

# Public Participation Plan for the Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS<sup>\*</sup>)

**Purpose of the Public Participation Plan (PPP):** *To outline methods and approximate time frames for encouraging citizens, affected organizations and other interested parties to be involved in and comment on development of the long-range transportation plan for Central Oklahoma, called the 2035 OCARTS Plan; the short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the OCARTS area; and the ongoing transportation planning process. Methods for encouraging involvement include providing access to plans, programs and their supporting materials, and opportunities to comment as the plan or program develops. Implementation of scheduled activities is designed to meet or exceed requirements of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The Public Participation Plan is periodically evaluated and revised, as needed, to ensure its continued effectiveness. A 45-day public review and comment period is provided with each proposed revision to the PPP.*

*Beginning January 15 and extending through February 28, 2007, the public was invited to comment on this plan and the methods outlined for involvement. Written comments were received via mail, e-mail or fax by the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments. The Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee (ITPC) adopted the PPP at its April 26, 2007 meeting. The PPP is posted on the ACOG Web site.*

## A. PROPOSED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

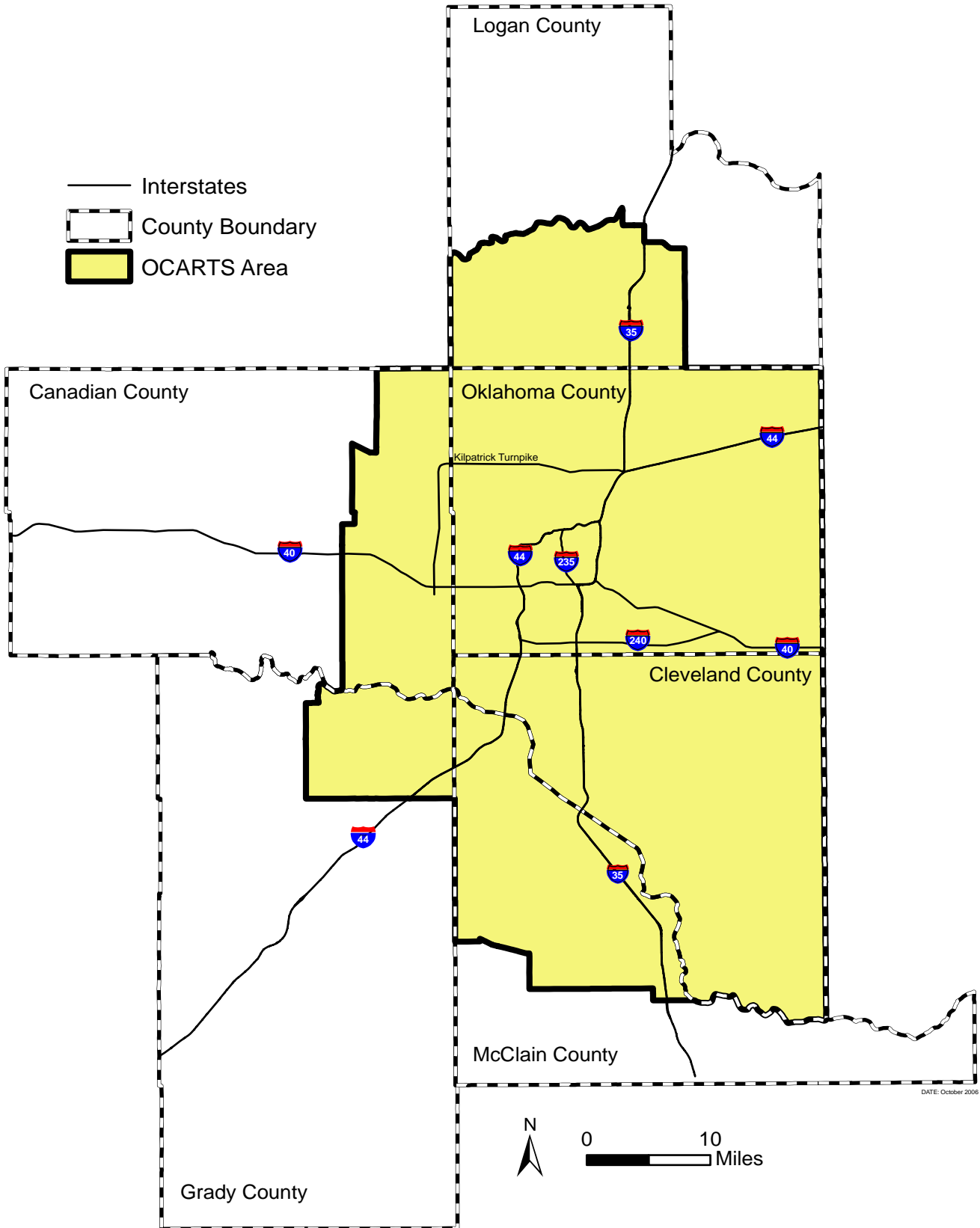
### January 2007

Announce availability of the proposed revisions to the Public Participation Plan through area media and the metropolitan library system. A media release will be sent to media outlets including radio, television and newspapers, including *The Oklahoman, Journal Record, Black Chronicle, El Nacional, Dan Quyen Newspaper, Norman Transcript, Edmond Sun, Midwest City Sun* and others. The PPP also will be distributed to local libraries affiliated with the metropolitan library system (those throughout the OCARTS area), and will be available on ACOG's Web site, at [www.acogok.org](http://www.acogok.org). In addition, announcements will be sent to affected public agencies, private transportation providers, minority organizations and special interest groups such as bicyclists, transit riders, rail advocates, trucking industry representatives, chambers of commerce, neighborhood organizations, elderly and disabled advocacy groups and others for their information and inclusion in their newsletters. Following issuance of the announcements, 45 days will be allowed for citizens to comment on the Public Participation Plan.

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\* The OCARTS area includes all of Oklahoma and Cleveland Counties and portions of Canadian, Logan, Grady and McClain Counties (see attached map).

# Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS) Geography



Map Disclaimer Applies.  
See <http://www.acogok.org/mapdisclaimer.asp>

## **B. OCARTS LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

### **General**

ACOG serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) charged with the federal requirement to assure a continuing, comprehensive and cooperative transportation planning and decision making process for the OCARTS area. One of the MPO's primary responsibilities is to prepare a long range transportation plan, with a new plan adopted every five years. The next plan will be the 2035 OCARTS Plan, with an anticipated adoption date of September 2010. Extensive data gathering, growth projection and computer modeling is required with each new plan.

