

Public Service Announcement:

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) has entered into an agreement with the Oklahoma Association of Regional Councils (OARC) to oversee development of the regional transportation planning process and regional public participation process in the non-metropolitan areas of the state. Grand Gateway EDA is one of eleven Councils of Government in the state of Oklahoma and a member of OARC. The Grand Gateway EDA Board of Directors created the Grand Gateway (North East) Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) by Resolution to fulfill this obligation with ODOT and OARC for the counties of Craig, Delaware, Mayes, Nowata, Ottawa, Rogers, and Washington in the Grand Gateway region.

An RTPO Policy Board and Technical Committee has since been established with members representing area cities, counties, business/manufacturing industry, tribal governments, and community leaders from the Grand Gateway service region. All aspects of the transportation planning process are overseen by the Grand Gateway RTPO Policy Board and the Grand Gateway Technical Committee serves as an advisory group for transportation and policy initiatives. Both groups meet monthly and a calendar of meeting dates are available through the Oklahoma Secretary of State's website, local City, County, OKDHS offices, newspapers, Libraries, and the Grand Gateway (North East) RTPO offices at 333 S. Oak Street, Big Cabin, OK and the website at grandgateway.org under calendar or the Transportation Planning tab.

The Planning Work Program (PWP) represents the budget and work tasks necessary to accomplish and maintain the transportation planning process within the RTPO region. The PWP is developed to coordinate transportation planning activities for a cooperative, continuing, and comprehensive planning process. This document includes a description of what work is to be accomplished, who will perform the work, the schedule for completion of the work, the intended products and funding. The PWP is a one-year scope of work and budget for transportation planning activities and funding sources to be accomplished between October 1 and September 30 of the FFY.

The Public Participation Plan (FY-2017) is a process to inform citizens, groups, and organizations about specific decisions likely to affect their lives, ensure that planning and decision-making consider views and inputs from stakeholders, and resolve issues and problems taking into consideration multiple interests and concerns related to transportation planning for the Grand Gateway EDA service region. Public review and comments of both of these plans are open until 2/19/17. You may request more information at rtpodirector@grandgateway.org.

The first project under the new federal fiscal year is to complete a Long Range Transportation Plan for Rogers County. Multiple planning meetings will be held with a newly formed Working Group and Steering Committee comprised of Rogers County professionals ranging from elected officials to industry and area agency leaders. Public Forums and surveys will also be conducted with the general public and targeted groups of people to gather data and plans for economic growth and impact that will affect our transportation system. Short, Medium, and Long Range Plans will be included in the 2040 Long Range Transportation Planning Project. You may follow the progress from our website under transportation planning.

The Grand Gateway (North East) RTPO will also conduct a Long Range Transportation Plan for each of our remaining counties in the future as well. The Grand Gateway (North East) RTPO Policy Board chose/approved Rogers County planning project to be conducted first due to the involvement of the Tulsa Port of Catoosa and the complexities of waterway, rail, I-44 traffic and freight routes.

Additionally, the role of the Grand Gateway RTPO will include coordination between ODOT and regional transportation stakeholders with transportation needs arising. Grand Gateway's team of Directors and Grant Writers continually work with planners for economic development to improve our area communities. Another project underway with ODOT is the collection of freight routes, traffic bottlenecks and issues information to help consultants in culminating proposals to improve our Statewide Freight Plan in 2017.

This unified planning work program has been financed in part through grants from the Federal Highway Administration and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. The transportation planning products, including the Planning Work Program, inventory and data collection, transportation plans and public involvement will enable better transportation planning and preparation for funding opportunities to enable economic growth and improvements to transportation needs in the Grand Gateway service region.