

Regional Transportation Survey Results Unveiled

The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) has released preliminary results from a recent survey on transportation issues in Central Oklahoma. The findings will provide useful information for the metro-region's long range transportation plan, known as the 2030 Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS) plan.

ACOG coordinates regional transportation planning efforts within the OCARTS area, which includes all of Oklahoma and Cleveland counties, and portions of Canadian, Logan, Grady and McClain counties.

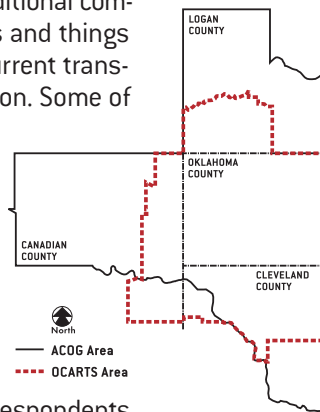
Input from the survey suggests ways to improve auto, bus, pedestrian, truck, rail and bicycle travel for the next two decades. It also helps define the most acceptable means of financing transportation improvements as well as gauge the level of public interest in improving alternative transportation modes.

Over 500 people from 24 communities and counties completed the survey, which was available throughout Central Oklahoma at meetings, libraries, in the *The Oklahoman* and on ACOG's Web site at www.acogok.org.

Priorities that surfaced from the re-

sults included safety and mobility issues, as well as an inclination to preserve gasoline and diesel fuel taxes for traditional street, highway and bridge improvements. The survey also asked for additional comments on desirable changes and things that were good about the current transportation system in the region. Some of the key findings include:

- Improved safety is one of the top priorities for the transportation system in Central Oklahoma.
- The average distance of a daily commute from home to work for survey respondents was about 13 miles.
- Respondents ranked "better maintenance of the existing street and highway network" as a way to improve personal mobility and as an incentive to strengthen the regional economy by improving the delivery of goods and commodities. Respondents also placed a high priority on maintenance when it came to ranking projects based on the constraints of transportation funding.



- When asked what new funding sources they would be most willing to support to improve the maintenance of the current street and highway

infrastructure, 46 percent of respondents selected a gasoline tax, and 42 percent said a diesel tax.

- A dedicated sales tax was among the most popular choices to support the construction of a regional light rail system, a regional bicycle network, expanded bus service, and interstate passenger rail.

- Over 88 percent were in favor of communities requiring developers to construct sidewalks in new residential and commercial developments.
- Respondents replied that "more frequent bus service," and "closer bus service to home and work" were likely to encourage them to utilize public transportation.

The survey did not employ a standard ...See "Survey Results" on page three.

Inside Perspective:

Phase II Stormwater Permit Being Reviewed	2
Local Red Cross Seeking Nominations for Heroes	2
What's New Around the Region	3
ACOG Calendar	4

Transportation Plan Input Sought

Central Oklahoma residents interested in transportation issues are welcome to attend one of two open house meetings to be held in January. The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) is hosting the events to encourage public comments that will help in the development of the long-range transportation plan, known as the 2030 Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS) Plan.

The free sessions are scheduled for January 20, at the city of Moore Community Center, 301 S. Howard (east of I-35 at 4th Street), and January 25 at Metro Technology Center, 1900 Springlake Drive (located near the intersection of N.E. 36th and Martin Luther King Avenue) in Oklahoma City. Public transportation is available to Metro Tech via Metro Transit's Route 22. For more details, call 235-RIDE. ...See "Open Houses" on page four.

Phase II Stormwater Permit Being Reviewed

After years of refinement, the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) issued the proposed Phase II General Stormwater Permit for public comment and review. ACOG has been working with municipal staff from the 21 Central Oklahoma communities that will be affected by the policy.

ODEQ drafted the general permit in compliance with the Phase II rules of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, which requires Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems within U.S. Census Urbanized Areas and those outside urbanized areas that have a population of 10,000, and up to 100,000, with a minimum density of 1,000 people per square mile to obtain coverage under this permit.

The draft permit was issued in November 2004 and comments were received through the end of December. There were two public meetings held in the state in December. While the comments are being reviewed this month, there is potential for a formal public hearing, depending on a significant degree of public interest. Notice of the date, time and place of the hearing will be given to all parties of record, and published.

