 0.2 MILES WEST OF BEARDEN	\$300,000	\$300,000
FY 2019						
30087(04)	CO RD	5.00 Mi	GRADE, DRAIN & SURFACE	CO RD, NS-383 BEG AT I-40 EXT SOUTH AND EAST TO NS-114 CLEARVIEW ROAD	\$4,068,177	\$4,068,177
FY 2020						
<i>No Projects scheduled in Okfuskee County FY 2020</i>						

Table 15

“The problems of 40 years of underfunding cannot be overcome in a few years,” said ODOT Executive Director Mike Patterson. “ODOT is grateful to the Legislature and the public for investing in the system’s bridge needs. Unfortunately, it will take a sustained effort to truly dig out of this hole and put Oklahoma back on track to meet its citizens’ transportation needs.” (Hill, 2015)

Chapter 4: Financial Summary

Funding for Projects and Recommendations of the LRTP

Funding of local transportation projects and programs is heavily influenced by State of Oklahoma's annual budget and federal funding. Transportation funding sources based on motor vehicle fuel taxes tend to fluctuate with changes in fuel prices and fuel consumption. Instability in gas and oil revenues collected by the State has contributed to the challenge of consistent investment in road surface maintenance and preservation. Modern roads and bridges must be wider and carry more freight than the original design of a road, and therefore rehabilitation or replacement becomes increasingly expensive.

Limited budgets and a focus on repairing structurally deficient bridges have diverted funds from pavement maintenance. The number of structurally deficient highway bridges peaked at 1,168 in 2004. Due to increased state funding since 2006, bridges were replaced at such a rate that by the end of the 2014 inspection season that number had dropped to 372.

Therefore, coordination among federal, local, regional and statewide agencies in the development of transportation initiatives will be necessary in order to accomplish needed improvements. New sources of revenue may be required to meet gaps in services.

Funding Sources

Funding for highway improvements in Oklahoma comes primarily from two sources – the Federal Highway Trust Fund and state funds. Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) provided \$26 million of Surface Transportation Program (STP) federal funds to the County Highway System. Oklahoma's primary sources of funding for road and bridge construction and maintenance are derived from fuel taxes and motor vehicle tax. Appendix 4.1 provides more information about various transportation funding strategies.

In 1923, Oklahoma enacted its first State excise tax on motor fuels. The last increase was in 1987 and the tax is currently 17 cents per gallon for gasoline; diesel is taxed at 14 cents. In addition, counties raise their own revenue sources to supplement state and federal funding through local option sales taxes. Okfuskee County collects a one-cent excise (sales) tax, the proceeds of which are deposited to the county revolving fund. Fifty-six percent (56%) of the tax is allocated to maintenance, repair and improvement of county roads and bridges.

Rural Transit

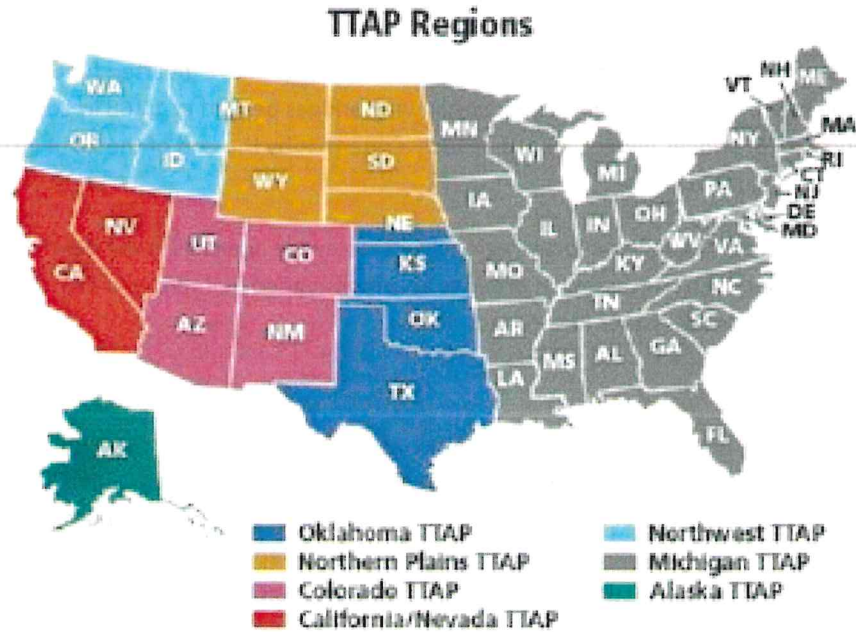
The Federal Transit Authority allocates funds annually to the governor of each state, to provide funding for public transportation projects serving areas that are outside of an urban boundary with a population of 50,000 or less. Tribal Transportation funding is a critical component of keeping transit available in the county and the region.

