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OTA resumes engineering work on South Extension as part of ACCESS Oklahoma long-range plan

The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority is preparing to resume engineering design work on the South Extension Turnpike, which is part of the ACCESS Oklahoma long-range plan. The South Extension will serve as a traffic reliever route for the congested I-35 Southern Corridor by moving heavy truck traffic out of the city center. It will also improve safety by lessening congestion and crashes between Purcell and Oklahoma City.

Director Joe Echelle shared in the March 4 OTA Board meeting that after all legal challenges were cleared in 2023 work resumed on some turnpike corridors in the ACCESS Oklahoma plan in early 2024. While OTA is just restarting work on the South Extension project, it is clear the preliminary alignment will be moved as part of the upcoming engineering design work.

“I can say with certainty that OTA and their project team plan to be accessible to the citizens and stakeholders as much as possible,” Echelle said. “We want property owners in the area to reach out to us as plans develop to select the best route. We will make them our priority on this project with special attention given to minimizing the impact on them.”

Property owners with questions or concerns are encouraged to reach out to OTA's hotline at 1-844-56-ACCESS or email info@accessoklahoma.com.

Interchange opening at I-44/Will Rogers Turnpike at Flint Road near Claremore

A new interchange will open later in March on I-44/Will Rogers Turnpike at Flint Road/E. 510 Road near Claremore. It is the second new turnpike interchange to open since OTA went to cashless tolling. This interchange is part of a larger project in conjunction with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, which is realigning SH-20. OTA's interchange on the Will Rogers Turnpike provides a direct connection to this new state highway alignment, which is expected to open a little later this spring. For now, Will Rogers motorists will be able to exit Flint Road to the west to access SH-66 or to travel east to E. 510 County Road. SH-20 to the west remains closed until later this spring.

New interchange on I-344/John Kilpatrick Turnpike

As part of the ACCESS Oklahoma long-range plan, design work is currently underway on a new interchange on the I-344/John Kilpatrick Turnpike at County Line Rd. OTA's project will add a new interchange and widen the turnpike to six lanes. The Authority recently added to this project to help alleviate commercial and housing development traffic near Paycom's headquarters in Oklahoma City. The project now will include widening of westbound Memorial Road from two to three lanes between

Council Road and Rockwell Avenue, a turnaround bridge at Council Road and a new eastbound ramp from Council Road to the John Kilpatrick Turnpike. The estimated construction cost is \$25 million and is tentatively scheduled to start in spring 2026. This project will be in partnership with the City of Oklahoma City.

