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CORTPO

SEMINOLE COUNTY OKLAHOMA  
LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



LRTP | 2016-2040

*Produced by:*

# Central Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization

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CORTPO

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

**CORTPO  
In cooperation with:  
The County of Seminole  
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**

The mission and vision for long-range transportation planning 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**

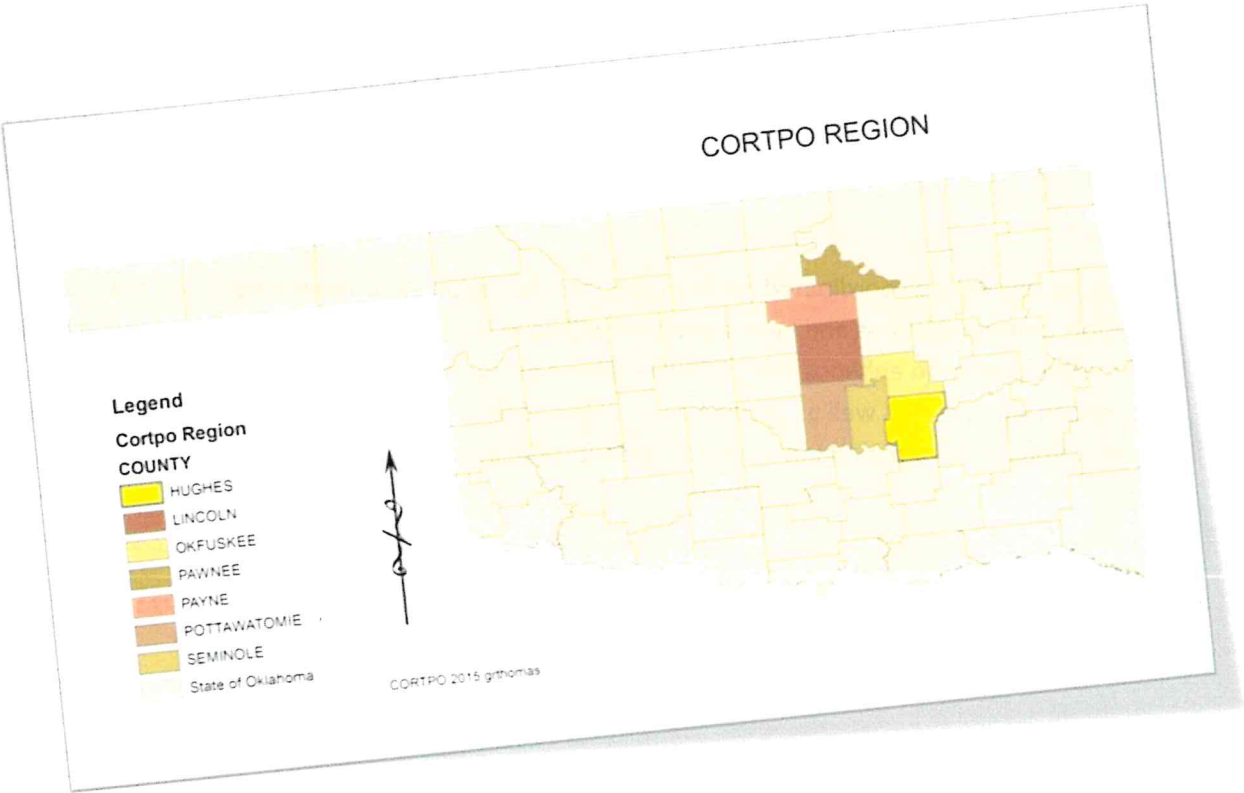
To work with public and private partners to develop and maintain the appropriate systems necessary for a safe, efficient, and convenient multi-modal transportation system that will effectively move people and goods on a coordinated transportation network that will advance and secure the economic prosperity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

Map 1: CORTPO

The CORTPO Region is in East-Central Oklahoma





## 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 economic vitality.

### Funding

The primary challenge to improving transportation in Seminole County is to secure adequate funding. The current level of federal, state and local funding 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 and unpredictable future conditions.

Goals of the Long-Range Transportation Plan related to sustainability include maintenance and preservation of the current system, enhanced economic vitality; improved access and connectivity for non-motorized transportation modes. Preservation, rehabilitation and enhanced access to rail are perceived as vital to both short term economic goals and long term community resilience.

Motor vehicle travel will remain the primary transportation mode in the state in the foreseeable future. However, the potential for increased economic activity associated with development, improved access, and tourism must also be represented in personal transportation and freight



## Planning

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

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

The plan was developed through a cooperative effort among CORTPO, the member jurisdictions the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) and is funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).



infrastructure investments.

This balanced approach would constitute a policy shift in rural Oklahoma: the consistent expansion of modal options specifically; Rail, Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle transportation. Enhanced access and safety for handicap-mobility vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists was identified as a pressing need in rural populated areas throughout the County.

### **L RTP Updates**

The transportation policies and projects recommended in the L RTP are intended to be implemented over the next two decades. Over the period of the L RTP, 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.

### **2010 Base Data**

The 2010 decennial Census was used as a foundation for this report; an accepted standard for planning analysis. Other Census products were employed for analytic purposes, including the American Community Survey published at one, three and five year intervals, and Traffic Analysis Zone data included in Census Transportation Planning Products (CTPP). The necessity of using multiple data products results in a situation where demographic and labor numbers are general rather than specific 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 include a wider range of modal options. Strategies that direct revenue to infrastructure preservation can be applied at the local level.

Proposed projects include intersection improvements, integration of bicycle and pedestrian routes with road and street projects, modernized signage and studies to be conducted. A listing of proposed projects is in Chapter 6.

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

## **Chapter 1: Introduction; Goals & Key Issues**

### **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 Seminole County in context of the greater CORTPO region.



Map 2: Seminole County

### Seminole County Highways



CORTPO 2018 gthomas

## Purpose of the Plan

The Seminole County Transportation Plan (LRTP) may be used to assist the community in focusing limited transportation funds on projects that provide the best return on investment, 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 was the first law enacted in over ten years that provided long-term funding certainty for surface transportation, meaning states and local governments can move forward with transportation projects, like highway rehabilitation or transit expansion, 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 Seminole 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

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

Table 2: 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

## **Key Issues, Trends and Challenges**

During the public participation process, the Seminole 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 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. Signage is perceived to be lacking or in need of repair. Rail preservation and improvement are a high priority for those interested in industry and economic growth.

### **Issues**

- Funding limitation - revenues continue to be limited to meet transportation system needs, while costs increase, especially in:
  - County road maintenance
  - City street and sidewalk maintenance, preservation and improvement
- Need for improved safety:
  - Pedestrian routes (including persons using electric mobility scooters and power wheelchairs)
  - Bicycle traffic on rural streets and roads
- There is little resiliency incorporated into the existing system
- Rehabilitate rail Infrastructure to support economic goals

### **Trends**

- Stable population base
- Residents support local business and medical services
- An increase in the proportion of residents over age 65 is projected
- Decay of existing infrastructure among all modes of transportation
- Increase in bicycle travel on rural roads and streets
- Increased Tribal influence on development and transportation in Oklahoma
- A regional and national economic shift towards increased demand for rail capacity
- FHWA policy has placed greater emphasis on improving transportation for “traditionally under-served” population groups
  - Traditionally under-served populations in Seminole County include the following:
    - 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 to improving transportation in Seminole County is securing adequate and stable funding. The current level of federal, state and local funds will be inadequate to ensure long term maintenance of roads, rail, transit and pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure. For that reason, it will be necessary to establish 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.** Improvements in long-term sustainability and resilience in transportation are needed to ensure that people and the economy can continue to function in the face of unpredictable future conditions.

**Accommodate Non-motor vehicle Transportation Modes.** Motor vehicle travel will remain the major transportation mode in the state in the foreseeable future. However, in some areas of the county, there is a high concentration of foot traffic which must be accommodated. Enhanced access and safety for handicap-mobility vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists was identified as a pressing need in rural populated areas throughout the County.