The permit was originally to be released in March 2003. Since then, it has undergone several revisions. After ODEQ has reviewed and published comments, the timetable for implementation of the permit is likely to be in March. It will be accompanied by a 90-day implementation and compliance period, so affected communities should prepare to address the program in fiscal year 2006 budgets.

ACOG Water Resources staff has been monitoring the permit process, and is available for technical assistance to Central Oklahoma communities. ACOG's John Harrington said that the monitoring requirements indicate each community must evaluate program compliance, the appropriateness of identified best man-

agement practices, and progress toward achieving identified measurable goals.

ACOG is also awaiting authorization to implement a regional stormwater public education program, which is one of the six minimum control measures required by the permit. The regional approach of the program will assist communities that may not have the time or resources to implement an effective program of their own. The program is being offered free to affected ACOG communities. More details will be provided in coming months. For more information on the stormwater permit process, contact John Harrington, ACOG.



ACOG communities will have to implement Phase II stormwater rules once the general permit is issued.

Central Oklahoma *Perspective*

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Association of Central Oklahoma Governments

*"Providing Regional Leadership in
Central Oklahoma Since 1966"*

Established in 1966, the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) is a voluntary association of cities, towns and counties. ACOG helps member governments plan for common needs, cooperate for mutual benefit and coordinate for sound regional development.

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Local Red Cross Seeking Nominations for Regional Heroes

The **American Red Cross of Central Oklahoma** is looking for regional heroes to honor at a forthcoming ceremony to be held in the spring. This is the second year of the group's Heroes Breakfast, which was developed to honor individuals and groups in the region who have displayed hard work, dedication, and meritorious courage in an act of heroism.

Nominations for those to be honored at the March 3rd breakfast are due **January 19**. "We wanted to recognize people in the community that do amazing things," said Marisa Valdez, Community Relations Coordinator for the local chapter. "The purpose of the event is to recognize and honor local, everyday people who have done something extraordinary. The event is an opportunity to publicly thank

those who best exemplify the character of a hero."

Valdez said that a hero is someone who has gone beyond the scope of his or her job to help another in critical need in unusual circumstances, or by displaying exceptional characteristics. She adds that life-saving actions, such as unusual courage, lightning fast response, or the willingness to put the life of another ahead of one's own personal safety, are great examples of heroic action.

Eight individuals or groups, such as a fire, police or EMS department, will be recognized at a breakfast on March 3 at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.

Last year, there were several categories...See "Regional Heroes" on page three.

“Survey Results”

...Continued from page one. statistical validation model, but it did provide valuable insight on the needs of Central Oklahomans, and what they find important in regional transportation.

Due to specific outreach efforts and interest from specialized transportation audiences, some survey results were slightly disproportionate to census data.

For example, respondents to the 2030 OCARTS survey “who drive alone to work” accounted for 70 percent of the total responses. According to 2000 Census journey-to-work data, about 82 percent of regional workers drive to work alone. Fifteen percent of respondents said that they take the bus to work, while census data indicates that the regional average was about one half of one percent. Similarly, three percent of survey respondents answered that they ride a bike to work, while the Census shows that 0.2 percent of the region’s employees commute to work by bicycle.

Open-ended responses are still being compiled. The survey is among many projects that comprise the Plan’s public involvement process. For complete results, contact ACOG, or visit www.acogok.org.

“Regional Heroes”

...Continued from page two. ries for nominations, such as adult and youth good Samaritans, emergency dispatchers, police, fire and medical, community leader and military.

“We wanted to open things up this year,” said Valdez. “But people can look at the categories that we had last year to give them some idea of nomination opportunities.”

Nominees must have participated in the heroic event in the past two years and must come from the Chapter’s five-county region, which includes Oklahoma, Lincoln, Grady, Kingfisher and eastern Caddo Counties. Anyone can nominate a prospective hero, by filling out a form online at www.newsok.com. The NewsOK Web link features a “Red Cross Heroes” link on the home page, and can be filled out online. For more information on the nomination process, or to reserve tickets for the event, call Marisa Valdez, with the American Red Cross of Central Oklahoma, at 228-9581.



