

# RTA ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS UPDATE

*Prepared by*

**Kimley»Horn**

*Prepared for*

**Regional Transportation  
Authority of Central Oklahoma**

**Board of Directors  
September 16, 2020**



# Introductions

# Agenda

- Project Team
- Firm Qualifications
- Project Understanding
- Our Philosophy, Approach, and Scope
- Open Discussion
- Closing Remarks

# The Project Team



# Project Management



## Liz Scanlon

- Former Director of Planning for Caltrain
- FTA funding and process expert
- Project development and community planning specialist



## Luke Schmidt, P.E., PTOE

- Dedicated to improving mobility options in Central OK
- Working relationships with local stakeholders and agencies
- Successful history with downtown areas in RTA member cities

# Our Leadership – Quality and Task Managers



**Kyle Keahey, AICP**

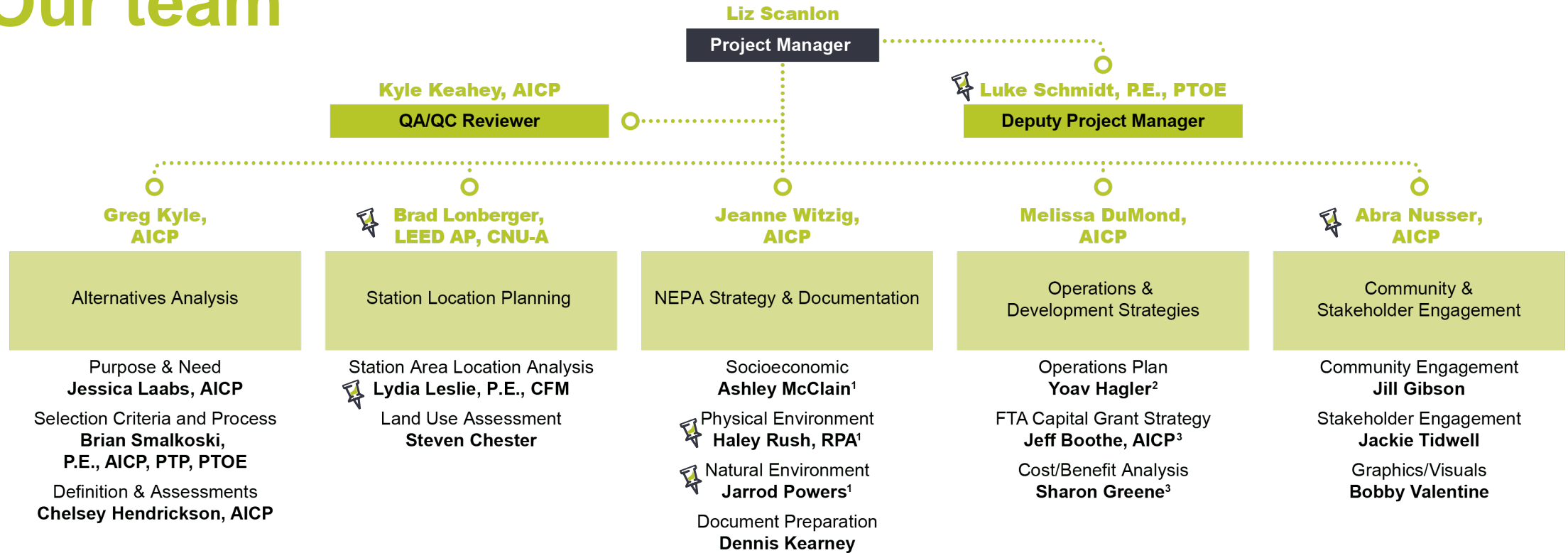
- Executed FTA Capital Investment Grants
- Longstanding relationships with FTA
- Advanced transit projects through project development stages from System Planning through NEPA



**Greg Kyle, AICP**

- Completed AA studies resulting in LPAs for commuter rail and streetcar
- Executed FTA Capital Investment Grants
- Advanced streetcar and commuter rail projects past AA phase through NEPA
- Successful site location analysis for stations and facilities

# Our team



## Resources and Toolbox

Rail Transit Senior Advisor  
**Paul Danielson, P.E.**

Conceptual Design  
**Zach Teague, P.E.**  
**Matt Gibson, P.E.**

Mapping & GIS  
**Madeline Cole<sup>1</sup>**

Freight Rail/FRA  
Regulatory Compliance  
**Corey Hill**

Transit Program  
Development  
**D.J. Baxter<sup>4</sup>**  
Capital Cost Estimates  
**Darren Adrian, P.E.**