A dedicated section of the ACOG Web site, [www.acogok.org](http://www.acogok.org), is reserved for the long range plan and will be utilized for posting OCARTS socio-economic data, reports, visual tools, surveys, public forum news, public commentary interaction and other information related to the long range plan. Occasionally, the Web site will be used to develop electronic updates, either directing people to the site, or including new information via e-mail. MPO staff is always available to speak to interested groups about the MPO's activities and the intent and impact of the long range plan on the region.

### **August 2009**

Conduct a survey to elicit feedback about future transportation needs in Central Oklahoma. The survey will be included in *Central Oklahoma Perspective* (ACOG monthly newsletter with a circulation of 1,600) and interactively on ACOG's Web site. It also will be provided to metro area newspapers for publication as well as other media outlets, and will be provided to a broad range of advocacy groups, public and private transportation interests, citizens, affected public agencies, minority groups and others.

### **October 2009**

Reconvene a citizens' advisory committee (CAC) composed of private citizens and representatives of local governments, chambers of commerce, special advocacy groups, neighborhoods, all travel modes (trucking, rail, air, bicycle/pedestrian, transit and highways), and agencies representing elderly individuals, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and lower income individuals, as well as others interested in the transportation planning process. The CAC will serve for the remainder of the plan development process as an advisory committee to the Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee.

### **January 2010**

Conduct at least two public meetings to encourage questions and comments about existing transportation conditions and future needs. These will be conducted in a come-and-go format with informational displays, visualization techniques, handouts, technical experts and opportunities for written and/or verbal comments. The MPO will strive to hold public meetings at times and locations convenient to the general public, including citizens that are physically disabled who need wheelchair accessibility and/or a sign language or other language interpreter. The public meetings will be accessible by fixed public bus routes. The MPO will provide timely information about the public

meetings using media outlets, special mailings, newsletters, the ACOG Web site and other available methods, to citizens, affected public agencies, advocacy groups, public and private transportation interests, and other interested parties.

### **June 2010**

Publish a summary of the recommended 2035 OCARTS Plan (Draft Plan Summary) and distribute for public review and comment. The summary will include recommendations for all modes and will be widely distributed to the media, local libraries and will be available on the ACOG Web site. The draft plan summary will also be provided to citizens, agencies, committee members and others who have been involved in development of the Plan. All comments received will be summarized and presented to the ITPC prior to its consideration of the recommended Plan. A written response will be provided to each commenter.

