



SOUTHERN OKLAHOMA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors Meeting February, 28, 2020

MEETING BRIEFING

The SODA Board of Directors met for its regular February meeting at Murray State College in Tishomingo, Oklahoma.

Regional Transportation Planning Organization

The Board of Directors approved starting the process to form the SODA Regional Transportation Planning Organization, which would include only the SODA ten-county service area.

An RTPO is a formal organization with membership comprised of counties, cities, and towns within a region. The RTPO may be an existing regional organization or may be established as a new transportation planning organization. The RTPO is responsible for conducting a transportation planning process including the development of policy and procedures to outline the transportation planning process for the RTPO's respective region.

Once established, the RTPO can apply for operational funding through the State Planning & Research Program (SPR) provided to ODOT by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which would be supplemented by 20-25% local funding. To develop a regional plan, the RTPO would first convene planning meetings in each county in the SODA service area to develop county-level plans.

2020-2024 CEDS Plan Update

The Board of Directors approved an update to the 2020-2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to include a section on Opportunity Zones. SODA has Opportunity Zones in seven of its ten counties. A copy of the updated plan is available on the Community and Economic Development page of the SODA website at www.soda-ok.org/ced.

SODA Facilities Expansion

Executive Director Steve Mills discussed submitting a EDA grant application under the Disaster Relief program to add a large safe room/conference room to the SODA facilities. The Disaster Relief program allows for an 80/20 leverage of costs building. Mills will obtain preliminary estimate of construction costs and present to the Board of Directors at a later meeting for approval before submitting the grant application.

Announcements and Reports

SODA Board of Directors President Linda Hyman presented a plaque for 40 years of service to Board member, Ron Alexander. Ron represents the Town of Wilson.

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SODA Coronavirus Response and Program Updates

The health and well-being of its employees, partners, and clients is a priority at the Southern Oklahoma Development Association. To ensure our employees have the support they need in order to continue providing services to our clients and partners during this crisis, SODA has modified its employee travel and leave policies. These new guidelines will be in effect through April 10 and extended to a later date if deemed necessary. These guidelines recognize the CDC recommendations and include the following:

- Employee travel out of the SODA service area is suspended through April 10.
- Employees who can perform work responsibilities remotely should do so.
- Employees should avoid gatherings of 10 or more people and travel to highly populated areas outside of the SODA service area.

Although SODA will be open during its regular business hours of 8 am – 5 pm, Monday – Friday, to prevent our work environment from contamination, the SODA corporate offices at 2704 N. First in Durant will be locked down beginning Monday, March 23, 2020 and only employees may enter the premises. ***SODA staff is still available during business hours by phone or email.***

Area Agency on Aging

Ombudsman – Ombudsman staff are working remotely and should be contacted directly at their SODA cell phone numbers.

Nutrition – Title III nutrition sites are setting up to hand meals to seniors in their cars. Because of the location of some sites, drive-up or drive-through is not possible and seniors will be handed meals at the door. If we have to close the drive thru process, then we will transform all meal provision to home-delivered meals.

Assessments – All client assessments will be conducted by phone until the crisis has passed at which time a follow-up face-to-face assessment will be conducted for those that received in-home services resulting from a phone assessment.

Transportation – Transportation services are continuing and all vehicles are sprayed before riders can board and throughout the day. The number of riders at any time may be limited.

Vouchers – Recipients of Chore, Homemaker and Respite vouchers should decide for themselves if they want to continue in-home visits from providers.

Tai Chi – Classes are suspended for at least 4 weeks. We are considering the possibility of sending an instructional CD home with clients now instead of at the end of class to continue in home exercises.

Legal Aid – Legal consulting will continue as normal as most are phone consultations.

Rural Fire Defense

The Fire Defense Director is available for consultation by phone and email. No inventories or inspections at local fire departments will be conducted until further notice. The Forestry equipment yard is closed for pick-up until further notice.

Community and Economic Development

The CED staff is available for consultation by phone and email and will continue to assist counties and communities in grant writing and in meeting grant submission deadlines. CED staff will provide the necessary information for agenda items for council or commission meetings for pending grant submissions. CED staff is also available to consult with you by phone during your council or commission meeting upon request.