Travel Demand Modeling  
**Rachel Copperman<sup>5</sup>**  
Corridor Right of Way  
Inventory  
**Adam Hinds, LS<sup>6</sup>**

## Local Team Members

### Subconsultants

- <sup>1</sup> Cox|McLain Environmental Consultants (Cox|McLain)
- <sup>2</sup> DB Engineering & Consulting USA Inc. (DB E&C)
- <sup>3</sup> InfraStrategies
- <sup>4</sup> Shields Obletz Johnsen (SOJ)
- <sup>5</sup> Cambridge Systematics (Cambridge)
- <sup>6</sup> Frontier Land Surveying (Frontier)

# Our Leadership – Task Managers



*NEPA Strategy & Documentation*  
**Jeanne Witzig, AICP**

30+ years of experience shepherding transit projects through the NEPA process, including several currently operational commuter rail lines



*Station Location Planning*  
**Brad Lonberger, CNU, LEED, AP**

Transit-oriented development expert with extensive land use, corridor redevelopment, community visioning and planning, and innovative financing experience



# Our Leadership – Task Managers



*Operations & Development Strategies*  
**Melissa DuMond**

Former FRA Southwest  
Regional Manager with  
extensive operations  
planning experience



*Community & Stakeholder Engagement*  
**Abra Nusser, AICP**

Experienced planner with  
award-winning community  
engagement strategies

# Strategic Teaming Partners



CAMBRIDGE  
SYSTEMATICS

*Travel demand modeling*

- FTA STOPS ridership model experts



*FTA CIG program and funding strategies*

- Jeff Boothe of InfraStrategies chairs the FTA Capital Investment Grants Working Group



*Operations planning*

- Currently contracted with BNSF providing operations planning

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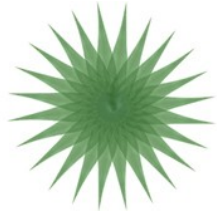
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*Planning and execution of transit projects*

- National streetcar specialists

# Local DBE Teaming Partners



**COX | McLAIN**  
**Environmental Consulting**

*NEPA strategy and documentation efforts*

- Transit NEPA Specialists

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**frontier**  
**LAND SURVEYING**

*Local survey partner*

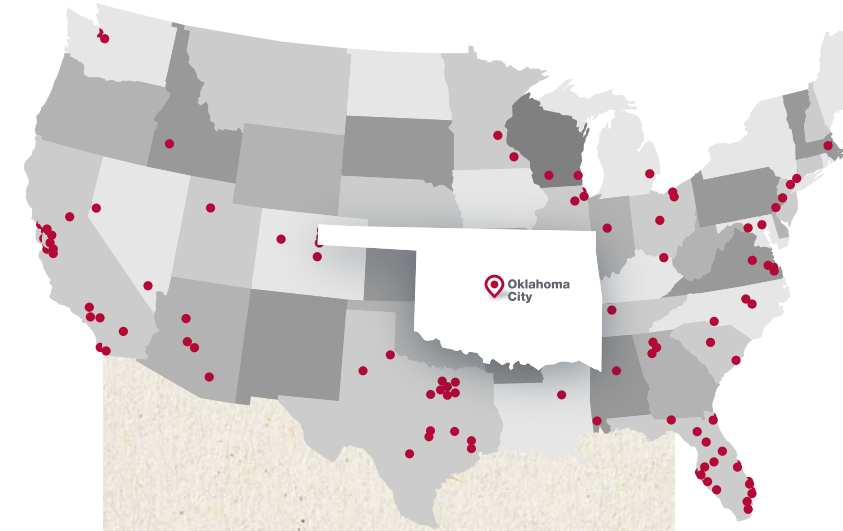
- BNSF ROW Survey experts with Santa Fe Depot experience

# Firm Qualifications



## About Kimley-Horn

- The right resources, when you need them
- Flexibility to adapt to your needs
- Client-centric approach of partnership and value
- Consistency in approach and quality



