



Southwest Oklahoma Regional Multi Modal Transportation Plan

Funding Opportunity: #DT0S59-SS-RA-RAISE



SPONSOR: South Western Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA)

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<i>RAISE REQUEST AMOUNT:</i>	<i>\$1,500,000</i>
<i>LOCATED IN OPPORTUNITY ZONE:</i>	<i>YES</i>
<i>LOCATED IN PERSISTENTLY POVERTY AREA:</i>	<i>YES</i>
<i>LOCATED IN HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED AREA:</i>	<i>YES</i>
<i>IS PROJECT IN AN URBANIZED AREA:</i>	<i>NO</i>

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Development of the Southwest Oklahoma Regional Multi Modal Transportation Plan (Project) is necessitated for the region to enhance transportation connectivity, increase safety for all users, and provide opportunities for public involvement in the development of a long-range regional transportation plan.

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PROJECT BENEFITS

The Project will result in collection/development of regional data to assist in the prioritization of projects that support the integration of non-motorized and motorized transportation and transit better integrating the region which will increase quality of life for rural residents and strengthen the economy. The Plan will be a diamond for southwest Oklahoma focusing on safety, connectivity, public involvement, assessments, and recommendations for strategic investments in the multi modal system that enhance the economic opportunities and quality of life.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Southwest Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO) region includes sixteen counties in southwest Oklahoma encompassing 14,294 square miles. This region's geographic features include prairies, rivers, lakes, and mountains. Looking into the region travelers will see oil and natural gas wells, herds of cattle, cotton, and wheat fields with pockets of population. Throughout the region population density ranges from 3.02 persons per square mile to 111.74 persons per square mile.

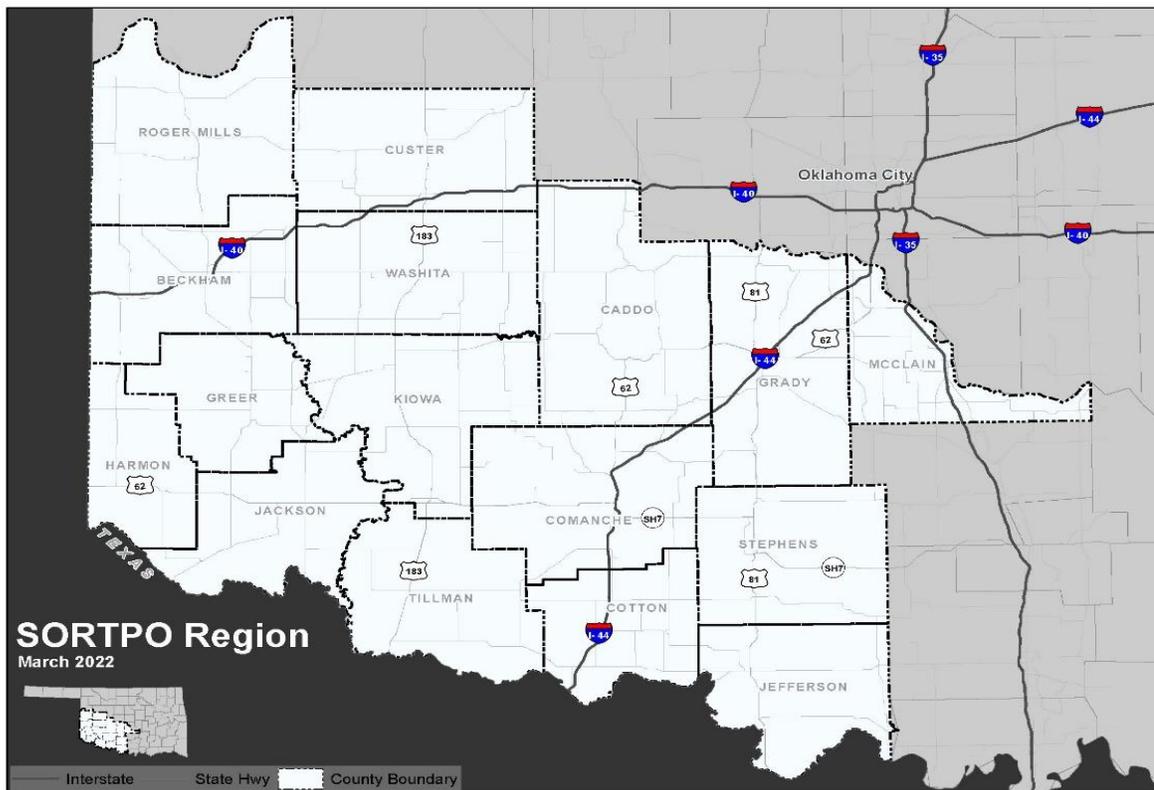
According to the 2020 Decennial Census the region boasts a population of 411,859 residents, 120 municipalities and two military installations. This region borders Texas to the south and west and serves as a direct link to the economic opportunities in Texas, energy production and agriculture. The Project area is a critical economic generator for the State of Oklahoma and United States. The region is hosted to growing industries, Fort Sill: Fires Center and Excellence and Altus Air Force Base, Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, Quartz Mountain State Park, Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, Black Kettle National Grassland, regional lakes, parks, and entertainment venues, three Universities, health centers and employment centers. Figure 1 on the following page illustrates the SORTPO region. Like most communities and regional planning districts the SORTPO's regions predominant means of transportation is the motor vehicle. There are substantial benefits when people can travel in ways other than single occupant motor vehicle travel. Some benefits include reduced energy demands, improved air quality, better public health, increased economic activity, more intensive utilization of right-of-way and better quality of life.