Around the Region

- **Brad Gambill** has been named **Norman’s** new City Manager. He had been working in an interim capacity since former city manager Andy Anderson vacated the post last July for a position in Oregon. Gambill is very familiar with the city of Norman, having served the community previously as director of utilities until he retired last year. The retirement was brief. After Anderson left, the city asked Gambill to help out, then city leaders made it permanent. Mayor **Harold Haralson** and the Norman city council have lauded Gambill’s enthusiasm and vision.
- **Rick Cain**, longtime assistant director and business manager for the **Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA)**, has been named administrator of COTPA. Cain has served as interim administrator for the past three months. Cain has worked in transit services since 1991. He said he was excited about the opportunities to improve transit services in the region.
- The **Environmental Management Directorate of Tinker Air Force Base (TAFB)** was awarded two Air Force Materiel Command honors for environmental stewardship and programming. The unit won awards for pollution prevention and for conducting a comprehensive environmental quality program that addresses base-wide environmental policies. TAFB is the national defense leader in alternative fuel vehicles with over 75 percent of its fleet operating on alternative fuels.
- **Logan County** District 1 Commissioner **Mark Sharpton** was recently certified as an accredited county commissioner through the **Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma (ACCO)**. Commissioner

Sharpton’s First Deputy, **Mary Murphey**, also has been certified through ACCO’s program. The association began the certification program in 2001 for county leaders to increase their administrative skills.

- **METRO Transit** took home the top three honors at the 16th Annual Spotlight Awards during the recent **Southwest Transit Association Marketing Conference**. METRO Transit’s award winning campaigns included first place for the Red Line Lunch Trolley Campaign, second place for the Eddy Grand Opening, and third place for the Adventure Line Trolley Route, which operates from Memorial Day to Labor Day, and takes tourists to Oklahoma Adventure District.

- **Clayton Robinson** has joined the **Transportation Planning and Data Services Division of ACOG** as an intern. He is currently pursuing a master’s in regional and city planning at the **University of Oklahoma**, and holds a bachelor’s in international business. At ACOG, he will provide assistance on GIS data and other planning components.



Clayton Robinson, new ACOG intern

“Open Houses”

...Continued from page one.

The time for both forums is from 4 to 6 p.m.

The open houses are designed so that those attending can come and go at their convenience and make comments throughout the time period. Transportation planners will be available to answer questions and receive comments from the public. Area maps and other information will also be on display.

Transportation plan goals, results from a recent area survey, and regional population and employment patterns will be available. Current and possible future scenarios – pedestrian, truck, rail and bicycle transportation – will also be available for review and comment.

The OCARTS plan focuses on the regional transportation network, as opposed to local or neighborhood transportation issues, which are under the authority of city or county governments.

As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), ACOG coordinates regional transportation planning efforts within the metropolitan region.

Both meeting locations are accessible for people with disabilities. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ACOG will provide for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities attending either open house. These re-

ACOG Calendar

January

- 10th (Special) Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 9 a.m.
- 13th Areawide Planning Technical Advisory Committee, 9 a.m.
Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 14th Garber-Wellington Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 17th ACOG Offices Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 18th Operation FireSAFE, 10 a.m.
Clean Cities Stakeholders, 1 p.m.
Citizens Advisory Committee, 3 p.m.
- 27th 9-1-1 Board of Directors, 1 p.m.
Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee, 1:20 p.m.
ACOG Board of Directors, 1:45 p.m.
Garber-Wellington Policy Committee, 2:30 p.m.

February

- 10th Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 14th Citizen's Advisory Committee, 3 p.m.
- 21st ACOG Offices Closed for President's Day
- 24th 9-1-1 Board of Directors, 1 p.m.
Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee, 1:20 p.m.
ACOG Board of Directors, 1:45 p.m.
Garber-Wellington Policy Committee, 2:30 p.m.

quests should be received by ACOG by January 14, 2005. Call Jerry Church at

234-2264, for more information, or TDD, 234-2217.

Central Oklahoma

Perspective

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