Founded in **1967**



**95+ Offices**  
Nationwide



**4,200 Professionals**  
Nationwide

## Proven Track Record

**\$9B** in Successful FTA Capital Investment Grant New and Small Starts Applications

**1,000+** Projects Involving Freight Rail Coordination

**500+** Transit, Planning, and Environmental Specialists Here to Serve You

**50+** Alternatives Analyses for Transit Projects

**25+** Former Transit Agency Staff Who Have Walked in Your Shoes

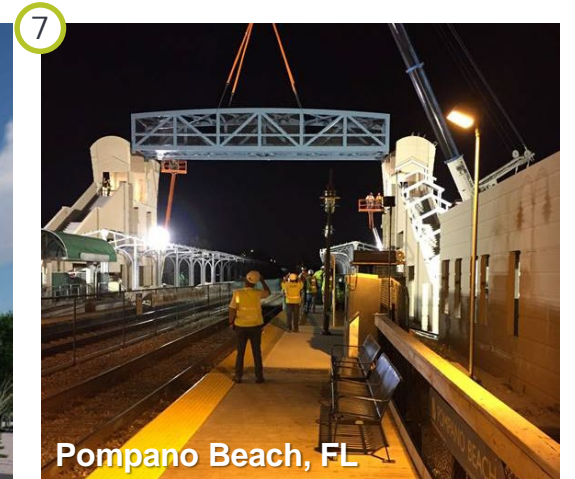
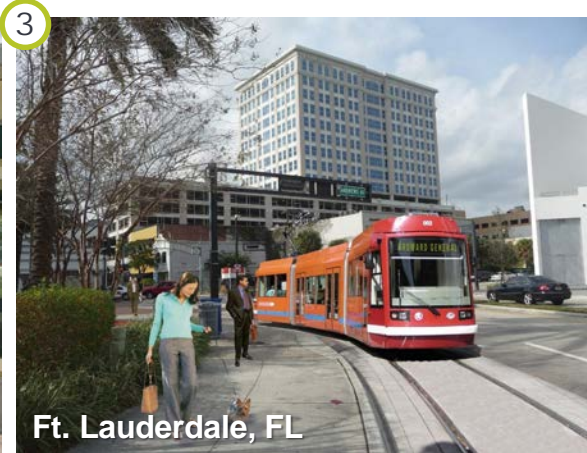
Extensive FRA Knowledge and Experience