OTA's crews keep turnpikes safe during winter weather

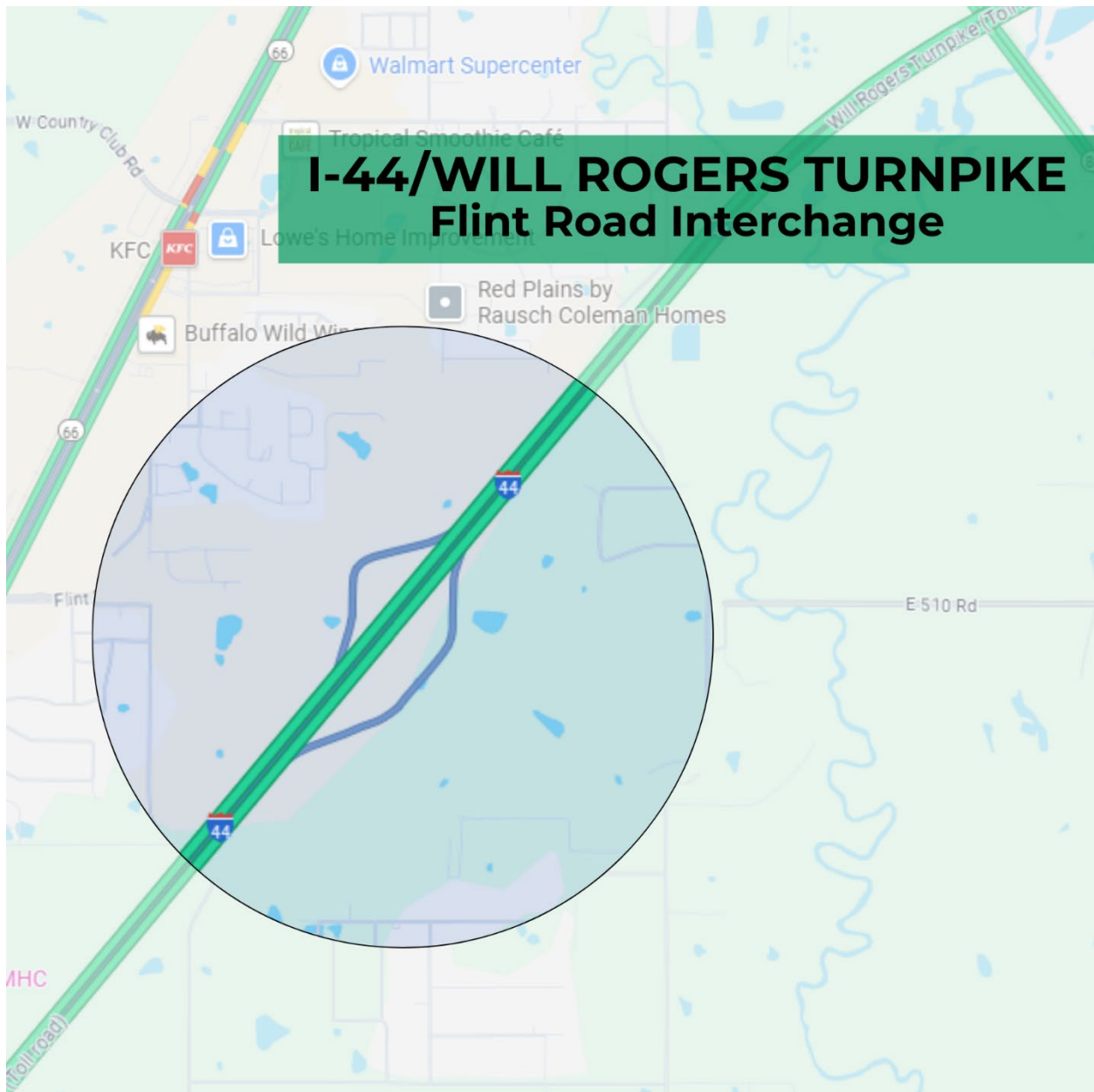
During the winter storm Feb. 18-21 that impacted statewide travel, OTA's maintenance crews, including salt/sand trucks and snowplows, spent 5,297 hours pre-treating then treating and clearing 84,837 lane miles and 870 turnpike bridges.

OTA Maintenance Director Jeremy Smith shared that the response was a coordinated effort between OTA and partners at Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Oklahoma Highway Patrol, National Guard, Emergency Management, Health Services, National Weather Service, the Governor's Office and others. Motorists who found themselves stranded due to difficult driving conditions were safely escorted to shelter by the Oklahoma National Guard and OHP.