Non-motorized Transportation

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) was authorized under Section 1122 of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, primarily bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Tribal Transportation projects and funding

Recognized tribal governments receive federal transportation funds and may also designate local funds for transportation projects. Municipal and Tribal governments throughout the CORTPO region have been successful in working together to achieve implementation of critical transportation improvements. The (TTP) Tribal Transportation Program is the largest program in the Office of Federal Lands Highway. TTP is intended to address transportation needs of Tribal governments throughout the United States. Okfuskee County is located entirely within the Muskogee Creek Nation.



Source: LTAP/TTAP



Chapter 5: Public Participation

Public involvement is an integral part of the transportation process and is also a federal requirement, continued as part of the legislation Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or "FAST Act." 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.

We include an assessment of the relative concentrations of identified populations such as low-income and zero-vehicle households. Proposed construction projects must be evaluated to determine if they have disproportional adverse effects on vulnerable populations. This concept is known as Environmental justice. Additional information about community involvement in drafting this plan is available in Appendix 5.

Public Participation Plan

CORTPO is proactive in its efforts to communicate effectively with the public and has adopted a Public Participation Plan (PPP) to ensure that local transportation planning provides opportunities for the public to take an active role in the decision-making process and complies with the federal requirement for public involvement and participation.

Methods

As part of the PPP, public meetings were held and newspaper press releases were issued for public outreach, to involve interested parties in the early stages of the plan development. Notices of public meetings for the LRTP were posted in accordance with Oklahoma Open Meetings Law. After the draft LRTP was developed, CORTPO hosted additional public meetings and provided a notice of availability for a 45-day public comment period (Appendix 5.5; copy of public comment period notice). The final draft LRTP was presented to the CORTPO Technical Committee for review and comment prior to recommendation to the CORTPO Policy Board for adoption. Contact the CORTPO office or website for the full version of the PPP.

Surveys

To receive public comments by survey, we issued a press release, posted notices, published the survey on CORTPO website, provided paper copies to local interest groups and distributed them throughout Okfuskee County, the Towns of Paden, Boley, Clearview, Weleetka, City of Okemah, and community representatives on the CORTPO Technical Committee. Surveys were collected from the public between January 10, 2017 and May 5, 2017. Thirty-two surveys were returned and tabulated. All public comments received have been included. See Appendix 5.1 for survey instrument, response summary and public comments.

Narrative Survey Results

Three top concerns were identified during the process of public involvement. They are: Maintenance of infrastructure, Improved Mobility (Transit and Pedestrian safety) and Economic Vitality. Road surface maintenance and bridge integrity are considered most important for state and county roads, and city street systems. Expanded transit and safer pedestrian routes and crosswalks are needed to access work, schools and shopping. Economic vitality and transportation are viewed as mutually dependent. Signage is perceived to be lacking or in need of repair. There are few existing accommodations for bicycle travel.

Medical Travel

Many people are able to get primary medical care within 15 to 40 miles from home, in Okemah, Okmulgee, Prague, Seminole or Shawnee, but that does represent a 30 to 80 mile round trip. A third of respondents must travel to Oklahoma City for Medical care, often more than 150 miles round trip. Medical travel to OKC for individuals varies from twice a week to 2 times per year among Okfuskee County respondents.