The potential for increased economic activity associated with development, improved access, and tourism must also be represented in freight and personal transportation infrastructure investments. This balanced approach would constitute a policy shift: the consistent expansion of modal options specifically; Rail, Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle transportation.

**Improve Rail.** The following two paragraphs are excerpts from the Federal Highway Administration document titled "Planning for Transportation in Rural Areas," that are relevant to Seminole County connections to the regional and national economy: "Transportation planners must develop plans that are practical for the long term and try to ensure that the resulting system meets the needs of the private sector, which makes countless short-term business decisions. An example of this is the rail mergers in the 1990's, which will have dramatic long-term impacts on many rural areas.

This is a case where 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).



In addition to intrinsic health benefits, bicycle and pedestrian travel are sustainable modes of transportation.



Improved access to rail freight ensures greater economic resilience in the event of unpredictable future conditions





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 restoring the function of rail infrastructure in central Oklahoma, and the direct economic benefits of existing and potential rail restoration investment in Seminole County and the CORTPO region. 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.

## **1. Demographic Trends**

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

**AGING.** The projected number of people over age 60 in 2040, is expected to grow. The number of people predicted to reside in the County and the trends for each age group in the State of Oklahoma are based on the *2012 Demographic State of the State* report for Oklahoma, which includes state and county population projections through 2075. The population of Oklahoma is also expected to enjoy greater longevity (SoS, 2012).

In 2010, Seminole County, 16% of the population was over age 65, somewhat higher than the percentage for the rest of the State (13.8%). The US Administration on Aging (AoA) Report projected that in 2035, the over-65 group will make up 24% of the population in the county (AoA, 2014). For more information on changing demographics in the county also see Appendix 3.2.

**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.

## **2. 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
- ⇒ 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

## **Goals, Objectives and Policies**

The LRTP includes goals, objectives and policies to assist Seminole 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).

### **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 of approach related to attaining the set goals.

### **POLICIES**

Policy statements provide guidance for decisions that will help attain these goals and objectives. 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. Table 5.1 identifies the goal categories for the LRTP. The full text of the goals, objectives and strategies developed for this plan are outlined below.



## Seminole County Transportation Goals

1	Prioritize Maintenance and Preservation	Preservation and maintenance of existing infrastructure will be prioritized
2	Improve Accessibility and Connectivity	Improve accessibility and connectivity for non-motorized transportation and freight
3	Enhance Economic Vitality	Develop an integrated, multimodal transportation system that promotes livability and economic development opportunities
4	Increase Safety and Security	All modes of transportation will provide transportation opportunities that are safe. Strategies for improved resilience are incorporated over time

### 1. Prioritize maintenance and preservation of the system

**GOAL STATEMENT:** Maintain and preserve existing roads and transportation infrastructure

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Adequate funding is prioritized
2. Truck weight limits are appropriate for county roads
3. Sidewalks and crosswalks are preserved and maintained
4. Development is directed to appropriate roads
5. Rail Infrastructure is preserved

**POLICY**

1. Monitor and apply for all available transportation grant opportunities each year
2. Preservation of existing infrastructure is a priority
3. Engage in long term Fiscal Planning; explore additional revenue opportunities
4. Continue to improve Multi-jurisdictional collaboration
5. Allocate an annual portion of public employee labor to be used as in-kind match funds for grants

## **2. Improve Accessibility, Connectivity**

**GOAL STATEMENT:** Improve accessibility and connectivity for non-motorized transportation and freight

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Highway improvements are coordinated with other transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects
2. Regional Rail connectivity is restored
3. Disadvantaged persons efficiently access opportunities
4. Bike routes are indicated with signage for improved regional connectivity
5. Right of way (ROW) areas are preserved for transportation purposes; including abandoned, existing and future road and railroad corridors
6. Planning efforts result in continuous pedestrian routes and bikeways throughout the region

### **POLICY**

1. Integrate multimodal transportation solutions into all new developments
2. Consistent investment in alternative modes to improve resilience
3. Recognize and respond to opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle amenities concurrent with street and highway improvements
4. When improving roads, include bicycle signage
5. When improving paved roads, place rumble strips near the edgeline for enhanced safety between motorized vehicles and bikes using the shoulder, in accordance with FHWA standards (see Appendix 6)

## **3. Enhance Economic Vitality**

### **GOAL STATEMENT:**

Develop an integrated, multimodal transportation system that promotes livability and economic development opportunities

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. The existing road and rail infrastructure are preserved and maintained to serve the industrial and manufacturing base within the region
2. Economic development is supported by strategic transportation investments
3. Employers have assurance that the labor force has reliable transportation options
4. Reliable access to work, shopping and services is realistic for all residents

**POLICY**

1. Coordinate economic development with long-term transportation regional connectivity, especially rail connections
2. Support the restoration of the Shawnee to McAlester Rail connection

**4. 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.

**SAFETY OBJECTIVES:**

1. Monitor areas with higher collision rates and implement solutions
2. Structurally deficient bridges are prioritized for repair or replacement
3. Local site development standards increase safety for all legal road users
4. Bicyclists have improved safety in rural areas

**SECURITY OBJECTIVES:**

5. A transportation system which is sustainable and resilient
6. Improved modal options to reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles
7. Personal security for travelers

**POLICY**

1. Integrate transportation solutions into existing infrastructure; Signage, appropriate rumble-strip placement, expanded sidewalks, crosswalk upgrades, improved shoulders



## Chapter 2: Current Conditions, Needs, and Funded Improvements

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

### Seminole County

Seminole County is located in East-Central Oklahoma. The county seat is Wewoka. The county has a total area of 640 square miles, of which 633 square miles is land and 7.6 square miles (1.2%) is water. The county is bounded on the north by the North Canadian River and on the south by the Canadian River.

The population of Seminole County is relatively diverse. It is home to the Seminole Nation. The area was settled by the Creek and Seminole in the 1830s. The Seminole, in Florida prior to removal to Oklahoma in 1838, included about 4,000 "Seminole" and about 800 "Black Seminole" allies. Ultimately, most Seminoles were removed to Oklahoma during the *Trail of Tears* event.

In the late nineteenth century, Black Seminoles thrived in towns on the reservation. Wewoka, the county seat, was founded in 1849 by John Horse as a Black Seminole settlement. Today it is the capital of the federally recognized Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. (Littlefield, 1977)

### Economy

Seminole County is noted for the Greater Seminole Field, one of the most important oil fields ever found, which is still producing. European-American settlers flooded into the Seminole Nation seeking land and oil, before and after Oklahoma became a state in 1907. Oil, agriculture and commerce supported a peak population of 79,621 in 1930. As oil production later declined, population dropped, and holds steady round 25,000.

Oil and Gas fields are significant to the regional economy. Primary agricultural products from the area have been cotton, wheat, corn, oats, peanuts, and soybeans. Small poultry and cattle operations are common. The primary mode of transportation for shipping and receiving oil field and agricultural products into the national economy is by truck.

### 2010 Community Populations

Bowlegs	431
Cromwell	307
Konawa	1,398
Maud	1,046
Sasakwa	122
Seminole	7,493
Wewoka	3,444

**Place**

In addition to Wewoka, other incorporated towns in the county include the Cities of Konawa, Maud and Seminole and the Towns of Bowlegs, Cromwell, Lima, and Sasakwa. There are seven (7) unincorporated communities; Butner, Dewright, Dixon, Little, Nobletown, Vamoosa, and Wolf.

**Population**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Seminole County had a 2010 Census population of 25,482. The median age was 39 years. Seminole County’s racial and ethnic composition is 68% White, 19% percent Native American, 5% African American and 4% Hispanic or Latino. In comparison, Oklahoma’s is 72% White, 8% Native American, 7% African American, and 9% Hispanic or Latino. Therefore, Seminole County has more people who identify as Native American, and fewer Whites or Hispanics than does the state, in general.