Construction of Northstar Commuter Rail



# Our Experience

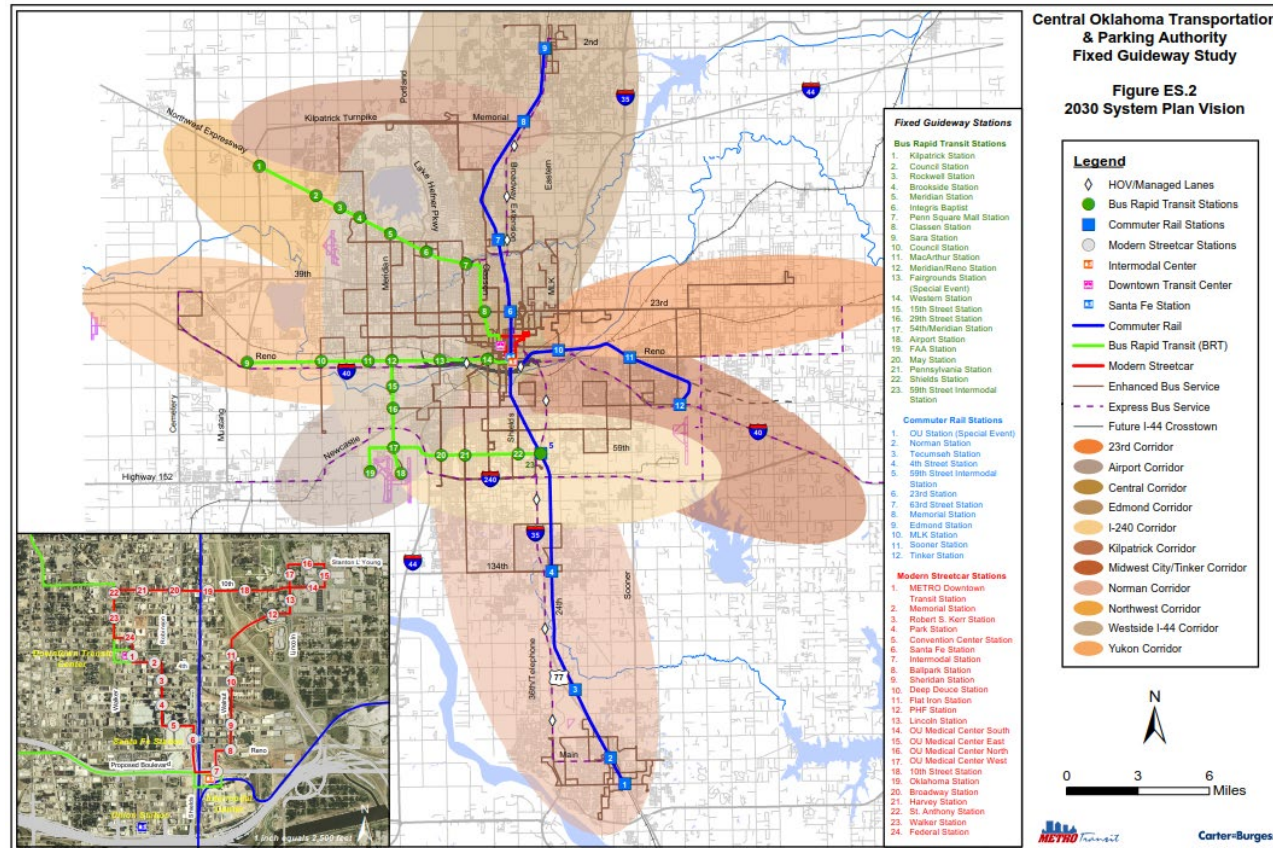


- 1 Downtown Parking Management Study
- 2 Northstar Commuter Rail
- 3 Wave Streetcar
- 4 Bicycle Master Plan
- 5 Northstar Commuter Rail Station
- 6 Omni Hotel
- 7 Pompano Beach Tri-Rail Station

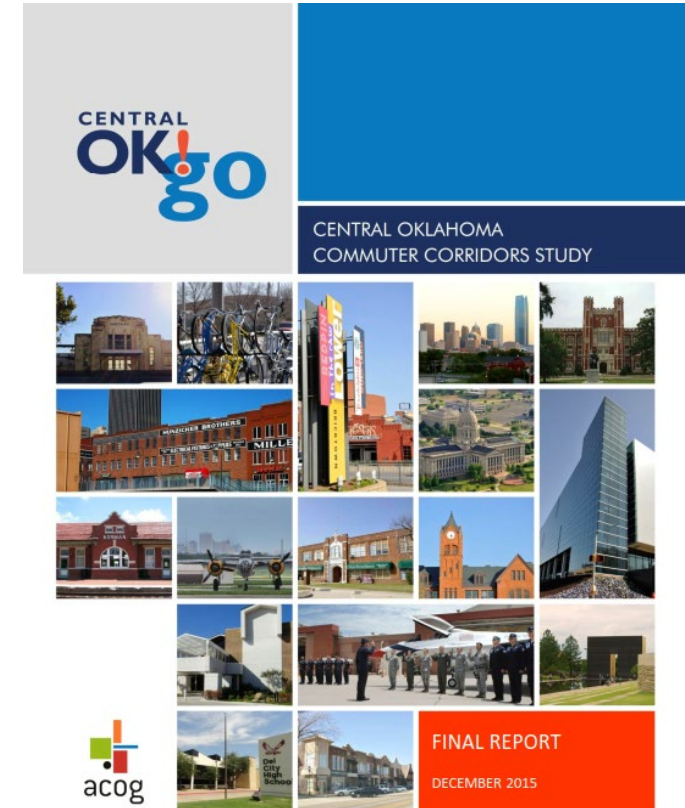
# Project Understanding



# Project Understanding



Fixed Guideway Study (2005)



CentralOK!go (2015)

## What's Changed?

- OKC Streetcar is BUILT!
- We have an RTA!
- Projects are advancing, e.g. Northwest BRT
- Walkable urban development is happening
- Construction costs have risen since 2015