Work, Shopping, Other

Most respondents shop at local merchants most often (less than 30 miles from home) a 20 to 60 mile round trip. The most frequent work and shopping destinations are Okemah, Prague, Shawnee and Oklahoma City. More than half of respondents drive somewhere in a car alone every day (work, shopping, school). About a third of respondents say that carpooling is common mode of travel. Few respondents report using transit services; one respondent relies on a motorized wheelchair or scooter to access needed supplies or services in town.

Importance of transportation components

Road improvements and maintenance are viewed as the most important issues, followed by bridge maintenance. Crosswalks, pedestrian safety and signage all rated as important concerns as well. Protecting the environment ranked near the middle in importance, transit scored next, while bicycling and rail freight scored much lower. All three modes (transit, bicycling and improved rail freight) could be viewed as environmentally preferable to an individual vehicle strategy. This may indicate that bicycling and rail freight are seen as less feasible than automobile travel.

Culturally, bicycling has been viewed as a relatively exotic method of travel in central Oklahoma. The proportion of people engaging in bicycle recreational travel has been increasing in the region, consistent with a national trend towards biking. While bicycle improvements scored lower than road maintenance and pedestrian improvements, the higher priorities of general road safety (adding shoulders and improved signage) will support an increase in bicycling as a viable and sustainable strategy for both travel and recreational purposes. Anecdotally, bicycling was seen as being tied to economic vitality, tourism and perceived quality of life available in the county, but may be viewed as a luxury in terms of funding.

Priority for consideration

Economic development ranked as the top priority for transportation improvements. This seems practical when sales tax revenues and jobs are the revenue foundations for local municipal functions.

Pedestrian safety was the second priority, followed by more travel choices (transit) and reducing environmental impacts.