**2000 TO 2010 CENSUS**

Population diversity has remained relatively stable in recent decades; the comparison between the year 2000 and the 2010 US Decennial Census data indicates slightly fewer whites (from 71% to 69%), more Native Americans (from 17% to 18%, fewer Black (from 5.6 to 4.6%), and more Asian (from 54 individuals to 68 individuals {,3%}). The percentage of Hispanic or Latino has risen somewhat from 2.2 to 3.5. The institutional population has fallen from 1.9 % (485 individuals) to 1.4% (354 individuals).

**Households**

In Seminole County, 35 percent of all households include one or more people under the age of 18; 32 percent of all households include one or more people aged 65 years and over. The average household size is 2.55 persons. Of the total population, about a third (36%) reside in a city or town and the other 64% live in rural or unincorporated areas.

Housing: Between the 2000 and 2010 Census, the total number of housing units rose by 4.5%. The population resides in 9,750 housing units as compared to 9,575 in 2000. The total number of housing units is estimated to be 11,642. More units of housing are vacant; from 14.1% in 2000 (1,571 units) to 16.3% (1,892) in 2010. Most vacant units are rentals. Vacant rentals increased from 12 percent of all housing to 15.6% of all units. Most homeowner units are occupied; only 2.3% of these are vacant (see map, below).

Of the total housing units, 76 percent were single-unit structures, eight percent (8%) were in multi-unit structures, and 16 percent were mobile homes. Thirty-six percent (36%) of all housing units are located within a town or city; sixty-four percent (64%) are rural dwellings.

<b>2010 US Census</b>	<b>Seminole County Dwelling Units</b>	
<b>Total:</b>	11,642	
<b>Urban:</b>	4,160	36%
<b>Rural</b>	7,482	64%

**Income**

The 2010 median income of households was \$34,016. Twenty-one percent of households had income below \$15,000 a year and 2 percent had income over \$150,000 or more. Poverty in the County (as defined by the US Census Bureau) averages about 23 % of the total population. There are more persons in poverty in Census Tract (CT) 5836 (Wewoka) and CT's 5835 & 5834 (center and west side of Seminole) than there are in the rural parts of the county (map below).

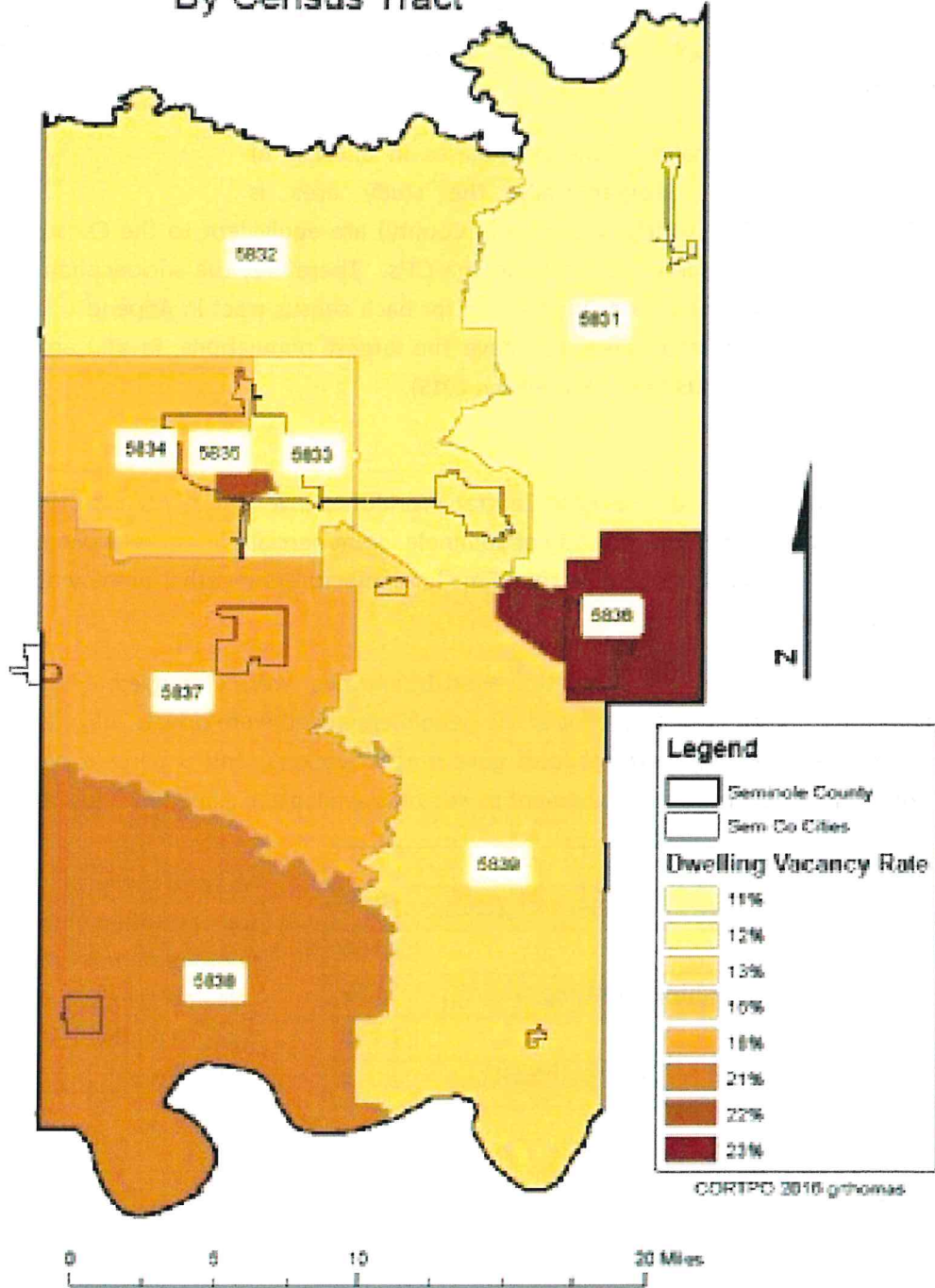
In 2014, median income was estimated at \$35,607. The county-wide poverty rate was estimated to have increased to 25%. Some areas represent a severe poverty rate of 38.5%, specifically within the City of Wewoka and the earliest neighborhoods founded in the City of Seminole.

<b>Economic comparison</b>	<b>Poverty rate</b>	<b>Median Income 2014 (est.)</b>
<b>Seminole County</b>	25%	\$35,607
<b>State of Oklahoma</b>	17%	\$46,235
<b>USA</b>	15%	\$53,482



Map: Dwelling Vacancy

### Density of Vacant Dwelling Units By Census Tract



### 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 used Traffic Analysis Zone boundaries in analysis of socio-economic data. Geographically, the study area is subdivided into five TAZ which (in Seminole County) are equivalent to the Census Tracts (CT) (See Appendix 2.6) and numbered identically to the CT's. Therefore, the socioeconomic data (including population and employment) are summarized for each census tract in Appendix 2.3 and 2.5. Tracts 5835 & 5836 are smallest in area, but have the largest populations, in and around the Cities of Seminole and Wewoka (US Census Fact Finder, 2015).

### Major Employers

Seminole County is part of the East Central Workforce Investment Area (ECWIA). Many major employers are based in or near the City of Seminole. Commercial Brick in Wewoka employs about 180 people at the plant northwest of the city. Small manufacturers together employ about a third of the active workforce.

Fifty-three (53) percent of the population aged 16 and over were employed; 47% were not active in the labor force. Seventy-one percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 23 percent were federal, state, or local government workers; and 6 percent were self-employed. Additional information about employment by sector is available in Appendix 2 (uscensus 2010).