Knowledge gained from the past two years (2020 pandemic include:

- rural southwest Oklahoma residents who do not have access to a motor vehicle were left isolated,

- lack of accessible and available bicycle and pedestrian facilities and transit operations left segments of the population without means to medical appointment, shopping, and employment opportunities.
- the supply train and connectivity of the road and rail freight system should be integrated with the region's transportation system to establish a more efficient and connected multimodal transportation system.

Figure 1: SORTPO Region



The Project is supported by SORTPO's vision to be a leader in regional transportation planning for facilitating collaboration and input opportunities into decision making for future transportation infrastructure, safety, and economic growth in southwest Oklahoma. Achieving this vision includes improving accessibility and mobility for the movement of people and goods through multiple jurisdictions and municipalities, connecting to other regions and states. Also, this Project will address two of the ten Planning factors "Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight" and "Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes, people and freight," identified in The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). This Project is also consistent with US DOT's Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES).

Accordingly, the Project will follow the SORTPO’s adopted Public Participation Plan and adopted Limited English Proficiency Plan that promote stakeholder participation from groups such as but not limited to local/state/federal governments, health, business, and overburdened communities. The Project region meets the definition of rural and is has locations designation as areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged, with multiple Opportunity Zones. The region contains multiple US, and State Highways as well as Interstates I-35, I-40, and I-44 and municipal and county road system that does not support the non-motorized transportation user.

This Plan will lead to increased functionality for all users, improve safety, environmental and physical health – all indicators of improved quality of life for the residents of the region and connectivity for all users is limited in the region. Plan outputs are anticipated to include Multi Modal Transportation Plan:

- procedures to assist SORTPO in future project evaluation and prioritization,
- identification of technology and innovative programs/systems that enhance the quality of life and reduce emissions,
- identification of (challenges) environmental and socio-economic stressors that contribute to persistent environmental health disparities and opportunities to remediate,
- development of a complete streets policy template focusing on rural municipalities and counties.

GOALS

1. A multimodal transportation plan that contains recommendations for policies, prioritized list of projects, GIS maps, cost estimates, and strategies for funding.
2. A transportation culture that provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and good.
3. Projects will be identified through data development and analysis.
4. Enhance and support connectivity of the network with all users.

OBJECTIVES

Table 1 illustrates the Project’s objectives and examples of performance metrics to guide development and implementation of the plan.

TABLE 1: OBJECTIVES

Objective Area	Objective	Example Performance Metric
Safe and Secure Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide for a safer, more secure, and resilient transportation system for the Region’s residents, businesses, and visitors. • Ensure the ability of the highways, roads, and rail to safely accommodate growth in freight traffic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced traffic collisions • Reduced fatalities • Reduce pedestrian and bicycle injuries and fatalities • Improve railroad crossings