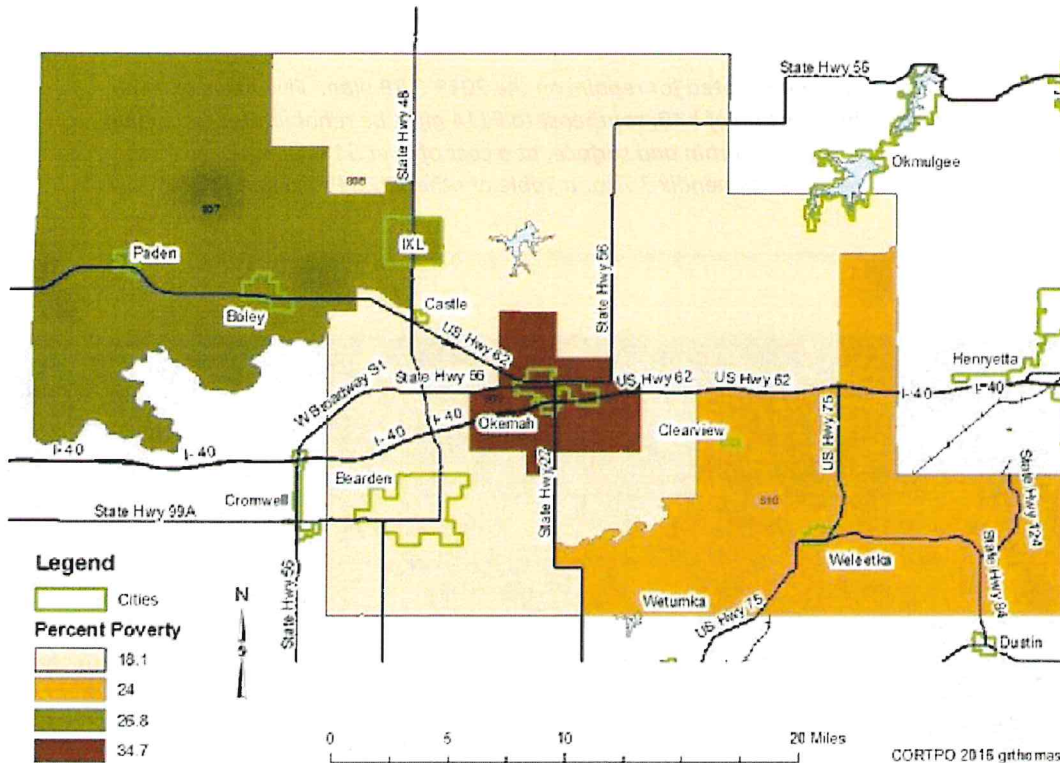


Environmental Justice

Public involvement in development of the Plan must comply with Presidential Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) also follows federal policy to ensure federally funded activities (including planning, through implementation) do not have a disproportionate adverse effect on disadvantaged populations.

Poverty rates as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2011-2015 were identified in Okfuskee County. About 18.8% of families and 24.8% of individuals were living below the poverty line. The LRTP process identified additional environmental justice (EJ) populations through a comparison of the racial and ethnic composition of the county by Census area. A greater percentage of minority populations do seem to be correlated with higher density of poverty in the county. This information is further illustrated in Appendix 5.10.

Density of Poverty by Census Tract



Chapter 6: The Transportation Plan

The recommendations of projects, plans, policies and studies were developed as a result of the review of demographics, growth, activity generators, transportation infrastructure, survey information and comments of the community. Research is included in the plan that will provide information and data to support achievement of the goals. The goals, objectives, and recommendations of this plan can be used as guidelines for improvement to the county and region's multimodal transportation system over a long period of time.

With regard to Federally-funded projects, the Okfuskee County LRTP is fiscally balanced in that the total project costs do not exceed the anticipated Federal funds. This assumes that Congress, at a minimum, will fund the most conservative of the Federal reauthorization bills each cycle.

Clearview Road is slated for repairs on the 2019 CIRB plan. Five miles of road from the intersection of I-40, southeast to E114 must be rehabilitated, including grade, drain and surface, at a cost of over \$4 million. See Appendix 3.7 for a Table of other CIRB Projects



L RTP Recommendations:

The goals and objectives in Chapter 1 of the Okfuskee County L RTP suggest strategies which consistently applied, can be expected to bring the community vision to fruition. Those activities and policies have been organized into a Table for handy reference below. The entire plan has been summarized into a comprehensive reference Table shown in Appendix 6, The Plan.

CORTPO will continue to monitor potential funding sources as they become available, or as projects become eligible. Over the life of the L RTP, Okfuskee County and CORTPO will expand on this effort by identifying additional projects that are needed in the county and potential funding sources for those projects.

Comments Summary

The L RTP goals, objectives, policy and project suggestions are based on public comments. The largest number of comments indicated a need for improved access and mobility specifically, additional transit, surface maintenance and preservation of roads and bridges and improved safety for pedestrians. Specific locations were noted where safety was a concern. Many of these locations are on State Highways. Those comments were organized into Table 1, page 10, above. All comments received may be viewed in Appendix 5.5.

Community Survey project recommendations

There were several projects that were identified by the community during the planning process. Many comments indicated a need for increased preservation and maintenance of existing road and street surfaces throughout the county, and especially in small towns. Other projects suggested were crosswalks to improve safety near schools and pedestrian improvements throughout the county. Rehabilitating the appearance of public spaces and streets was suggested as pertinent to economic vitality and tourism. Improved bicycle safety was of interest to the public.

Projects recommended in the L RTP are shown in Table 1 Chapter1. Potential funding may come from a single source or multiple sources. Sources could include funding from entities such as EDA, USDA, REAP, CDBG, Industrial Access, Lake Access, the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) or the Tribal Transportation Program (TTP). Additional sources of project support such as private investments, non-governmental grants and others not listed may also be available. Successful projects are often the result of collaborative funding strategies.