Employment by sector	
Edu services, health care and social assistance	1,979
Manufacturing	1,566
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	1,259
Retail trade	1,249
Recreation, accommodation and food services	1,014

Much of the local funding for transportation maintenance and improvement is reliant on a portion of sales tax revenue, sourced from retail trade, a relatively small part of the total economy.

Class of worker	Percent
Private wage and salary workers	70.6
Federal, state, or local government workers	22.9
Self-employed workers in own not-incorporated business	6.3

### Commute to work

Eighty-two percent of Seminole County workers drove to work alone in 2010-2012, and 10 percent carpooled. It took an average of 25 minutes for commuters to get to work.

According to the 2011 WIA Economic Profile, of the East Central WIA's potential workforce, Pottawatomie County is responsible for the largest portion of the workforce distribution with forty-nine percent. Lincoln County is responsible for twenty percent. Seminole County represents sixteen percent. Hughes and Okfuskee Counties each are home to about nine and seven percent of the total workforce distribution in the East Central WIA respectively (ECWIA, 2012)

In Seminole County, 67.5% of workers are employed within the county. About 16% commute to Pottawatomie, Lincoln, Hughes or Okfuskee counties. Approximately 15.3% of working residents leave the ECWIA for employment; that percentage includes workers commuting east, to nearby McAlester, or south to Ada. The ECWIA Profile states:

“Lincoln County has the highest percentage of residents commuting outside the WIA for work, at 43.2% of the county's resident working population. Seminole County has the lowest percentage of working residents leaving the WIA, at 15.3%. Approximately one quarter to one third of working residents in Hughes, Okfuskee and Pottawatomie counties leave the WIA for employment – 22.3%, 26.7% and 29.1% respectively

On average, 10.0% of all workers in the region commute from outside of the WIA with some variation from county to county. When looking at the percentage of workers coming from outside the county, Seminole County has the lowest ratio at 5.2%. Lincoln County has the highest ratio at 14.3%.

Pottawatomie and Seminole counties are the only two counties showing a net workforce inflow. Pottawatomie County's daytime population grows by over 1,300 as workers from outside the county travel to work while the net inflow in Seminole County approaches 200 workers. (OKCOMM, 2011)”

### Registered Motor Vehicles

There were 19,361 vehicles registered in Seminole County in 2015. The number of vehicles registered as compared to the total estimated population equals a rate of about .76 vehicles *per person* (OTC, 2015). See Appendix 2.

VEHICLES AVAILABLE PER HOUSEHOLD	
No vehicle available	2%
1 vehicle available	28%
2 vehicles available	38%
3 or more vehicles	32%

### Zero-vehicle Households

An average of 2% of households, have no vehicle available at home. Twenty eight percent of households have at least one vehicle, while 38% of households have 2 vehicles. Thirty-two percent of Seminole County households have 3 or more vehicles at home.

### Commercial and Retail Development

Seminole County, like most rural Midwest counties, faces aging infrastructure in original population centers, while highways and new development tend to grow on the periphery, leaving the threat of a hollow core in original downtown business and residential areas. Poverty seems to concentrate in these older neighborhoods.

The primary downtown areas of the two largest cities, Seminole and Wewoka have been targeted for revitalization, with positive results. Smaller towns struggle to maintain vital public services and streetscapes when retail businesses close, buildings are abandoned and the sales taxes upon which these communities depend are thereby reduced.

### Development areas

Growth within Seminole and Wewoka is guided by Zoning. Seminole County has no zoning or subdivision regulations; does not provide water, sewer or electric utility services. The county does regulate road standards for new development.

### 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.

**HIGHWAYS.** The location and condition of state highways in the county may drive development decisions. Refer to Map 2, Chapter 1. Several two-lane no-shoulder roads in the county are identified as locations for ODOT improvements over the next few years. See Map Appendix 2.13.

**RAIL.** The location of rail facilities in the county may influence development decisions. Burlington Northern-Santa Fe provides freight transport in the county. Appendix 2.7 illustrates the location of operational railroads. Deferred maintenance has led to the discontinuation of service on the UP line between McAlester and Shawnee. No passenger rail service is available in the county.

*One hundred ninety-five (195) households in the county own no vehicle*

*At an average household size of 2.55 persons, that means nearly 500 people do not have a vehicle at home*

*- uscensus 2010*

### **Environmental features**

Seminole County is home to environmental features and natural resources which influence the transportation system. The information collected and mapped in Appendix 2.9 illustrates a starting point for the consideration of some of these features.

The topography features low hills. This rolling topography, together with 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 significant amount of floodplain area mapped by FEMA (1977/1989) in the County. 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.

### **Ecological Zone**

Seminole County lies in the Cross Timbers ecological region.

“Post oak–blackjack oak woodland and savanna are native on porous, coarse-textured soils derived from sandstone; the percentage of blackjack oak increases westward. Tall grasses are native on fine-textured, moisture deficient soils derived from limestone, shale, or marl. Recent fire suppression has increased forest density and allowed eastern red cedar to invade many areas. Today, woodland, rangeland, pastureland, and several extensive, but declining, oil fields occur. Abandoned, depleted farmland is common.” (EPA, 2005)

### **Threatened & Endangered Species**

Species	Status
Least Tern	Endangered
Piping Plover	Threatened
Red Knot	Threatened
Whooping Crane	Endangered
American Burying Beetle	Endangered
Arkansas River Shiner	Threatened; Critical Habitat



*The Whooping Crane is an Endangered Species in Seminole County Oklahoma (USFWS, 2015)*

*More information is available in Appendix 2*

**Historic Sites**

The following sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Place	Location
Brown, Alice, House	Sasakwa
Brown, Jackson, House	Wewoka
Brown, Silas L., House	Wewoka
Grisso, W. E., Mansion	Seminole
Home Stake Oil & Gas Co Building	Seminole
Hotel Aldridge	Wewoka
Johnson, J. Coody, Building	Wewoka
Konawa Armory	Konawa
Mekasukey Academy	Seminole
Rosenwald Hall	Lima
Seminole County Courthouse	Wewoka
Seminole Whipping Tree	Wewoka
Sinclair Loading Rack	Seminole
Strother Memorial Chapel	Seminole
Wewoka Switch and Side Tracks	Wewoka

*More information is available in Appendix 2*



**Chief Alice Brown-Davis**

Alice Brown Davis (September 10, 1852 – June 21, 1935) was the first female Principal Chief of the Seminole Tribe of Oklahoma, and served from 1922–1935, appointed by President Warren G. Harding (Waldowski, 2009)

**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 on State Highways throughout the State.

*While unsafe speed represented only 12% of all Seminole County accidents, it was the identified cause of 20% of the fatalities.*

Table 2.1 below depicts Seminole County Collision data from 2010 through 2014. There were a total of 1,821 reported vehicle accidents of all types over the 5 year period between 2011 and 2015 (inclusive). The number of all collisions per year is since 2011 with a total of 302 crashes occurring in 2011, rising to 350 in 2012, with 383 in 2013, 422 in 2014, and 364 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 Seminole County accidents resulted in death. About 1% of all accidents statewide result in fatality.

Thirty-three (33) vehicle accidents resulted in the deaths of 36 individuals in Seminole County over the five year period, 579 people were injured, and 1079 collisions caused property damage alone.

**Seminole County Collisions 2011-2015**

Seminole County Collisions				
YEAR	FATALITIES (persons killed)	PERSONS INJURED	PROPERTY DAMAGE only	TOTAL COLLISIONS
2011	7	115	172	302
2012	5	134	198	350
2013	6	109	229	383
2014	13	111	261	422
2015	5	110	216	364
<b>Totals</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>1079</b>	<b>1821</b>

Source ODOT 2016

"Possible injuries" were not included in this table

The above information is for informational purposes only and use is restricted under 23 USC 409.

Of the 1821 collisions that were analyzed for this plan, 1342 (74%) were on highways. Five percent 5% (286 collisions) occurred on county roads; 193 (or 11%) occurred on city streets.