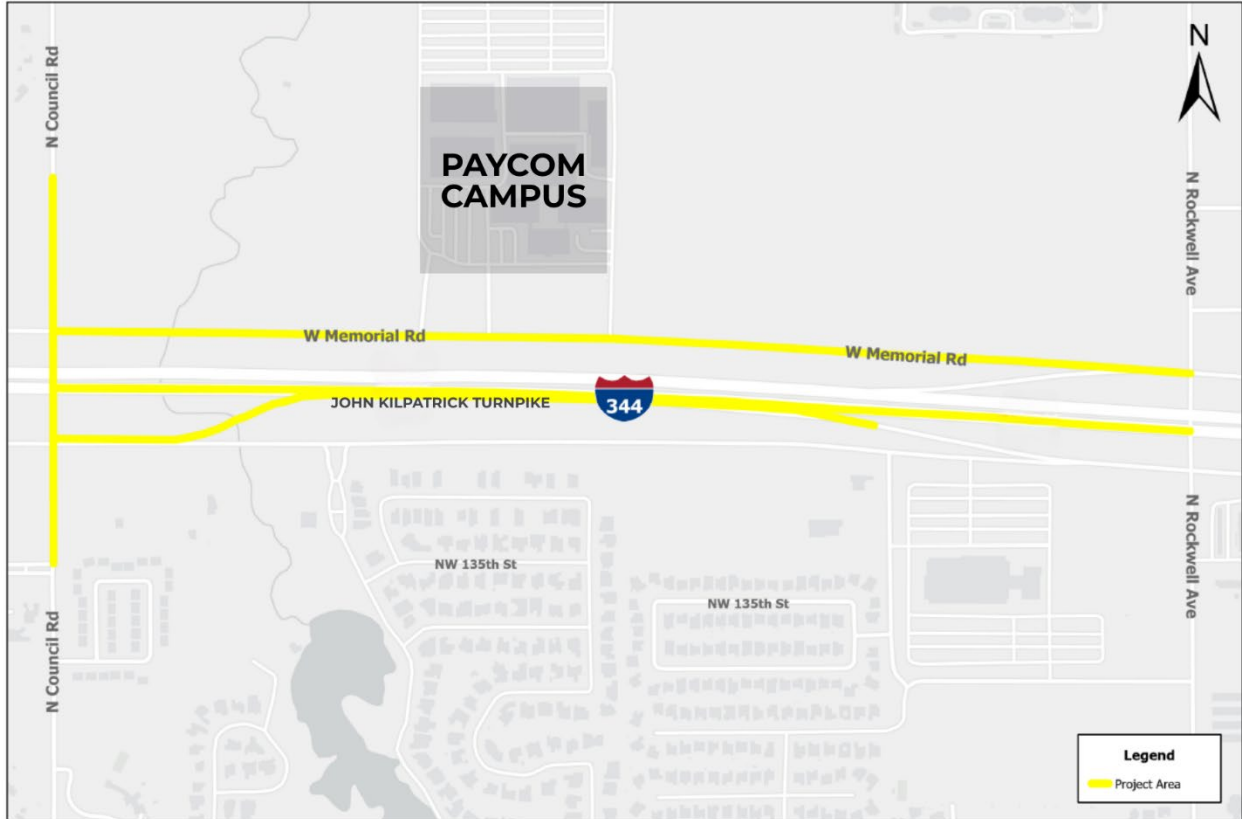
There were several challenges to safety, including when three of OTA's snowplow trucks were struck by motorists - two on the Will Rogers Turnpike in one incident and one on the Turner Turnpike. Thankfully no one was injured, however, these incidents were entirely avoidable. Smith encouraged motorists to remember the need to stay at least 200 feet away from OTA's equipment.

"These crashes, which cause major delays in transportation, are another example of why it is imperative that motorists give our plow operators the space they need (during inclement weather)," he said.

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A new turnpike interchange is expected to open in mid-March on I-44/Will Rogers Turnpike at Flint Road/E. 510 Road near Claremore. This will be the second new interchange opened on the turnpike system since the completion of cashless conversion in late 2024.



Council Interchange/Memorial Widening



Design work is underway on a new interchange on the I-344/John Kilpatrick Turnpike at County Line Rd. This project will widen the John Kilpatrick Turnpike to six lanes and in partnership with the City of Oklahoma City will widen westbound Memorial Road from two to three lanes between Council Road and Rockwell Avenue, add a turnaround bridge at Council Road and add a new eastbound ramp from Council Road to the John Kilpatrick Turnpike. Work is tentatively scheduled for spring 2026.