# **Our Philosophy and Approach**

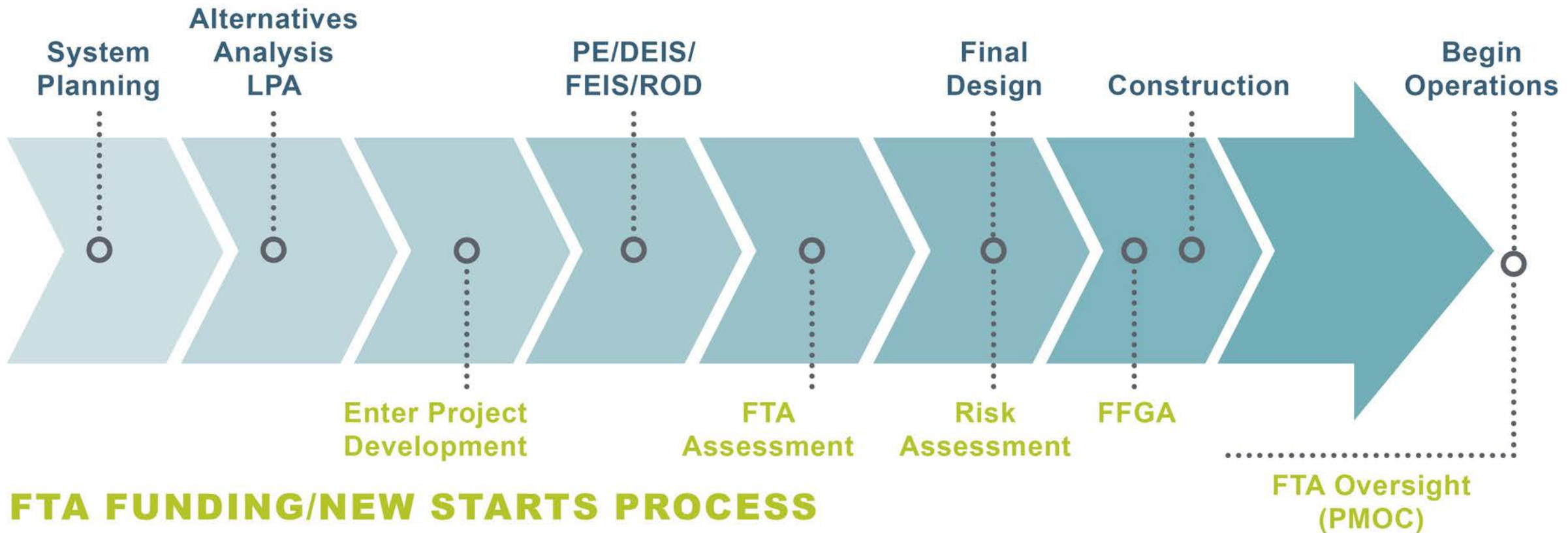
# Our Philosophy

- We begin with the end in mind –
  - How will the trains operate?
  - What is the passenger experience?
- We work with our clients to realize funding success (FTA-forward methodology)
- Data and evidence-driven project development
- Committed to the communities that we serve
  - Engagement is more than a checkbox. We spend a lot of time and energy on it
  - Have real conversations about benefits and trade-off's



# Project Lifecycle

## PLANNING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES



## FTA FUNDING/NEW STARTS PROCESS

# Multi-Year Process: What to Expect

**YEAR  
1**