Objective Area	Objective	Example Performance Metric
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide safe non-motorized transportation infrastructure. 	
Infrastructure Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support infrastructure preservation and maintenance and coordination with active living projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway pavement conditions • Bridge conditions • Railway conditions • Active living facilities and accessibilities
Mobility: Choice, Connectivity and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve accessibility and mobility for people and freight • Improve the national defense readiness capability of public highways and railroad infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced traffic delays • Decreased truck idling time • Increase in number of active living facilities
Economic Vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a transportation system that enhances regional connectivity, retains existing businesses, promotes new businesses, and enhances freight movements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide connectivity between municipalities, businesses, health centers and employment centers.
Environmental Preservation & Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce impacts to the region’s natural environment, historic areas and disadvantaged populations, underrepresented populations, projects and services information to motorist and emergency personnel. • Develop Alternative Fuel Corridors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Alternative Fueling Stations within one mile of Roadway. • Number of improvements for water runoff. • Number of miles of active living infrastructure.
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the regional transportation system to advance equity and contributes to communities’ livability and sustainability. • Strengthen partnerships creating opportunities to exchange information and work together collectively to enhance the region’s transportation system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify through GIS mapping transportation projects, disadvantaged population locations, and opportunity zones. • Identify opportunities to engage additional partners and share information.

CHALLENGES

The challenges listed on the below are not insurmountable and can be overcome through a robust continuing, cooperative and comprehensive regional transportation planning process that involve partnerships with local, regional, state and federal agencies, Native American Tribes, businesses, agencies that represent overburdened communities, and businesses with a common goal to plan for the region's transportation system evolving from motor vehicle oriented to a balance and interconnected system that all users can access.



Challenge 1. Unsafe conditions between motor vehicles and non-motorized transportation users.

Challenge 2. Lack or unavailability of data specific to the region to support a comprehensive transportation planning process.

Challenge 3. Roadway designs discourage non-motorized users resulting in poor connectivity and efficiency.

OPPORTUNITIES

SORTPO's regional transportation planning process includes partnerships with local, state, federal agencies, community partners, health agencies and stakeholders that work cooperatively to plan for future transportation needs. identify and solve transportation challenges in the most effective and efficient manner. Through the leadership of the South Western Oklahoma Development Authority SORTPO is recognized as a leader in the region and state for regional transportation planning. these partnerships

PROJECT LOCATION

The SORTPO region is in the southwest quadrant of the State of Oklahoma. This region is bound to the west and south by the Oklahoma /Texas state line, to the east US Highway 81 and to the north Interstate 40; except for 2 counties: McClain County is located east of I-35 and Roger Mills County is located north of I-40. The Project location is defined within the transportation planning authority of The Southwest Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO), one of Oklahoma's largest regional transportation planning organizations (RTPO).

Within this region are sixteen counties (Beckham, Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Custer, Grady, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Jefferson, Kiowa, McClain, Roger Mills, Stephens, Tillman, and Washita) and one hundred twenty (120) municipalities and nine conservation districts. Two military installations

(Altus Air Force Base and Fort Sill: Fires of Excellence), seven college/universities (Cameron University – Lawton, Cameron University - Duncan, Comanche Nation College – Lawton, Western State College – Altus, USAO – Chickasha, SWOSU – Weatherford. Much of the Region’s is agricultural in character, with pockets of population centers. The Project area covers a network of interstate highway, rail, and air corridors that traverse both rural and urban areas.

GRANT FUNDS, SOURCES, AND USES OF PROJECT FUNDING

The cost of the Project is \$1.5 million and includes allocations for each major component of the project including collection of data, public participation, innovative technologies consideration, project prioritization, environmental justice analysis and final plan. If awarded the RAISE funds will be used to retain a consultant familiar with transportation needs of rural Oklahoma who will develop a Multi Modal Transportation Plan that focuses on connective and safety of the non-motorized and motorized public. The Consultant will be charged with the tasks below and follow the project timeline in Table 2.

- ✓ Assessing available data, collecting, or acquiring data, review existing plans/reports and coordinate with local/regional/state agencies to coordinate projects and reduce duplicity.
- ✓ Development of a GIS map with multiple layers.
- ✓ Conduct GAP analysis of existing facilities and infrastructure.
- ✓ Identify, evaluate, and provide recommendations on innovate technology opportunities that will increase connectivity, reduce collisions/insures and increase efficiency of the transportation network
- ✓ Assist in prioritization of projects and develop policy documents to support the implementation of the Plan.
- ✓ Conduct extensive public meetings through the region, coordinate with SORTPO website host to create opportunities for surveys, questions, updates, and information, identify and meet with stakeholders, review existing plans/reports.
- ✓ Develop Complete Streets policy template based upon population size, prepare design illustrations to illustrate complete streets in rural areas, develop recommendations for improvements for efficient movement of freight, transit, and non-motorized public.
- ✓ Create the final plan.

