



ODOT Officials Ban Lindsey Closure Option in Norman after Public Meeting Input

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With public input indicating the citizens of Norman want to keep access in place at Lindsey Street and I-35 in Norman, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation today announced it has taken off the table a proposal that would have eliminated the ramps at Lindsey Street.

Department officials Thursday asked the public for input on several proposals as part of the proposed widening of I-35 between Main Street and the Canadian River. About 250 people attended a public meeting on the matter. Citizens overwhelmingly said maintaining the current access at Lindsey Street is very important to them. In addition to businesses and residents in the area, the City of Norman and The University of Oklahoma spoke in favor of keeping the Lindsey Street exit open.

The agency plans to spend more than \$100 million over the next eight years to widen I-35 to six lanes through Norman. Commuter traffic between Oklahoma City and Norman is at an all time high with up to 75,000 vehicles a day traveling the stretch of interstate.

The design is a complex one, mainly because of its close proximity to SH-9 and Main Street. The federal environmental assessment and public involvement process encourages state departments of transportation to evaluate every option possible during project development and seek public input of its viability.

ODOT Director Gary Ridley has now directed engineers on the project to eliminate that option and work with other alternatives available by studying the area for possible new proposals as needed to take to the community.

“In this case the process did exactly what it was supposed to do, and ODOT is listening to the concerns and input of the people who live and work in the community,” Ridley said. “Ultimately, those concerns will lead to a better highway for the community, and we see that process happening before our eyes.”

The public involvement is a long-term process in which ODOT receives input from different communities statewide and works them into projects for the local areas as best they can by balancing public interest and public safety. Normally, the department is encouraged to keep all options open until the final design stage; however, in this case the agency believed keeping this option open until then would be counter-productive to the community and the public involvement process.

ODOT will further evaluate all comments and adjust plan elements. Another public meeting will be scheduled in a few months to gather additional input from the public.

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(Editors and News Directors: For media inquiries, contact the ODOT Media and Public Relations Division at 405-521-6000.)

INFORMATION RELEASE

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