

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

3 HOUSE BILL 2034

By: Archer

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7 AS INTRODUCED

8 An Act relating to transportation; creating the
9 Regional Rural Transportation Task Force;
10 establishing membership; requiring majority for
11 quorum; providing for election of chair; providing
12 for meeting times; authorizing chair to designate
13 meeting venue; prohibiting compensation for duties;
14 detailing duties of the Task Force; setting time
15 frames for the meeting of certain goals of Task
16 Force; requiring delivery of certain reports;
17 designating staffing; providing for codification;
18 providing an effective date; and declaring an
19 emergency.

20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

21 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
22 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4050 of Title 69, unless there
23 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

24 A. The Regional Rural Transportation Task Force is hereby
created, until December 31, 2026, unless further legislative action
extends its mandate; to address critical transportation needs and

1 challenges across western Oklahoma, encompassing areas of
2 responsibility for the Northern Oklahoma Regional Transportation
3 Planning Organization (NORTPO) and the Southwest Oklahoma Regional
4 Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO). Task Force members
5 shall appoint alternative members to ensure quorum and continuity of
6 the project. The Task Force shall consist of, but may not be
7 limited to, representation from the following:

8 1. One member designated by the Speaker of the Oklahoma House
9 of Representatives, who shall be a current member of the Oklahoma
10 House of Representatives who represents the region of western
11 Oklahoma;

12 2. One member designated by the President Pro Tempore of the
13 Oklahoma State Senate, who shall be a current member of the Oklahoma
14 State Senate who represents the region of western Oklahoma;

15 3. The NORTPO Transportation Director;

16 4. The SORTPO Transportation Director;

17 5. The Deputy Administrator of the Oklahoma Health Care
18 Authority;

19 6. A representative from the State Department of Health;

20 7. A representative from South Western Oklahoma Development
21 Authority;

22 8. A representative from the Oklahoma Department of Human
23 Services;

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1 9. A representative from the Oklahoma Department of
2 Transportation Office of Mobility and Public Transit;

3 10. A representative from Oklahoma Rural Health Association or
4 Duncan Regional Hospital; and

5 11. Regional development specialist from the Oklahoma
6 Department of Commerce.

7 B. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the
8 purpose of conducting the business of the Task Force. The Task
9 Force shall select a chair from its membership. The Task Force
10 shall meet at least bimonthly and at such other times as may be
11 called by the chair. The chair shall designate a venue within the
12 state for meetings.

13 C. Members of the Task Force shall receive no compensation for
14 serving on the Task Force but shall receive travel reimbursement for
15 necessary travel expenses incurred in the performance of their
16 duties by their respective agencies in accordance with the State
17 Travel Reimbursement Act.

18 D. The Regional Rural Transportation Task Force shall:

19 1. Gather and analyze transportation-related data to identify
20 gaps, needs, duplications, inefficiencies, and provide
21 recommendations and strategies for improving transit services;

22 2. Facilitate coordination among regional stakeholders to align
23 goals and leverage collective expertise;

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1 3. Identify and pursue state, federal, and other funding
2 opportunities to support infrastructure and capital improvements;

3 4. Expand the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's statewide
4 mobility management program to include two mobility navigators in
5 both the NORTPO and SORTPO regions; this number excludes mobility
6 navigators in the region working within a metropolitan planning
7 organization, transit operator, or similar entity; funding to one
8 hundred percent (100%) of eligible program costs;

9 5. Benchmark western Oklahoma's transportation initiatives
10 against similar projects in other states and regions to adopt best
11 practices and innovative strategies;

12 6. Collaborate with NORTPO, SORTPO, and other regional agencies
13 and groups;

14 7. Engage stakeholders, including, but not limited to, health
15 care professionals, aging services professionals, veterans' groups,
16 and transit operators, and define a framework to engage these groups
17 through in-person interviews, summits, and coordination with other
18 activities or event opportunities;

19 8. Develop and begin implementation of at least three separate
20 pilot programs by December 31, 2026, that are focused on volunteer
21 drivers, mileage reimbursement, real-time tracking and dispatch
22 software tailored for rural use, centralized transit hubs and
23 integrated scheduling systems;

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1 9. Initiate reports, studies, and analysis among agencies or
2 organizations that provide public transportation, identifying
3 service gaps, evaluating the feasibility of extension of service and
4 coordinating to reduce duplication of service coverage;

5 10. Identify funding sources and develop opportunities for
6 rural transit innovation grants;

7 11. Evaluate and identify potential tax incentives for private
8 entities partnering in transit solutions;

9 12. Identify opportunities with state agencies to streamline
10 grant funding applications for smaller transportation providers; and

11 13. In coordination with the Oklahoma Broadband Office,
12 internet providers or state agencies overseeing technology
13 infrastructure prioritize areas for improved broadband and cellular
14 service to allow for innovative technology and dispatch.

15 E. The Task Force shall meet the duties listed in subsection D
16 of this section in the following time frames:

17 1. In years one and two, immediate duties to be accomplished:

18 a. establish the Task Force with diverse stakeholder
19 representation and agencies with expertise in rural
20 communities, services, and needs to ensure a broad
21 spectrum of perspective,

22 b. commission feasibility studies for pilot programs
23 focusing on service gaps identified by the Oklahoma
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1 Public Transit Policy Plan and legislative interim
2 studies,

- 3 c. establish dedicated funding streams and secure
- 4 commitments from state and federal sources, and
- 5 d. expand the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's
- 6 statewide mobility management program to include a
- 7 minimum of two mobility navigators in the NORTPO and
- 8 two mobility navigators in the SORTPO regions this
- 9 number excludes mobility navigators in the region
- 10 working within a metropolitan planning organization,
- 11 transit operator, or similar entity; funding to one
- 12 hundred percent (100%) of eligible program costs;

13 2. In years three through five, mid-term duties to be
14 accomplished:

- 15 a. launch pilot programs in counties and municipalities
- 16 not served by public transit or microtransit services,
- 17 and
- 18 b. in coordination with the Oklahoma Department of
- 19 Transportation, and other state agencies that include
- 20 transportation funding in budget, NORTPO, and SORTPO,
- 21 identify areas for development of inter-county transit
- 22 hubs using data collected and identify funding
- 23 sources; and

1 3. In years six through ten, long-term duties to be
2 accomplished:

- 3 a. identify funding sources to support expansion of pilot
- 4 programs into sustainable regional transit systems,
- 5 b. institutionalize technology solutions and improve
- 6 broadband infrastructure to support operations,
- 7 c. increase driver recruitment and retention through
- 8 competitive pay and benefits programs, and
- 9 d. integrate transit with autonomous vehicles.

10 F. On or before October 1, the Task Force shall prepare a
11 report of its findings, recommendations, and progress to be
12 submitted to the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma
13 State Senate, the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives,
14 and Chairs of the Transportation Committees in both the Oklahoma
15 State Senate and the Oklahoma House of Representatives and the
16 minority leaders of both the Oklahoma State Senate and Oklahoma
17 House of Representatives. The first report shall be due October 1,
18 2025.

19 G. Staffing for the Task Force shall be provided by the
20 Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

21 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.

22 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
23 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby
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1 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
2 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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