### **September 2010**

The ITPC will conduct a public hearing prior to consideration of adoption of the recommended plan. Notices of the public hearing will be published at least 30 days in advance, and a news release will be provided to all media outlets.

### **March 2011**

Publish a Plan brochure that describes the adopted 2035 OCARTS Plan. The brochure will be distributed to all citizens who have participated in any phase of the planning process as well as other involved agencies and jurisdictions. The brochure also will be available on ACOG's Web site.

### **Plan Amendments**

The OCARTS Plan may be considered for amendment by the Transportation Policy Committee at any time. A Notice of Public Hearing for each proposed amendment to the adopted Plan will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the entity or entities impacted by the proposed amendment. The Notice of Public Hearing will be published at least 30 days prior to the date of the Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee meeting, at which the amendment will be considered for approval. Requests for Plan amendments shall also be presented to the Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee for a recommendation to the ITPC. Additional public notice of proposed Plan amendments may also be provided through press releases or other appropriate means. All comments received will be summarized and presented to the ITPC prior to its consideration of the requested amendment.

## C. OCARTS TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

### October

A four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the OCARTS area will be developed annually in accordance with the *Procedures for Developing and Amending the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and Oklahoma Metropolitan Planning Organizations' Transportation Improvement Programs* (jointly adopted by the MPOs, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration). The TIP is a multi-year program that identifies proposed federally funded transportation projects that are consistent with the adopted long range plan. The TIP is adopted every year by the MPO.

Development of the OCARTS TIP will begin in October each year with announcement of the schedule for preparing the new TIP. The schedule will include key dates for ensuring timely TIP development, as well as timeframes for notifying the public of opportunities to review and comment on the preliminary and final documents prior to MPO adoption.

### April

A preliminary TIP will be made available for public review and comment during the month of April. The preliminary TIP will be available on ACOG's Web site and distributed to all metro area libraries. A notice of the availability of the preliminary document will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the OCARTS area, in *Central Oklahoma Perspective*, and a media release will be issued to advise where the preliminary document may be viewed and when it will be considered by the Policy Committee. Notification will also be mailed to members of the Citizens Advisory Committee, individuals on the Transportation Users Group Mailing List and others (including citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, and representatives of users of public transit, pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities). All substantive comments will be summarized and provided to the ITPC prior to consideration of the preliminary TIP during its regular April meeting. Comments concerning specific projects or proposals will be forwarded to the sponsoring agency or jurisdiction. A written response will be provided to the commenter concerning any recommendations or decisions arising from the ITPC meeting or the sponsoring entity, as appropriate.

ACOG will publish a Notice of Public Hearing in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the OCARTS area prior to consideration of the final OCARTS TIP by the Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee. The notice will be published at least 30 days prior to the date of the May Policy Committee meeting. The Notice of Public Hearing will advise of the date, time and place that the Policy Committee will conduct the public hearing for consideration of adoption of the final TIP. All comments received will be summarized and presented to the ITPC prior to its consideration of the final TIP.

## **May**

The Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee will conduct a public hearing during its regular May meeting to consider adoption of the final TIP for the OCARTS area. The final TIP will be available on the ACOG Web site, and a paper copy will be mailed to any requesting citizen or organization.

### **TIP Amendments**

The Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee may consider amendment of the OCARTS TIP any time during the TIP period. A Notice of Public Hearing for each proposed amendment to the adopted TIP will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the entity or entities impacted by the amendment. The Notice of Public Hearing will be published at least 14 days prior to the date of the Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee meeting at which the amendment will be considered for approval. All comments received will be summarized and presented to the ITPC prior to its consideration of the requested amendment. A summary of all TIP amendments will be posted on the ACOG Web site.

## **D. ONGOING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EFFORTS**

### **Special Studies – Integration of Planning and Environmental Processes**

At the beginning of any special study concerning transportation corridors or modes, the MPO will assist the lead entity in defining a public education and input process to involve potentially impacted individuals and groups. The process will be designed to ensure early and continual input from citizens and other interested parties throughout the length of the study. The process will introduce the public to the nature and scope of the study, potential alternatives and any final recommendations, as well as potential broad social, economic and environmental impacts that could result from the recommended improvement. The data and recommendations developed during the special study will provide input for any subsequent environmental assessments.

### **Annual Listing of Obligated Projects**

Each year, following the close of the federal fiscal year, the MPO will prepare a report reflecting all OCARTS area transportation projects (including pedestrian and bicycle improvements) that were funded during the previous fiscal year using federal funds. The annual listing report will be made available on the ACOG Web site and its availability will be announced through a media release to all area media outlets.