TABLE 2: PROJECT TIMELINE

Date	Milestone Title	Description or Activity
Aug. 2022	US DOT Award	Raise Grant Awarded,
Sept - Nov 2022	US DOT Contract	US DOT RAISE contract and agreement signing
Sept - Dec 2022	RFP Development, Advertisement	Develop request for proposal and advertise
Jan-Mar 2023	RFP Interviews and Award	Review submitted proposals, interview candidates and award contract
Apr -Nov 2023	Task 1	Assessment and collection of data
Apr 2023 - Apr 2024	Task 2	Development of GIS Maps and website mapping
Sept 2023 - Apr 2024	Task 3	GAP Analysis
May - Dec 2023	Task 4	Innovative Technology Evaluation
Oct 2023 - Apr 2024	Task 5	Project prioritization and policy development
June 2023 - Nov 2024	Task 6	Public engagement
Jan - May 2024	Task 7	Develop Complete Streets Policy
Nov 2023 - Nov 2024	Task 8	Draft and Final Plan
Oct - Nov 2024	Plan Adoption	Public hearings to adopt Plan
Nov 2024 - 2043	Implementation	

The Region's expansive rural network and current fiscal constraints and uncertainties have exhausted all available funding sources for the Project and RAISE funding is needed to ensure the Project's development. In rural areas and for planning projects located in areas of persistent poverty, the USDOT Secretary may increase the Federal share of costs above 80%. SWODA is requesting 100% of the funding of the project. Project management will be the responsibility of the Director of Transportation and fiscal management will be conducted by SWODA who has a proven history of federal and state grant administration and project management. Listed in Table 3 are total cost of a breakdown of how funds will be spent for the Project. Additionally, the Project's funding source is provided in Table 4.

TABLE 3: PROJECT COST

Component	Cost	Percent
Materials and Supplies	\$75,000	5%
Task 1 - Assessment and collection of data	\$450,000	30%
Task 2 - Development of GIS mapping	\$100,000	6%
Task 3 - Gap Analysis	\$150,000	10%
Task 4 - Innovative Technologies Evaluation and Recommendation	\$45,000	3%
Task 5 - Prioritization and Policy	\$85,000	6%
Task 6 - Public Engagement	\$150,000	10%
Task 7 - Complete Streets Policy, Design Concept, and Design Template	\$145,000	10%
Task 8 - Draft and Final Plan	\$300,000	20%
Total Project Cost	\$1,500,000	100%

TABLE 4: FUNDING SOURCE

Funding Source	Amount	Percent
RAISE Funds	\$1,500,000.00	100%
Total Project Funds	\$1,500,000.00	100%

MERIT CRITERIA

SAFETY

Safety is the highest goal of this Project. Identifying existing and project future areas of traffic congestion, traffic calming, accident prone areas, as well as gaps and improvements needed for pedestrian and bicycle movement. Through this Project data will be collected, reviewed, and analyzed to identify safety problems. Without this project there is not a comprehensive method to develop and collect data at the municipal and regional level that will assist in identifying safety problems and concerns. Assessing (off and on system) hotspots of motor vehicle and pedestrian/bicyclist conflicts will help in the identification of priority projects that can help decrease injury and loss of life and enhance quality of



life for the Region. When large freight trucks travel along the roadway in rural southwest Oklahoma there are concerns between the speed of the vehicle and adjacent rural commercial and residential properties. This can create conflicts with those traveling by car, bike, or foot, threatening safety, and disrupting network efficiency. It is of vital importance that rural residents and workers safely get to and from their destinations, and lack of available local and regional data prevents comprehensive review of safety needs.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

This Project is designed to develop an efficient multi modal transportation system that enables people to travel by walking, bicycling, transit, or motor vehicle while considered the impact of transportation on the environment. Efficiency and future improvements will support and enhance the environmental through reduction of emissions by savings on fuel consumption.

With improved efficiency of the multi modal system more trips are project to be made using more efficient modes will result in an overall reduction in air pollution and greenhouse gas production. Environmental sustainability is a priority for southwest Oklahoma. Maintaining air quality standards and improving stormwater drainage will improve the quality of life for residents in the region. Clean energy production and fueling will further improve air quality while bolstering the regional economy. The Project will identify and prioritize improvements to support a sustainable environment.

CLEAN ENERGY

Oklahoma has maintained its leadership in the energy sector for many decades and will continue to do so in the future. As the demand for clean energy Oklahoma is poised to adjust its energy production methods to meet the demand. In the Region, wind energy, natural gas production and future hydrogen production offer more environmentally viable options over fossil fuels and enhance air quality and quality of life.