Thirty-seven percent (669) of all county vehicle collisions were documented on streets and highways within the city limits of Seminole; ninety-two accidents (5%) occurred in Wewoka. The remaining 1029 collisions happened on rural roads or within the other small populated areas.

Most collisions happened during clear daylight hours in dry conditions (57%). More than two-thirds (67%) occurred during midday to early evening (10 am 6 pm) in various weather conditions.

### CAUSES

Many accidents have no specific cause noted (39%). Most fatalities occurred among that group of accidents. The most frequently identified cause of collision in Seminole County was *unsafe speed* at about 12%. The next most common causes were *failure to yield* (11%), *inattention* at 10%, and *following too close* at five percent (5%). While unsafe speed represented only 12% of all Seminole County accidents, it was the identified cause of 20% of the fatalities. During the five year period, DWI caused 170 collisions, in which four drivers were cited as impaired in connection with fatal collisions.

### PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE

In 2011 through 2015, 14 accidents involved pedestrians, 12 of which resulted in personal injury. Those incidents represent less than one percent (.8%) of all collisions in the county.

Two reported vehicle accidents involved bicyclists (.1% of total accidents). Of those, neither resulted in fatality, but both resulted in personal injuries.

### Roadways

Seminole County maintains more than 280 miles of roads. County roads are rated as being in relatively good condition. The Oklahoma DOT has assigned Seminole County roads an average score of 94 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.

Most paved roads in Seminole County are two-lane roads. Map 2: Seminole County Cities, Towns and Highways (on Page 6 above) illustrates the location of local and state roads. See Appendix 2.14 for Functional Classification of roads; Appendix 2.15 shows Traffic counts.

### Deteriorating Pavements and Deficient Bridges

Small city budgets and low density populations pose challenges to funding the network of city streets and sidewalks in rural Seminole County. Population booms due to oil discovery in the early years of statehood contributed to a building of street and sewer infrastructure to accommodate peak populations which then dropped dramatically in the 1940's.

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; Definitions).





**State Bridges**

The Oklahoma Legislature recognized that transportation infrastructure is of critical importance to the economy, and 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 945 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 dedicated to bridge work. See Chapter 3 for scheduled improvements in the ODOT 8-year Plan.

The National Bridge Inventory database records a total of 337 bridges on the National highway system in Seminole County. One hundred thirty-eight (138) of those bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. In addition to public safety concerns, such conditions can have a negative impact on the development potential of properties in the County.

**2014 National Highway Bridge Inventory Seminole County (NBI, 2016)**

County	Total # bridges	# Structurally Deficient	# Functionally Obsolete	Total Deficient
SEMINOLE (133)	337	115	23	138

**All Bridges**

County	Total # bridges	# Structurally Deficient	# Functionally Obsolete	Total Deficient
SEMINOLE (133)	740	240	43	283

**County Bridges**

Many small, aging bridges are scattered throughout the county on the County road system. Some are structurally sound, but have narrow road beds which are considered functionally obsolete by modern standards.

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.

*Functionally Obsolete:  
Single lane on Salt Creek Bridge,  
Seminole County OK*



## Freight Routes

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.



Commodity flows are summarized by regions to illustrate truck flows. A halo region around the State of Oklahoma was defined to capture medium-distance flows. This region includes the states of Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, and New Mexico. Within the state, three regions are identified. They include the Oklahoma City Halo, the Tulsa Halo and the remainder of Oklahoma. Seminole County is included in the “Remainder of Oklahoma” halo of truck commodity flow.



### Truck Freight

Major truck freight routes through Seminole County as identified by ODOT are (East/West) US 270 and US 377 (North/South). US Highway 377 provides a freight connection to I-40, about 10 miles north of the City of Seminole. It is estimated that more than 6,560 trucks travel this route on an average day. State Highway 56, 59, SH 99, 3E and 99A each carry notable quantities of freight into, out of, and through Seminole County (ODOT FGM, 2015).

The 2012 ODOT document *Freight Flows* includes the following comments about trucked freight: Nearly one quarter (24 percent) of all trucks traveling in Oklahoma are involved in through trips. Almost two-thirds (65%) of all trucks traveling on the Oklahoma highway network have their origin and destination within the state.

### Rail Freight

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.

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. Short lines and regional railroads preserve service on branch lines, and act as collectors for Class I railroads. An operational BNSF freight route connecting the Tulsa hub to Dallas TX passes through Sasakwa in south-eastern Seminole County.

Union Pacific (UP) owns a railroad track that runs roughly east to northwest through Wewoka and Seminole to Holdenville (east) and Shawnee (west). Service on that line was formally discontinued in 2012 due to poor track condition and interrupted service as a result of a washout that occurred in 1991. This “former east-west line

across the central portion of the state connecting Memphis, Little Rock, and Oklahoma City to California has gained recent attention of the Governor’s economic task force.” (2012 Rail Plan ODOT) See A-OK RR, below, and Appendix 2.7 for a map of existing rail, and discontinued or abandoned railroad routes in Seminole County.

**DISCONTINUED UP LINE.** A section of discontinued track owned by Union Pacific Railroad runs through Seminole County. This section of rail is a stretch of deteriorating infrastructure that once connected McAlester to Shawnee, and ultimately ran from Howe, Oklahoma to Oklahoma City and linked to the national rail freight system. Seventy-five miles of the line from McAlester to Howe have been successfully restored and returned to service through cooperation among the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), Union Pacific RR (UP) and Arkansas-Oklahoma railroad (A-OK).

That portion of railroad (between Howe OK and McAlester) was temporarily held for preservation by the State of Oklahoma (ODOT). The A-OK short line successfully completed a financial agreement with ODOT and returned that line to service. A-OK also operates on approximately 40 miles of UP track from Shawnee to Oklahoma City. The short-line has expressed interest in the restoration of the track linking those two sections, between McAlester and Holdenville – out of service since 1991, and rehabilitation of the existing rail to connect with Shawnee. See Rail Map: Appendix 2.

A-OK railroad has recently completed the restoration of a railroad bridge crossing the North Canadian River in Pottawatomie County. That work is a key component in the long-term planned restoration of the UP line, which will provide an east-west reconnection of four major north-south rail corridors to enhance regional commerce, and would directly impact freight transportation in Hughes, Pottawatomie and Seminole counties.

**ABANDONED RR LINE.** The old Oklahoma City, Ada & Atoka (OCA&A) line runs through the southern portion of Seminole County along Negro Creek, through Konawa to Maud and into Pottawatomie County (See Appendix 2 for more information about the history of this railroad). The track and ties have been removed. The City of Ada in Pontotoc County repurposed a portion of this abandoned right-of-way as a multi-use trail. That trail could be extended over time, to provide a multi-use trail connecting several small population centers.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Network**

The 2006-2010 American Community Survey showed that few people walked or rode bikes to work in Seminole 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 Transportation**

### **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.

Central Oklahoma Transit System (COTS) currently offers demand-response services in Seminole county. COTS provides transportation to schools, vocational centers, medical appointments, shopping or social destinations. All areas are served by ADA accessible vehicles.

Rides must be booked 48 hours in advance. In 2016, the cost is \$3 per ride within Seminole city limits. All rides for Senior citizens and Veterans are \$1.00 one way within the City of Seminole. Rides outside the city limits are based on mileage.

The Seminole Nation Public Transit has been operating in Seminole County since 2007. This service is a demand response service available to the public for those who are 18 years of age and older; minors are allowed with an adult. As of May 2015, the routes included: Education, employment, medical appointments, and senior meal sites. Seminole Nation Public Transit receives Administration, Operating and Capital funding under the Section 5311c Rural Public Transportation Program from Federal Transit Administration (FTA) (SNO, 2015).