### **Citizens Advisory Committee**

A Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) will continue to be convened, as needed, to provide review and input on special transportation studies, including the long range transportation plan for the OCARTS area and amendments to the adopted Plan. Members of the CAC will provide geographic representation throughout the OCARTS area and will include, but not be limited to, individuals who represent the interests of private citizens, minorities, business, various transportation modes, low income, advocacy groups (i.e. environmental, aging, persons with disabilities, etc.) and public officials.

## **Visualization**

ACOG will use a variety of visualization techniques to aid in the dissemination of information to the public. Techniques could include static maps, PowerPoint presentations, GIS presentations, computer modeling, charts, tables and other techniques used to help stakeholders develop a shared vision for the future. ACOG's Web site will also contain the visual information to support published materials associated with the 2035 OCARTS Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Public Participation Plan (PPP).

## **Internet**

ACOG's Web site, at [www.acogok.org](http://www.acogok.org) will include all of the published materials identified in this Public Participation Plan (PPP) related to development of the 2035 OCARTS Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and other public involvement efforts of the OCARTS transportation planning process. Such published materials will include media releases, surveys, public meeting notices, brochures, and so forth. The text will either be hyperlinked or available to download through Adobe PDF format.

## **Newsletter**

ACOG's monthly newsletter, *Central Oklahoma Perspective*, will be utilized to distribute information on the OCARTS transportation planning process, including information on the Long-Range Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and upcoming public meetings and public hearings for various highway and transit programs.

## **Meetings**

The MPO staff will meet with city councils; neighborhood, civic, private sector, economic interest, minority, or other groups; and economically or physically disadvantaged groups, as requested, to discuss the transportation planning process and/or specific metropolitan transportation projects and needs.

## **Media Releases**

The MPO will prepare media releases, brochures, or other publications explaining aspects of the transportation planning process. Media releases will be distributed to regional media outlets in the OCARTS area, including minority newspapers, and to the Native American tribal governments. Special materials may also be prepared on issues such as air quality, alternative fuels, energy, the Census, the federal Surface Transportation Law and other topics, as the need arises.

## **Local Government Citizens Committees**

From time to time, local governments, as a part of their land use planning or capital improvements planning processes, utilize citizens committees to develop transportation priorities. The MPO encourages cities and counties to work with such committees, and to communicate the results/conclusions about transportation priorities in writing to their staff and elected representatives on the ITTC and ITPC. A written copy of the results/conclusions should also be forwarded to the MPO staff.

## Cooperation and Consultation

As the MPO, ACOG is continually seeking input from Federal, State and Local agencies and other interested parties to achieve compliance with the planning factors included in SAFETEA-LU and listed below. A more specific list of agencies and interested parties can be found in the Appendix to the PPP.

### Planning Factors:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users.
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- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
- 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.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

## Public Participation Plan Appendix

In addition to the standing committees that ACOG currently utilizes in its planning process, the MPO also cooperates with a number of Federal, State, Local and Tribal agencies responsible for land use, transportation planning, natural resources and other environmental issues in Central Oklahoma, including the following:

- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- Federal Transit Administration
- Oklahoma Department of Transportation
- Oklahoma Transportation Commission
- Oklahoma Turnpike Authority
- Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
- Oklahoma Department of Human Services
- Oklahoma Department of Public Safety
- Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
- Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Oklahoma Historical Commission
- Oklahoma State Preservation Office
- Oklahoma State Archaeologist
- Oklahoma Conservation Commission
- Oklahoma Water Resources Board
- Oklahoma Corporation Commission
- Oklahoma City Airport Trust
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Army Corp of Engineers
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- OCARTS Area Local Governments
- Tinker Air Force Base
- Cleveland Area Rapid Transit
- Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority

In addition, ACOG contacts many other interested parties during the planning process to solicit comment on the MPO's planning activities and products. Those contacted include interested citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of the disabled, and representatives of users of public transit, pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities. Some of those groups are listed below:

- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Local Neighborhood Associations
- Numerous Social Service Agencies
- Oklahoma Bicycle Coalition
- Oklahoma Highway Users Federation
- Oklahoma Railroad Association
- Oklahoma Traffic Engineering Association
- Oklahoma Chapter of Sierra Club
- Oklahoma Trucking Association
- State and Local Emergency Service Providers
- Representatives of the Traditionally Under-Served populations (minority, tribal, elderly, disabled, low-income)

A complete list of the interested parties routinely contacted by the MPO is available from ACOG.