In Okfuskee County, and throughout the CORTPO region, people using handicap-mobility vehicles may be forced onto State Highways when travelling from a residential area to a grocery store or other destination

Strategies for implementation: Policy

Reference Policy Table:	
Goal 1 Funding	
1.1	Preservation of existing levels of service among all modes of travel is the first priority
1.2	Continue to expand Multi-jurisdictional collaboration
1.3	Allocate an annual portion of public employee labor to be used as in-kind funds for grants
Goal 2 Preservation & Maintenance	
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
2.2	Consistent investment in alternative modes to improve resilience
2.3	Use public-private agreements to maintain vulnerable county roads
Goal 3 Economic Vitality	
3.1	Support facilities and services that enable non-drivers to access typical destinations
3.2	Coordinate economic development with long-term regional connectivity and sustainability
Goal 4 Accessibility; Mobility; Connectivity	
4.1	Recognize and respond to opportunities to include pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on or adjacent to state routes
4.2	Choose transit when possible to support sustainability
4.3	Integrate alternative transportation solutions into all new developments
Goal5 Safety& Security	
5.1	Well lighted facilities for automobile parking areas, bicycle and pedestrian facilities
5.2	Promote the use of alternative modes of transportation to reduce dependency on single-occupancy vehicles;
5.3	Incorporate sustainability and resiliency into annual transportation projects to mitigate the economic impacts of unpredictable events

Table 16

Strategies for Implementation: Activity & Projects

Project activity Tables:

Goal 1 Funding	
A.1.1	Monitor and apply for all available transportation grant opportunities each year
A.1.2	Engage in long term Fiscal Planning to balance long-term transportation needs with sustainable solutions
A.1.3	Explore and implement alternative funding opportunities used in other jurisdictions
Goal 2 Preservation & Maintenance	
A.2.1	Identify preferred development corridors and plan for preservation; Map
A.2.2	Evaluate and post weight limits on roads
A.2.3	Develop long-term strategies in coordination with waste disposal and oil field companies to fund
Goal 3 Economic Vitality	
A.3.1	Publish a County map showing the location of existing infrastructure appropriate for residential and industrial development
A.3.2	Develop a prioritized plan for sidewalks and bicycle routes
A.3.3	Encourage Tourism with highway signage; earmark revenue for transportation
Goal 4 Accessibility; Mobility; Connectivity	
A.4.1	Identify and minimize transportation barriers for non-drivers
A.4.2	Designate specific areas as Park-and-Ride lots for commuters
A.4.3	Develop a proposed Bike route map with a focus on regional connectivity
A.4.4	Add signage to direct Bike and Pedestrian travelers to preferred routes
A.4.5	Plan and implement walkways and bike facilities in small town areas
A.4.6	Evaluate existing town sidewalks and pursue rehabilitation
A.4.7	Appoint an individual to act as a Railroad contact to improve industrial access to rail and facilitate the mobility of freight

Table 17

Projects, Continued . . .

Goal 5 Safety & Security

A.5.1	Prioritize bridge improvements where weight limits are too low for emergency vehicle response;
A.5.2	Map appropriate routes for tanker response according to bridge sufficiency ratings (see Appendix 3.8)
A.5.3	Improved signage: alert motor vehicles to watch for bikes on the road
A.5.4	Evaluate and prioritize crosswalks for improvement
A.5.5	Place rumble strips appropriately for enhanced safety between motorized vehicles and bikes using the shoulder in accordance with FHWA standards (see Appendix 5.10)
A.5.6	Use signage to alert motorists to the possible presence of bicycles on the road
A.5.7	Evaluate and prioritize underpasses and overpasses for low-cost improvements for non-motor vehicle travel safety
A.5.8	Incorporate sustainability and resiliency into transportation system projects to mitigate the economic impacts of unpredictable events

The Okfuskee County LRTP 2040 is organized in a Summary Reference Table format with policy and action steps are shown together the goals and objectives for the convenience of the reader, in Appendix 6.1

The CORTPO Staff appreciates the invaluable contributions offered by the citizens of Okfuskee County in the development of this comprehensive Transportation policy plan.