**System Plan  
Focused  
Alternatives  
Analysis**

**Corridor Planning  
Stations and Land Use,  
Operations  
Concept  
Development**

**YEAR  
2**

**YEARS  
3&4**

**Initiate Environmental  
Review and Preliminary  
Engineering  
FTA Capital  
Investment Grant**

# Multi-Year Scope

# RTA Regional Rail System Plan

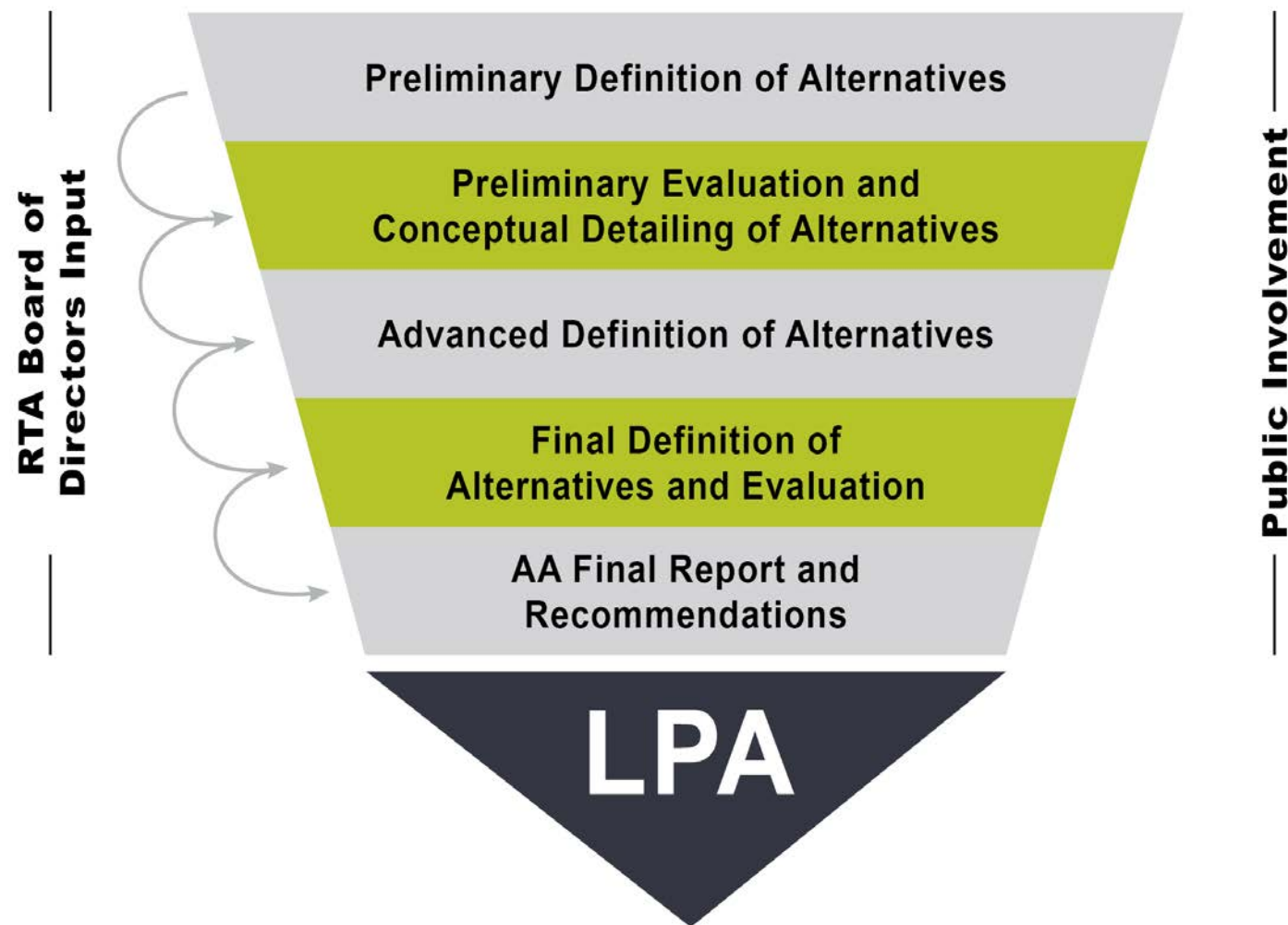
1. Assess prior work – Refresh, update and prioritize new tasks
2. Establish Goals & Objectives
3. Create a framework for Service Goals
4. Adopt a Plan and begin to establish priorities for investments
5. Work with ACOG to link with Long Range Transportation Plan