WIND ENERGY

Oklahoma produces a significant amount of wind energy. The state has 9,048 Mega Watts (MW) of installed wind capacity and 1,017 MW under construction. In Oklahoma, this industry employees around 9,000 wind energy jobs.¹ In 2018, Oklahoma ranked second in the nation for installed wind Bolstering the functions of this industry will lead to greater industry capacity and increased environmental sustainability.

¹ America Wind Energy Association, 2017, Wind Facts at a Glance. <https://www.awea.org/wind-101/basics-of-wind-energy/>

By upgrading freight network facilities, OS/OW vehicles carrying wind energy equipment and machinery may travel through the network more efficiently making this industry even more attractive to potential investors and contributing to improved environmental sustainability. This will not only improve industry operations in the region but will facilitate the movement of wind energy equipment to and from surrounding states and other Oklahoma regions.



ALTERNATE FUEL CORRIDORS ²

As part of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, FHWA designated specific US highway corridors for electric vehicle (EV) charging, hydrogen, propane, and compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling. In 2016, I-35, I-40, and I-44 corridors were designated as alternate fuel corridors for EV charging and CNG fueling. In the summer of 2021, the following highway segments were designated as alternative fuel corridors:

- **US 81** between the US 81/I-44 interchange in Chickasha, Oklahoma north to Enid, Oklahoma, (Corridor Ready)
- **I-40**: Between the TX/OK border and Erick, Oklahoma; Corridor Ready
- **US 62** between the US-62/I-44 interchange in Lawton, Oklahoma, and the OK/TX border,
- **US 81** between the OK/TX border and the OK/KS border³.

REDUCED STORMWATER IMPACTS

With any new improvements to the transportation network, including new bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, roadways, roadway widening, freight turnouts/parking area design considerations for stormwater will be made to help reduce runoff and filter sediment. This is especially important given the considerable amounts of stormwater runoff that agricultural lands produce when compared with forested lands⁴ southwest Oklahoma's flat terrain and numerous rivers and creeks make it especially prone to flooding, causing disruptions to the regional freight network. The Project will plan for improvements that will follow the ODOT Roadway Drainage Manual, the standard for designing and planning roadway drainage systems for the State of Oklahoma.

² U.S. DOT Alternative Fuel Corridors. https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/alternative_fuel_corridors/

³ Corridor-Ready and Pending Alternative Fuel Corridors. https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/alternative_fuel_corridors/2020_refresh/
https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/alternative_fuel_corridors/pending/

QUALITY OF LIFE

The Project will identify much needed multimodal investments that will increase transportation choices for those who need them most. These investments will provide more lifestyle and economic freedom transportation decisions. Currently, the default choice to travel through the region is to drive because safe, connected, and accessible walking and bicycle facilities and convenient and accessible transit are sorely limited. Enhancing community (regional) livability, including improving health and safety, prioritizing of infrastructure investments (which includes non-motorized) provides opportunities for people to become more engaged and reduce the feeling of being socially or physically isolated. Increasing the efficiency of the multi modal system will provide greater reliability in the movement of people and goods, increasing the economic productivity of the region. The Project will:

- aim to identify investment strategies that improve the access to jobs of all rural residents.
- will examine the impact of proposed county, municipal, highway, and rail projects on disadvantaged populations, and
- provide a coordinated and prioritized approach for transportation investments that increases access to medical centers, shopping, employment, and recreation services.
- provide prioritization of project that will connect rural communities and provide additional transportation options other than a motor vehicle.

IMPROVES MOBILITY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

This project will provide opportunities for citizens and stakeholders to become engaged in identifying connection gaps, decrease congestion and identify connectivity opportunities and hurdles. The region lacks the resources to produce a multi modal plan which includes ensuring all users to have access to the community and region without regards to owning a motor vehicle. Collaborating with citizens and stakeholders is paramount to the success of improving mobility and connectivity. Providing opportunities for public engagement provides “buy in” and support for future transportation investments and policies that support motorized and non-motorized transportation; establishing southwest Oklahoma as an area that focuses on access to all.

ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS AND OPPORTUNITY

The Project will provide the investment strategy critical to ensuring the transportation network is in a state of good repair, preserving prior infrastructure investment and facilitating new opportunities for accessible and availability of alternative modes of transportation, supporting goods movement, and optimizing the region and state’s assets. Specific to the region, the medical, energy, transportation, and distribution, and agricultural and biosciences are most prevalent, though there is strong military presence including Altus Air Force Base and Fort Sill Fires Center of Excellence. These industries contribute to providing jobs to rural Americans. Providing an investment strategy

for prioritized transportation projects, technology enhancements, and safety improvements will improve efficiency, reduce delay, and minimize conflicts on the transportation network between commerce and residents.

