



Passenger Rail Connecting Tulsa and Oklahoma City Gets an In-Depth Look

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The Oklahoma Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration, has initiated the Tulsa-Oklahoma City Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan to evaluate how passenger rail could improve inter-city connectivity between Tulsa and Oklahoma City. The Corridor Investment Plan includes an evaluation of service options, investment requirements and environmental impacts.

Three public scoping meetings will occur in mid-August to provide an opportunity for the public to provide feedback regarding the study. The meetings will be held in an open house format on the following days:

Tuesday, August 13	Wednesday, August 14	Thursday, August 15
Tulsa	Stroud	OKC
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tulsa Community College Center for Creativity 909 South Boston Avenue	5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Stroud High School Heritage Hall 212 W 7th St.	5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Metrotech OQ1 Room Springlake Campus 1900 Springlake Drive

Specifically, members of the public will be able to comment on the scope of the study, the transportation needs along this corridor and the purpose of this study. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation is also asking members of the public to help identify potential constrained areas along the corridor as well as opportunities for passenger rail along the corridor.

“This is not just a technical study,” David Streb, Director of Engineering for the ODOT said. “It is an opportunity, through a broad-based public dialogue, to establish a vision for passenger transportation in this corridor connecting the state’s two largest metropolitan areas.”

The project corridor extends on both north and south sides of Interstate 44, between Oklahoma City and Tulsa. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation will estimate future ridership, recommend an alignment, design the prospective operations and estimate the economic benefits to the state as a basis for the business case, or Service Development Plan within the corridor. The team will also prepare an Environmental Impact Statement. The purpose of developing an EIS is to consider the wide array of environmental, socio-economic and other impacts as passenger rail alternatives are developed to help support future population and economic growth in these metropolitan areas. Both the SDP and EIS are required to obtain federal funding for design and construction.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation will conduct the study in three phases. The first phase will focus on data collection, agency coordination, public involvement, National Environmental Policy Act scoping for the EIS and initial development of alternatives. Phases two and three focus on the screening of alternatives, SDP creation, Draft EIS, further public involvement and EIS finalization and are scheduled for completion by summer 2015. The study will build on the previous ODOT studies of improved passenger rail in the corridor.

The public can visit the project website, TulsaOKCRailCorridor.com to learn more. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation also encourages people to sign up for project email updates on the website or by sending an email directly to info@TulsaOKCRailCorridor.com.

Background:

In 2008, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act established improved passenger rail service as a high investment priority of the nation's transportation system. In 2009 and 2010, Congress appropriated capital assistance funds for development of high-speed rail corridors and intercity passenger rail services. Additionally, ODOT conducted numerous previous studies identifying a need for passenger rail including the 2001 ODOT High Speed Passenger Rail Feasibility Study, the 2002 Oklahoma High Speed Rail Initiative: Oklahoma City to Tulsa High Speed Rail Corridor Cost Study, the 2010-2035 Oklahoma Long Range Transportation Plan and the 2012 ODOT Oklahoma Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Study. The Federal Railroad Administration issued a strategic vision in 2009 that defines 11 high priority rail corridors, including the Tulsa-Oklahoma City Corridor.

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