# Updated AA Process

1. Develop Purpose and Need Statement – refresh Goals & Objectives
2. Establish Evaluation Criteria: Qualitative and Quantitative
  1. Corridors
  2. Stations
  3. Modes
3. First Level Assessment – higher level screening
4. Second Level Assessment – more focused

# Selecting the Locally Preferred Alternative(s)



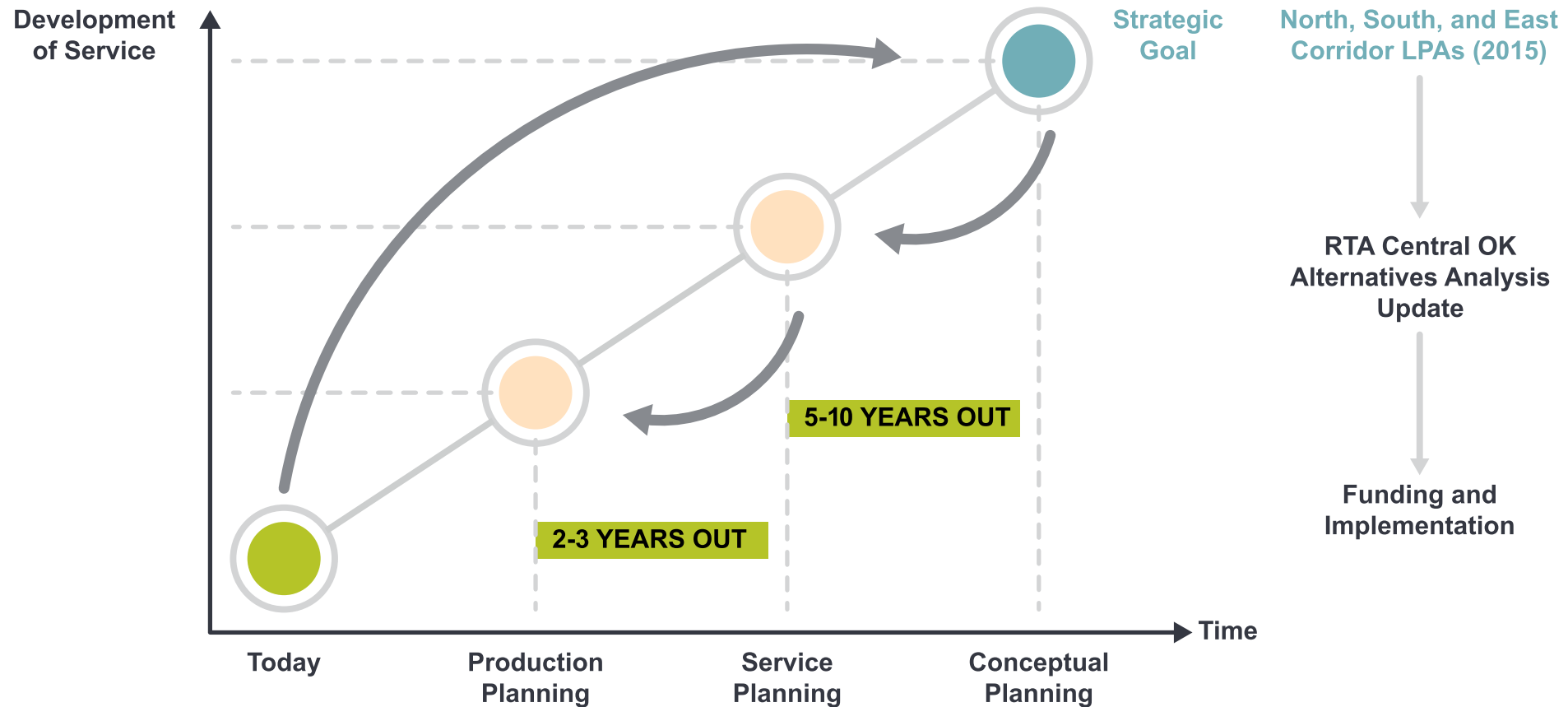
# Key Inputs for the updated AA

1. Travel Modeling
2. Land Use and Station Locations
3. Service Development Parameters
4. Qualitative and Quantitative Data:
  - Environmental considerations
  - Updated conceptual engineering and cost estimates
  - Community and Stakeholder Input
5. FTA Rating Criteria Elements



# Service Development

Service planning should be structured and strategic. Integrate service goals into the evaluation of alternatives.



## Station Area and Land Use

1. Analyze 2015 station locations: confirm, refine, and/or adjust
2. Collaborate with Service Development Planning
  - Leverage existing activity centers – Tinker, OU
3. Understand new development conditions and patterns
4. Evaluate land use opportunities to increase system ridership potential
5. Station Typology
  - Form and function, including surrounding development potential, role in each community, and resulting ridership and economic impacts

# Build on Previously Successful Engagement

“The process we have employed to determine the LPAs has been a logical and orderly approach to an otherwise complex task. I think the approach has allowed diverse needs, wants and desires to become alternatives that meet the needs of the largest portion of our citizenry.”

-- Victoria Caldwell, Councilmember, City of Edmond



“In this day and age when we can reach across oceans and connect with strangers through a single tweet, it only seems reasonable that we'd find new ways to help our citizens physically connect with their friends, family, jobs and interests. That's what this Commuter Corridor Study was all about – moving people throughout Central Oklahoma to the places they want and need to go.”

The study was a challenging undertaking as people from all areas of the metropolitan region came together to discuss plans and opportunities. I was privileged to represent the City of Oklahoma City. We support regional transit and have already made numerous investments to that end, from the downtown streetcar to the repurposing of the old Santa Fe Railroad Station. I'm grateful to have been a part of something so paramount to the economic health and quality of life of future generations of Oklahomans.”

-- Pete White, City Councilman, Oklahoma City Ward





# Key Engagement Components

- Transparent process
- Feedback aligns community priorities and goals
- Public Involvement Plan (PIP) leads to outcomes
- Develop digital and in-person engagement tools

## Transit-Ready Summit - May 2017

On May 25, 2017, the consultant team, in conjunction with TJCOG and Urban Land Institute, hosted an informational "Transit Ready Development Breakfast" to discuss market opportunities – and challenges – associated with the construction of the light rail line and related development activity. Topics discussed included real estate finance, market conditions and finance mechanisms to capture new tax revenues and other new resources that will result from investment in rail and subsequent development of walkable, mixed-use nodes at and around station areas.

This well attended forum was open to the public, with an audience that included a number of elected officials, municipal staff and members of the local real estate and banking community, all gathered to learn from local and national experts on transit oriented development. Some key takeaways from the day's speakers and panelists:

- Expansive growth in the region and a growing market for walkable, transit-oriented neighborhoods can be harnessed to spur economic development and tend to issues including quality of life, traffic congestion and affordable housing, throughout the region.
- Consensus on the market shift in the region from companies that sought low density, bucolic office parks in favor of more dense, mixed-use and walkable environments.
- The need for public investment and/or public-private partnerships, like American Tobacco, which would not have happened without the City of Durham's investment in the parking deck.
- The need to ensure zoning codes fit the needs of today's market, especially in regard to appropriate calibration for walkable and transit-served communities into the future.