The Project will also leverage the investments in developments such as the Altus Reservoir Project, which is currently in the planning phase and aims to encourage economic development along the Altus Reservoir Trail Loop. Table 4 highlights potential methods to reduce congestion, deterioration, delay, increase safety and improvement to the quality of life and economy. The Project will assess the opportunities to incorporate these methods into projects included in the investment strategy.

TABLE 4: ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS METHODS AND BENEFITS

Methods to Facilitate A Safe & Efficient Transportation System		Key Benefit to Economy
A	New shoulders, passing lanes, barriers, wrong-way signage, bridge heightening, and separated rail grade crossings.	Creates a safe transportation system for movement of people and goods.
B	Pavement technologies that increase useful life and reduce maintenance costs.	Withstand heavy loads from agricultural materials and area conditions.
C	Include water treatment, soil treatment, and erosion control within projects.	Ensures the “Great Plains” natural resources are preserved, particularly areas that produce United States food supplies.
D	Protect and build upon ongoing investments in the energy sector corridors.	For national and economic security make the United States less vulnerable to price and supply fluctuations in the Middle East and elsewhere.
E	Upgrade the system to include conflict detection, signage and features for semi or autonomous vehicle systems that capture and report safety-related issues, cybersecurity, and ITS.	Has multiple benefits, including prevention of loss of life during extreme weather events, providing route information for freight vehicles to maximize drive-times, and provides emergency services real-time information for threats to national security.
F	Follow US DOT Everyday Counts that help to rapidly deploy and shorten project delivery.	Benefit as many users as quickly as possible, accelerated project delivery.

Methods to Facilitate A Safe & Efficient Transportation System		Key Benefit to Economy
G	Infrastructure that will facilitate easy connection of interstate travel to municipalities using technology and governmental coordination.	Using innovative technologies that are optimal for area conditions.

STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

The project will accomplish a state of good repair through identification, prioritization, and coordination of multi modal transportation improvements with roadway improvements such as replacing the widening shoulders, separation of motor vehicle traffic, signalization, and accessibility. Safety, efficiency, and connectivity in the region promotes asset management across southwest Oklahoma. The Project will promote a financially constrained environment while maintaining the region’s transportation assets to the necessary level of quality required for increasing the access and efficiency of the movement of people and goods. The benefits of adequate roadway conditions support improvement connections between the rural municipalities, region and the State and medical and employment centers and state and national recreation sites. The improved connection promotes utilization of the transportation network across different modes.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

The Project, managed and supported by SWODA, boasts numerous representatives, chamber of commerce, health agencies, business owners, metropolitan Planning Organizations, economic development organizations, tribal governments, state and federal agencies and community stakeholders. These partners understand the importance of the Project and share the common goal of advancing the Southwest Oklahoma Multi Modal Transportation Plan to improve safety, prioritize projects, accelerate project delivery, increase accessibility to non-motorized transportation facilities, while considering equity and climate change. Each partner understands the wholistic benefits provided by focusing finite resources on solutions that improve connectivity and safety in rural southwest Oklahoma. The SORTPO Public Participation Plan and Limited English Proficiency Plan provide the backbone for engaging the public, stakeholders and traditionally under represented populations.



Working under the SWODA umbrella, SORTPO will administer the Project through SWODA's funding administration and oversight. This effort will be led by SORTPO staff with direct oversight by the SORTPO Policy Board. ODOT's Field Districts 3, 5, and 7 are responsible for project identification and implementation receiving input from SORTPO, stakeholder/public participation events, regional partners, counties, and municipalities. The final plan recommendations are intended to be incorporated into partner agencies' specific long-range plans to promote regional efficiency and consistency.

Regional partners and stakeholders through surveys and meetings identified a higher preference for projects that improve safety, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and freight movement, and support economic development.