### **Airports**

Seminole Municipal Airport is a small General Aviation facility. The airport covers 220 acres at an elevation of 1,023 feet. It has two runways: 16/34 is 5,004 by 75 feet asphalt; 5/23 is 2,000 by 150 feet turf. According to the FAA Airport master record, in the year ending June 21, 2011 the airport had 8,550 aircraft operations, average 23 per day: 99% general aviation and 1% military. 22 aircraft were then based at the airport: 91% single-engine, 4.5% multi -engine, and 4.5% helicopter (Effective November 15, 2012.).

Seminole Medical Center operates a heliport for air ambulance emergencies.

## **Chapter 3: Future Conditions, Needs & Planned Improvements**

### **Population and Employment**

US Census data indicate population is expected to remain relatively stable.

#### **Aging Population**

The percentage of people over age 60 is the most quickly growing segment of the local population. This demographic group can be expected to include a higher proportion of non-drivers over time, placing additional demand on transit systems. See Appendix 3.1 for more information.

#### **Employment projection**

The East Central Workforce Investment Area (ECWIA) monitors job data for five counties: Hughes, Lincoln, Okfuskee, Pottawatomie, and Seminole counties. ECWIA is projected to add jobs between 2010 and 2020. Seminole County represents about 16% of ECWIA jobs.

The East Central WIA added +4,570 jobs between 2005 and 2010, growing by +7.1% over that time period. 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. At the State 6% growth rate for each 5 year period, employment for Seminole County could be predicted to increase from 11,000 jobs in 2010 to about 11,500 jobs in 2020. A more conservative employment projection would hold the number of jobs steady.

#### **Projected Growth Areas and new Housing**

The City of Seminole is an industrial and residential growth area of Seminole County. Commercial development is occurring along north and south Milt Phillips Ave (US377). Residential development is occurring on the east side of the City, and there has been an increase in restoration of downtown upper-story space for residential occupancy.

In Wewoka, new commercial development is occurring at the intersection of State Hwy 56 and US 270, south of the main town; and US Business 270 at the intersection of SH 56 near downtown; the latter offering an infill development opportunity. Residential development is expected east of downtown, upper-story downtown residential rehabilitation and streetscape improvements are expected to contribute to the housing options available in the City over the next few years.

### **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 2.13.

### **Bike and Pedestrian Routes**

There has been a nationwide trend towards increased bicycling. Bicycle tourism can have a positive economic impact on a small community. In 2014, the State of Iowa reported recreational biking generated \$365 million in sales across the state. The week-long annual RAGBRAI event is so

*A local group called "Gravel Grinders" holds frequent biking events in the CORTPO region*



large that a lottery is held to limit participants to 10,000 riders and their associated support vehicles.

This shift toward adult biking as a primary form of transportation and recreation is evidenced in the CORTPO region by an increase in bicycle and bike accessory sales, and membership in local biking clubs and groups. Seminole County could benefit from bicycle routes and signage, both for enhanced safety and to support economic vitality in the form of bicycle tourism.

### **Public Transportation**

COTS consistently experiences high demand. The Seminole Nation provides Transit to the public as well. Transit systems may encounter increased operational demand as the aging and low-income populations continue to grow.

### **Aviation Review**

Renovations are planned for the Seminole Municipal Airport over the next few years. They include: a new AWOS system; new runway lights; PAPIS and REILS; new terminal on north end of runway, relocate T hangers to north end; widen south taxiway; rehabilitate north taxiway; clear trees from the Object Free Zone. These improvements are planned for phased implementation in cooperation with the FAA.

### **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 North/South BNSF service connecting Seminole County to the National Class I system, may imply the long-term economic desirability of local rail connections for East/West freight, and rehabilitation of a discontinued portion of the UP Line. For more information, see Appendix 3.

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 rely on sources of funding in addition to ODOT, to stabilize and improve local railways.

### **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 2040 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. These forecasts further indicate an increase in truck traffic on the smaller highways that connect with the interstate network as well (ODOT NHS, 2010).

The City of Seminole benefits from a direct connection to I-40 via US 377. US 377 and US 270 are primary freight routes. State Highway 56 is a common truck route serving Wewoka as well.



To be fully consistent with public guidance, bicycle safety signage could be included in the rehabilitation of roads and bridges.



### **Funded improvements**

The table below shows projects for which funding has been committed in the ODOT 8-year Construction Plan. Projects 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. Funded County Improvements Roads and Bridges (CIRB) tables are shown in Appendix 3.

The funded locations are consistent with the problem locations noted in the Public Comments received during the development of this plan, however, to be fully consistent with public opinion, bicycle safety signage would be included in the rehabilitation of the bridges. See Public Comments, Appendix 5.

<b>Funded Improvements on the 8-Year Plan</b>				
<b>2016</b>				
<b>BRIDGE &amp; APPROACHES</b>	SH099A	0.2 Mi	SH-99A OVER EAST GAR CREEK, 6.52 MI EAST OF SH-99	\$2,246,946
<b>BRIDGE &amp; APPROACHES</b>	SH009	0.2 Mi	SH-9 OVER UNNAMED CREEK, 4.39 MI EAST OF SH-3E	\$1,964,520
<b>2017</b>				
<b>BRIDGE &amp; APPROACHES</b>	US270	1.2 Mi	US-270 OVER WEWOKA CREEK & RAILROAD, FROM 4.89 MI EAST OF SH-270A IN SEMINOLE, EAST 1.2 MI	\$6,921,085
<b>BRIDGE &amp; APPROACHES</b>	SH 003E	0.4 Mi	SH-99 OVER SALT & SANDY CREEKS, 11.76 & 13.65 MI SOUTH OF US-270	\$9,005,867
<b>BRIDGE &amp; APPROACHES</b>	SH056	0.02 Mi	SH-56 OVER JUMPER CREEK, 1.3 MI EAST OF SH-3E	\$3,227,814
<b>BRIDGE &amp; APPROACHES</b>	SH009A	0.2 Mi	SH-9A OVER MUD CREEK, 4.3 MI NORTH OF SH-39	\$3,170,991
<b>BRIDGE &amp; APPROACHES</b>	SH009	0.45 Mi	SH-9 OVER TWO UNNAMED CREEKS, 6.0 & 6.25 MI EAST SH-3E	\$3,099,420
<b>BRIDGE REHABILITATION</b>	3 SH099A	0.02 Mi	SH-99A OVER SNAKE CREEK, 4.82 MI EAST OF SH-99 (REDECK AND SUBSTRUCTURE REPAIR)	\$1,060,000
<b>2018</b>				
<b>BRIDGE &amp; APPROACHES</b>	US270	7.57 Mi	US-270 OVER CARTER & 8 UNNAMED CR, FROM SH-270A IN SEMINOLE, EAST TO Y AT US-270B WEST OF WEWOKA	\$4,360,000
<b>BRIDGE &amp; APPROACHES</b>	SH099A	0.02 Mi	SH-99A OVER TURKEY CREEK, 5.32 MI EAST OF POTTAWATOMIE C/L	\$2,510,741
<b>BRIDGE &amp; APPROACHES</b>	US270	0.2 Mi	US-270 OVER UNNAMED CREEK, 2.83 MI EAST OF POTTAWATOMIE C/L	\$1,814,067
<b>BRIDGE &amp; APPROACHES</b>	US270	0.02 Mi	US-270 OVER MAGNOLIA CREEK, 0.8 MI EAST OF SH-99	\$2,735,682
<b>BRIDGE &amp; APPROACHES</b>	SH099A	0.02 Mi	SH-99A OVER SAND CREEK, 9.98 MI EAST OF SH-99	\$2,225,018





## **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.

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.

In 1923, Oklahoma enacted its first State-level 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. Seminole 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.

#### **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. ODOT awarded more than 22 million dollars in TAP funding for sidewalks and trail projects in 2016.

### **Tribal Transportation projects and funding**

The Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) 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. Recognized tribal governments receive federal transportation funds and may 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 projects. The Seminole Nation has an interest in local transportation issues and published a Transportation Plan for the Nation in 2012

### **State Funding Issues**

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 2015 inspection season that number had dropped to 339.

