



## **OTA announces new Long-Range Plan Media Fact Sheet December 2021**

- The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority is starting a new, comprehensive long-range planning process that will look at ongoing highway infrastructure needs for the next 15 years. This is the first time in OTA's history that it will develop and share a 15-year plan, especially in such a transparent manner.
- Implementing a long-range plan that is similar in process to the one offered by ODOT allows communities additional opportunities to engage with transportation planners earlier in project design and plan accordingly. Additionally, the plan maximizes infrastructure funding opportunities statewide and provides increased transparency.
- Many communities have offered tremendous feedback on the future of the turnpike system following the completion of recent projects such as the Kickapoo, the Gilcrease Expressway, and the Kilpatrick, seeking opportunities to coordinate infrastructure planning with their ongoing economic development efforts.
- The proposals for improvement are on almost every turnpike facility and OTA looks forward to developing plans and prioritizing based on the most benefit in partnerships with the communities. Many communities have asked for increased access and connections.
- The OTA will look for opportunities to enhance transportation reliability and safety while also supporting economic development and growth across the state through this process. The plan will focus on projects that complement ODOT's planning process and that bring increased access through expanded corridor connections and new interchanges on existing turnpikes. These projects will aim to further connect communities and offers additional detour options during emergency closures along with bringing economic growth opportunities in the state.
- During the upcoming year, the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority will hire consultants and additional professional services to vet details and start conceptual design plans for the comprehensive long-range plan. Their role will be to assist OTA with traffic modeling, financial planning, engineering, and working with community partners.

- Although tolls will be adjusted over time, the goal is to keep adjustments to a minimum as far into the future as possible. Oklahoma has one of the lowest toll rates per mile in the country, and the implementation of any future projects that emerge from the long-range plan will proceed with the goal of keeping Oklahoma turnpikes as one of the best-valued toll networks in the country. Out-of-state traffic pays about 40 percent of Oklahoma tolls.
- The benefits of enhancing the turnpike system include:
  - Reducing crashes associated with congestion,
  - Reducing travel time delay costs to motorists,
  - Increasing alternate options decreasing detour route-mileage during emergency closures,
  - More access provides quicker response for emergency vehicles,
  - Mitigating future traffic demands on the existing interstate, highway and local roadway systems, and
  - Allows ODOT to focus on other important priorities around the state.
- Economic and business benefits:
  - Opens up business location opportunities with the addition of new corridors,
  - Creates economic development through and near the new and improved corridors, and
  - Maintains and enhances interstate travel through Oklahoma for commerce and recreational travel.
- The 2016 Driving Forward program is nearing completion after the opening of the Kickapoo Turnpike and the John Kilpatrick extension. Final work includes the opening of the Gilcrease Expressway and the ongoing widening of the Turner Turnpike near Tulsa.
- This next planning phase will capitalize on shared services with ODOT for the betterment of the state's infrastructure system.
- Next steps will be formulated throughout 2022 by hiring consultants that can work on details, which will be made public as they become available.