SORTPO works closely with many regional organizations and local municipalities, businesses, and freight stakeholders. Various entities in the Region have shown their support for the project by providing letters of support. Some of these partners include:

- Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell, State of Oklahoma
- House of Representatives, Southwest Oklahoma Delegation:
 - Representative Marcus McEntire, District 50
 - Representative Brad Boles, District 51
 - Representative Gerrid Kendrix, District 52
 - Representative Todd Russ, District 55
 - Representative Dick Lowe, District 56
 - Representative Anthony Moore, District 57
 - Representative Daniel Pae, District 62
 - Representative Trey Caldwell, District 63
 - Representative Rande Worthen, District 64
 - Representative Toni Hasenbeck, District 65
- Senate Districts, Southwest Oklahoma Delegation:
 - Senator Lonnie Paxton, Senate District 23
 - Senator Chris Kidd, Senate District 31
 - Senator Jessica Garvin, Senate District 43
- **Congressional Delegation**
 - Frank D. Lucas, 3rd District, Oklahoma
 - Tom Cole, 4th District, Oklahoma

- Perry Brinegar, Association of South-Central Oklahoma Governments
- Lyle Rogow, President, Duncan Area Economic Development Foundation
- Judy Petry, President and General Manager, Farmrail System, Inc.
- Roland Mower, Director Clinton Economic Development Authority
- Brent Kisling, Oklahoma Department of Commerce
- Stan Booker, City of Lawton
- Chris Deal, Duncan Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Chris Deal, Duncan Rescue Mission
- Glenn Winters, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance
- Chris Munn, Interim Regional Administrative Director, Oklahoma State Department of Health, District 8
- Oklahoma Department of Transportation, District Engineers 3, 5, 7
- Jeannie Bowden, Oklahoma Southwest Alliance
- Debora Glasgow, Executive Director South Western Oklahoma Development Authority
- Roger Neal, Vice President Duncan Regional Hospital and Pathways To Healthy Living
- Richie Splitt, President & CEO Norman Regional Hospital
- Sandy Foster, Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma

Letters of support can be found in the *Letters of Support* section on the project website.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

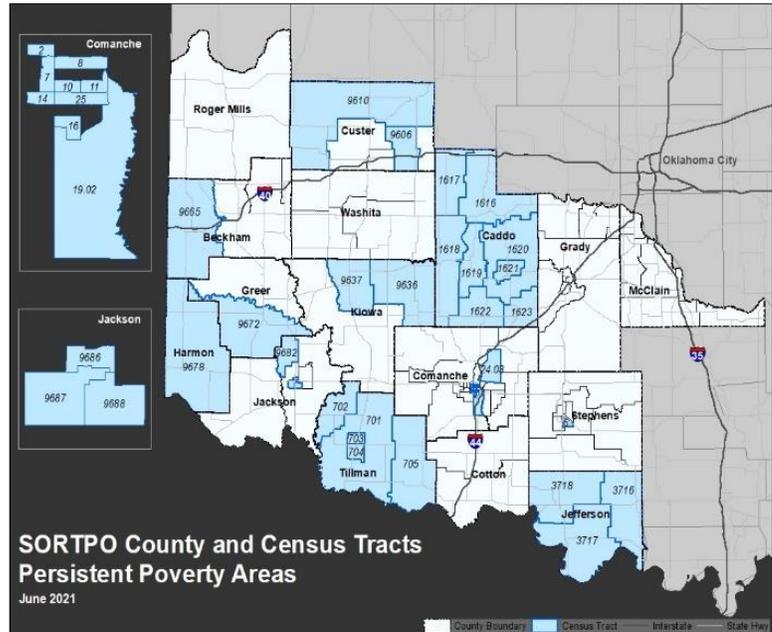
The SORTPO Policy Board on June 28, 2018, adopted the SORTPO Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) and Public Participation Plan (PPP); which provides the public and interested parties with opportunities to be involved in the regional transportation planning process. Procedures encouraging participation by traditionally underserved individuals, including elderly, low income and minority individuals, persons with disabilities, and persons with LEP are followed by SORTPO staff and will be followed by the consultant of the Project.

Pursuant to Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to address Environmental Justice (EJ) in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, dated February 11, 1994, and the subsequent U.S. Department of Transportation Order 5680.3, issued April 15, 1997, SORTPO's procedures for public engagement promotes EJ in all aspects of the Regional Transportation Planning Organization process. SORTPO does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its

activities or operations. SORTPO is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for the public, staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors, and vendors.

Specific to the RAISE grant is the identification of Persistent Poverty Areas and impact of the project in these areas. Figure 3 was developed utilizing information obtained from <https://datahub.transportation.gov/> and illustrates the Region's Persistent Poverty Areas. Data from this table identifies three counties (Caddo, Harmon, and Tillman) and 24 Census Tracts. Development of the Southwest Oklahoma Regional Multi Modal Transportation Plan will also include identification of racial impact, recommendations of equity focused policies, new or improved freight access to underserved communities, access, and connectivity for non-motorized public and transit to health, employment, and food.