Appendix 4.1 provides more information about various transportation funding strategies.

*“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 5: Public Participation**

This chapter describes the public participation methods CORTPO used as part of the planning process. Public involvement is an integral part of the transportation process and is also a federal requirement, continued as part of the legislation *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century* (MAP-21). Additional information is included in Appendix 5.

This chapter also includes 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.

### **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 press releases were issued for public outreach, to involve interested parties in the early stages of the plan development. Consultation with federally recognized tribes in the region was initiated by CORTPO.

Notices of public meetings for the LRTP were posted in accordance with Oklahoma Open Meetings Law (Appendix 5.6; copy of public meeting notice). After the draft LRTP was developed, CORTPO hosted additional public meetings and provided a notice of availability for a 45-day public comment period. 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 posted notices, published the survey on CORTPO website, used a "Survey Monkey" web form, provided copies to local interest groups and distributed copies through Seminole County, the City of Wewoka, the City of Seminole and community representatives on the CORTPO Technical Committee. Surveys were collected from the public between May 1, 2016 and September 30, 2016. Thirty-eight surveys were returned and tabulated. All public comments received have been included. See Appendix 5.1 for survey information, response summary and public comments.

Fifty-five percent (55%) of survey respondents drive alone every day. That is consistent with the number of people with jobs who responded (US Census data indicates 82% of people with jobs drive alone to work). Among respondents, carpooling is rarely used for access to daily work. One percent (1%) of respondents walk or bike at least sometimes; a few respondents use a motorized wheelchair or scooter to reach grocery shopping or services. About half of survey participants work, shop and access medical care within 10 miles of home; about half work or shop 30 to 50 miles from home. Older residents report the most travel outside the area for Medical facilities.

**Public comment summary:**

The Public comments we received were organized into three categories; Local (town & county) improvements needed; Local problem locations; Problem locations on State and US Highways. All of these are organized into tables in Chapter 6 of this document.

From the surveys, comments and public meetings, we developed a short list of policies that could be adopted, and another list of projects that could be undertaken. For Seminole County, short and long range projects are interconnected. By means of a simple policy shift, many miles of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure could result over a twenty-year period.

We made a similar short list of policies that could be applied by ODOT to projects in the county, which over time would have a significant impact on improving transportation in the county at a relatively low cost. Such policies are consistent with the ODOT Statewide Long-Range Plan.

Local problem locations were indicated around public school areas, where there is a perceived need for improved sidewalk and crosswalk safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Narrow streets and intersections were also noted as problematic in Wewoka and Seminole. Respondents from Konawa indicated that there is a need for safe pedestrian routes to the school and grocery store.

Projects suggested for State or US Highways slanted heavily in favor of improvements to US 270 between Wewoka and Seminole. This problem is already slated for correction in the 8-Year Plan, with construction beginning in 2018. Bridges were the top priority, followed by road surface maintenance. Anecdotally, there is an increase in the number of people who appear to be bicycling this route, which makes the narrow bridge decks increasingly dangerous.



**PUBLIC GUIDANCE**

Comments received during the public participation survey indicate that 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 are identified as insufficient.

There is interest in improving safety for local bicyclists and attracting bicycle tourism.

Signage is perceived to be lacking, or in need of repair.

Rail preservation and improvement are a high priority for those interested in industry and economic growth.



### Environmental Justice

Public involvement in development of this 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.

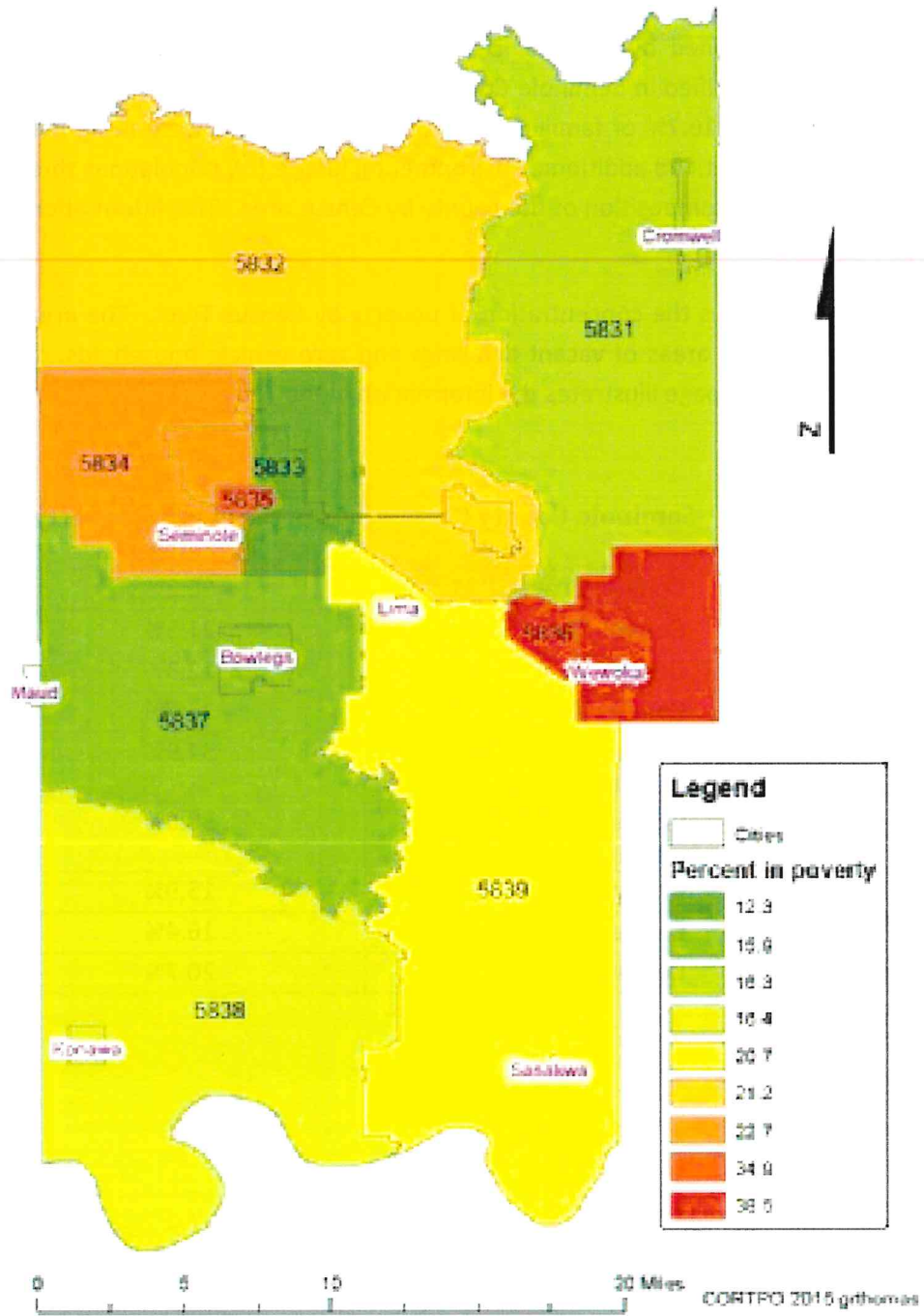
Poverty rates as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines were identified in Seminole County. The 2014 HHS poverty guideline for a family of four was \$23,850. About 16.7% of families and 21.9% of individuals were living below the poverty line. The LRTP process identified additional environmental justice (EJ) populations through a comparison of the racial and ethnic composition of the county by Census area. This information is further illustrated in Appendix 5.

The table below shows the concentration of poverty by Census Tract. The areas of highest poverty correlate closely with areas of vacant dwellings and zero-vehicle households, discussed above. The map on the following page illustrates the information in the Table below.