Figure 2 - Persistent Poverty Areas, SORTPO



INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

The Project will also aim to identify technologies and strategies that improve safety, reduce conflict with non-motorized traffic with automobiles and freight movement while simultaneously expanding access to broadband internet for rural residents. By expanding broadband service in rural areas, the Region's potential to implement innovative technologies increases. Innovative technologies can enhance safety, efficiency, and quality of life and help ensure economic competitiveness.

Wireless broadband can be used to integrate and expand police, fire, and health services. Broadband internet can also enable the nearby communities to attract and retain job-creating businesses and improve the productivity of home-based businesses by competing in regional and global markets. The Coronavirus pandemic further exposed the need for broadband in rural communities as schools and resources shut down, leaving many areas unable to access necessary resources. This improved transportation network, in conjunction with expanded broadband availability, will help improve access of residents to medical care through transportation to in-office visits and telemedicine capabilities.

BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT

Ensuring reliable high-speed service for the area will encourage economic competitiveness and growth and improve quality of life for those living and working in the Region. Furthermore, strategic installation of broadband and cellular infrastructure will allow implementation of innovative transportation technologies throughout the Region, such as connected and autonomous vehicle (CAV) and truck platoon deployment, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), wildlife detection signals, and vehicle-to-infrastructure communications. To date, fiber optic cable has been installed along I-44, from Duncan to Altus, and from Altus to Clinton, but more is needed. The Oklahoma Rural Broadband Expansion Council will improve expand and reduce the cost of high-speed internet connectivity. The Project will identify gaps in broadband service in the Region and how to effectively plan and promote for the delivery of dependable and connected service. ODOT has identified that, at a minimum, the Region's NHFN interstate corridors should be equipped with continuous high-speed service, and additional highway and roadway corridors will be identified.

REDUCING RURAL ROADWAY DEPARTURES

Reducing fatalities and collisions on rural roadways is a priority for the region. Providing countermeasures, such as shoulders, centerline rumble strips, friction treatments, and roadway reflectors, helps keep vehicles in their lanes, separated lanes for freight movement, non-motorized traffic, preventing or reducing the severity of crashes on rural roads. The Project will identify crash hotspots, problem areas, and areas with frequent wildlife crossings for application of corrective measures, thereby improving safety along roadways in Southwest Oklahoma.

OKLAHOMA INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Oklahoma Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Program uses ODOT's 2,600 linear miles of fiber optic cable to improve transportation throughout the state. Through expanded broadband internet deployment, the Region can increase its participation in this program to improve transportation efficiency and safety. This program specifically benefits the movement of freight by offering the following initiatives:

- Bluetooth sensors to provide commercial motor vehicle origin and destination data,
- Road weather information system,
- Dynamic message signs, and
- Vehicle-to-infrastructure communications

While fiber optic cable already exists along a few of the Region's corridors, more is needed. This would allow technologies such as probe data to monitor speed and provide real-time traffic information. Cameras and weather sensors could provide notification of weather and road conditions. Furthermore, signal cabinets and transmission infrastructure should provide more space than needed to allow for expansion in the future. The Project will identify locations where the ITS Program can be incorporated.

VIRTUAL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

As outlined in FHWA's Everyday Counts-5 Innovations, Virtual Public Involvement (VPI) is used to obtain a broader reach during the public engagement process. The Region's vastness and rural nature can create challenges to attending public meetings and utilization of virtual meetings in some situations would help the public provide valuable input to freight issues and concerns. The deployment of high-speed fiber-optic cable along freight corridors will facilitate the application of VPI as part of future public involvement efforts throughout the Region. The Project will identify places where VPI can be incorporated.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Because this is a planning project, and no construction or project delivery-related risks, risk assessment is not required for funding eligibility. However, SORTPO, SWODA, ASCOG, and ODOT are committed to delivering this project and tangible results associated with the Project. As a part of this commitment, ODOT's District, 5 and 7 engineers are voting members of the SORTPO Transportation Policy Board and have provided a joint letter in support of the Project. The District Engineers are active in this program to help ODOT identify safety issues and make informed decisions on project prioritization for the Region.

PROJECT READINESS

The Project upon completion will be adopted by the SORTPO Policy Board, local governments, and presented to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and FHWA for acceptance.