<b>Seminole County CT</b>	<b>Percent below poverty level</b>
<b>Census Tract 5831</b>	16.3%
<b>Census Tract 5832</b>	21.5%
<b>Census Tract 5833</b>	12.3%
<b>Census Tract 5834</b>	22.7%
<b>Census Tract 5835 (see City of Seminole)</b>	34.9%
<b>Census Tract 5836 (see City of Wewoka)</b>	38.5%
<b>Census Tract 5837</b>	15.9%
<b>Census Tract 5838</b>	16.4%
<b>Census Tract 5839</b>	20.7%

Map: Seminole County Poverty by Census Tract Area

### Census Tracts: Percent of people in poverty



## Chapter 6: Transportation Recommendations

This chapter identifies potential projects, plans and studies that were developed as a result of the review of demographics, growth, activity generators, transportation system, survey information, existing plans and other considerations. This plan may be used to develop and implement programs to enhance the County and Region's multimodal transportation system.

With regard to Federally-funded projects, the Seminole 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.

Research is included in the plan that will provide information and data to support the goals identified in Chapter 1. The information provided in the LRTP is to provide guidance on recommended projects, studies and plans. In other cases, studies should be undertaken in order to develop a comprehensive set of solutions.

### Funding the LRTP

The goals and objectives of the Seminole County LRTP suggest policies that may be adopted to facilitate implementation of local objectives. Those policies have been listed in a Table on page 39. Simple projects are suggested that may be developed over short- or long- range time spans.

The projects suggested in the LRTP may have potential funding from a single source or multiple sources. Each project has unique components and while there are many funding programs within various state and federal agencies, each project must be evaluated to determine which programs may apply.

Sources could include funding from entities such as EDA, USDA, REAP, CDBG, Industrial Access, Lake Access, or the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP). Additional sources of project support such as private investments, non-governmental grants and others not listed may also be available. CORTPO will continue to review potential funding sources as they become available or as projects become eligible.

### *ROUTINE ROAD MAINTENANCE IS FISCAL PRUDENCE*

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.



**Seminole County Community Survey Results:**

We received 72 written comments; thirty-seven (37) of those comments identified problem locations. The most frequently mentioned problem location (16 comments) was the set of twin bridges on US 270, and other functional concerns with US 270. That road and its bridges are already scheduled on the 8-year plan. All public comments received are reproduced in Appendix 5.

Maintenance of roads scored high in importance and priority. Fully ninety-two percent (92%) of the people identified maintenance of existing roads and bridges as the most pressing issue. Next, was the poor condition of signage, lack of appropriate signage, sidewalk and bicycle accommodations, and a poor public image presented by the condition of the existing infrastructure.

Sustainability concerns were expressed in categories such as fiscal and environmental responsibility, adequate long term funding, improving the mobility of freight, and increased safety and mobility for pedestrian and bicycle transportation. While rail freight improvements were noted as desirable by several stakeholders, that topic ranked low in importance and priority on the public survey, with only 26% of respondents viewing it as an area of concern.

The following tables show how each item scored in priority or importance among all respondents. The rank shows the items in relative order of importance to the respondents; the percentage to the right shows the percent of respondents who scored these items as *important*, or *very important*.

**“How important is each of the transportation system components to you”**

Rank	“Important” and “Very Important”	
1	Provide a smooth driving surface	92%
2	Add shoulders on 2-lane Highways	87%
3	Maintenance Improvements	87%
4	Maintenance of Bridges	87%
5	Condition of traffic signage	79%
6	Improve existing roadways (reconstruct steep hills or sharp curves)	79%
7	Intersection Improvements	71%
8	Connection to Highways	66%
9	Improve signs along existing roadways	66%
10	Protecting the environment	66%
11	Pedestrian safety or access	63%
12	Improve Technology of Signals	61%
13	Bicycle safety or access	42%
14	More Bus Service/Public transit	42%
15	Availability of passenger rail service	26%
16	Business access to rail freight	26%

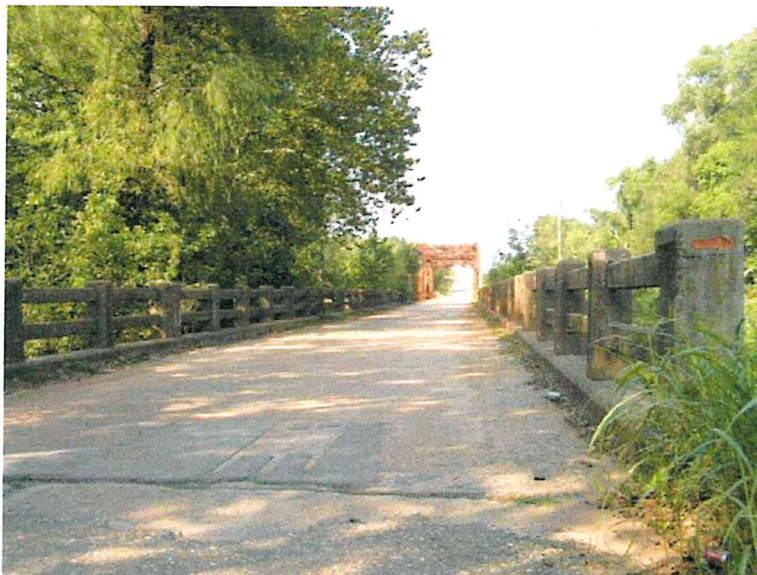


Concerns about the maintenance and preservation of roads were consistently ranked as the highest priority issues. Surface maintenance and road safety concerns dominate the top 9 of 16 possible issues proposed in the survey. The next 5 items may all be combined under transportation alternatives; reducing emissions and alternatives to driving somewhere in a car. Rail options scored about 26% among the general public responses, however rail access for freight was a concern noted by members of the Technical Committee and other Economic Development professionals.

**Which do you think should be a priority when selecting transportation projects?**

Priorities		
1	Improves Safety	87%
2	Supports Economic Development	68%
3	Reduces Energy Consumption/Pollution	63%
4	Reduces Congestion	61%
5	Improves Travel Choices	61%
6	Improve Pedestrian walkways	55%
7	Improves freight movement	47%
8	Bicycle Lanes or Facilities	32%

It should be noted that while “Safety” and “Reducing energy consumption and pollution” scored as relatively high priorities, pedestrian and bicycling improvements scored somewhat lower, with improvements to pedestrian walkways scoring as important to between 55% and 63% of respondents, while only 32% to 42% viewed bicycle improvements as a priority. This may reflect a tendency to view bicycling as a recreational activity rather than a primary means of transportation.



*The Little River Bridge is an example of a Structurally Deficient Bridge, due to age and deferred maintenance.*

*Now closed to motor vehicle traffic, the Little River Bridge is a potential point for a bike trail to cross the river.*

**Proposed Projects**

<b>Projects for Local governments</b>
Evaluate and map all county bridges
Map typical and proposed bicycle routes with a focus on regional connectivity
Plan and begin to implement walkways and bike facilities in each small town
Identify and modify Transportation Barriers to non-drivers
Identify and map preferred development corridors and plan for preservation
Evaluate weight limits on roads; develop long-term strategies to preserve county roads
Use signage to direct Bike and Pedestrian travelers to preferred routes; paint "Sharrows" along typical bike routes
Improved signage: alert motorists to the possible presence of bicycles on the road
Map and prioritize expansion of hard-surface roads throughout the County
Prioritize bridge improvements where weight limits are too low for emergency vehicle response
<b>Projects for Wewoka:</b>
Improve safety with sidewalks and crosswalks in the Public School and Sports area
Extend sidewalk improvements on S Wewoka Street from downtown to the Museum
<b>Projects for Seminole</b>
Construct sidewalks connecting the schools to neighborhoods and downtown
<b>Projects for Konawa and other small communities</b>
Construct safe pedestrian paths to schools and shopping

*Please refer to Appendix 5 for tables of all recommended policies and projects included in this Plan.*