Following the public event, a series of one-on-one and small group interviews were held between the consulting team and local members of the real estate development and finance communities. This was an opportunity to get a true sense of the challenges associated with developing throughout the Light Rail Corridor.



# Engagement Methods



Focus Groups (Specific People)

Collaborate



Workshops (Specific Groups)

Collaborate



Meetings (Standing Groups)

Collaborate and Receive Direction



Community Forums (Public Participation)

Collaborate



Open Houses (Public Participation)

Present Findings and Get Feedback



Social Media (Public Participation)

Inform and Collaborate

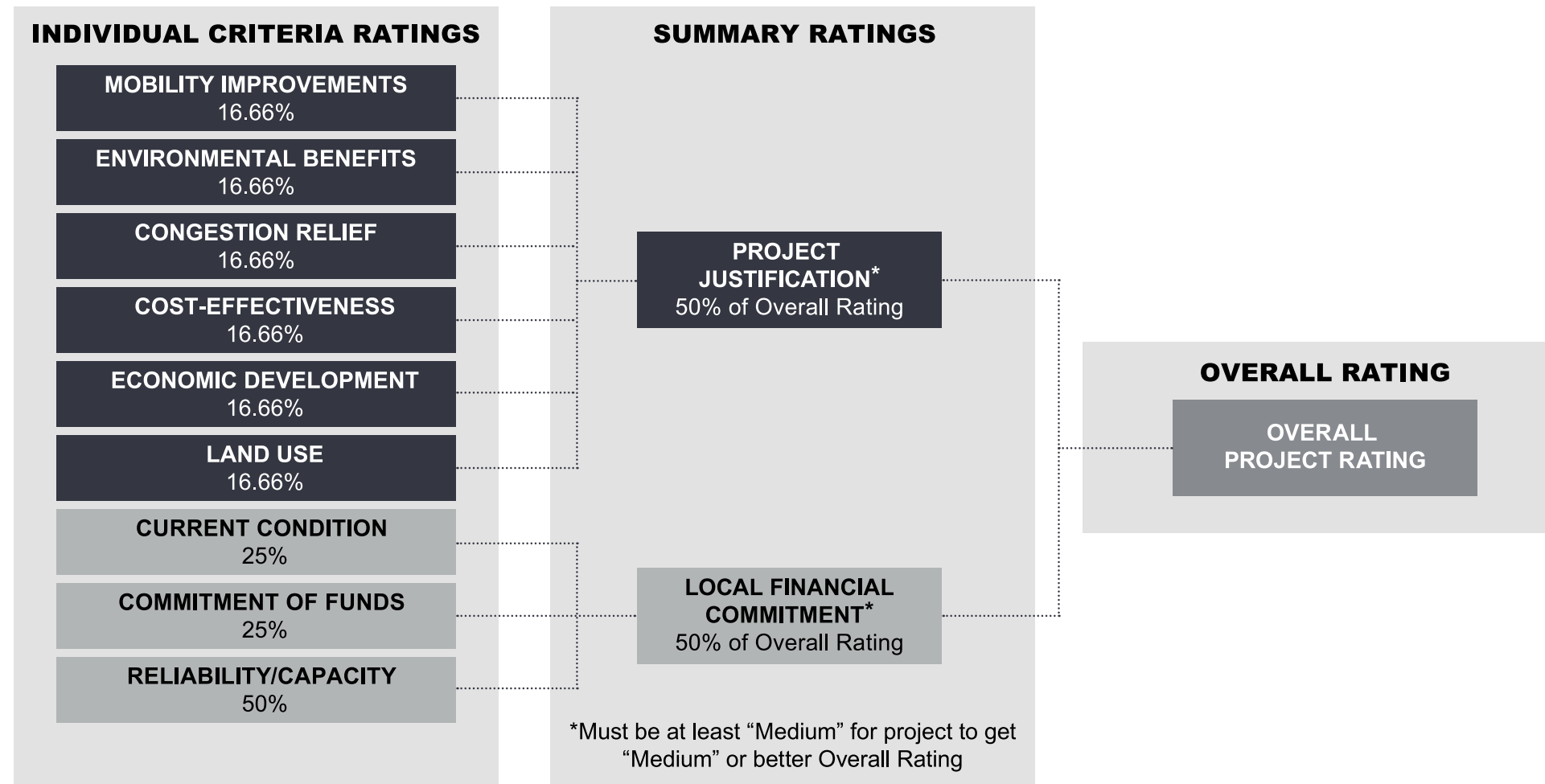


Project Website (Public Participation)

Inform and Collaborate

# FTA Project Development and Funding

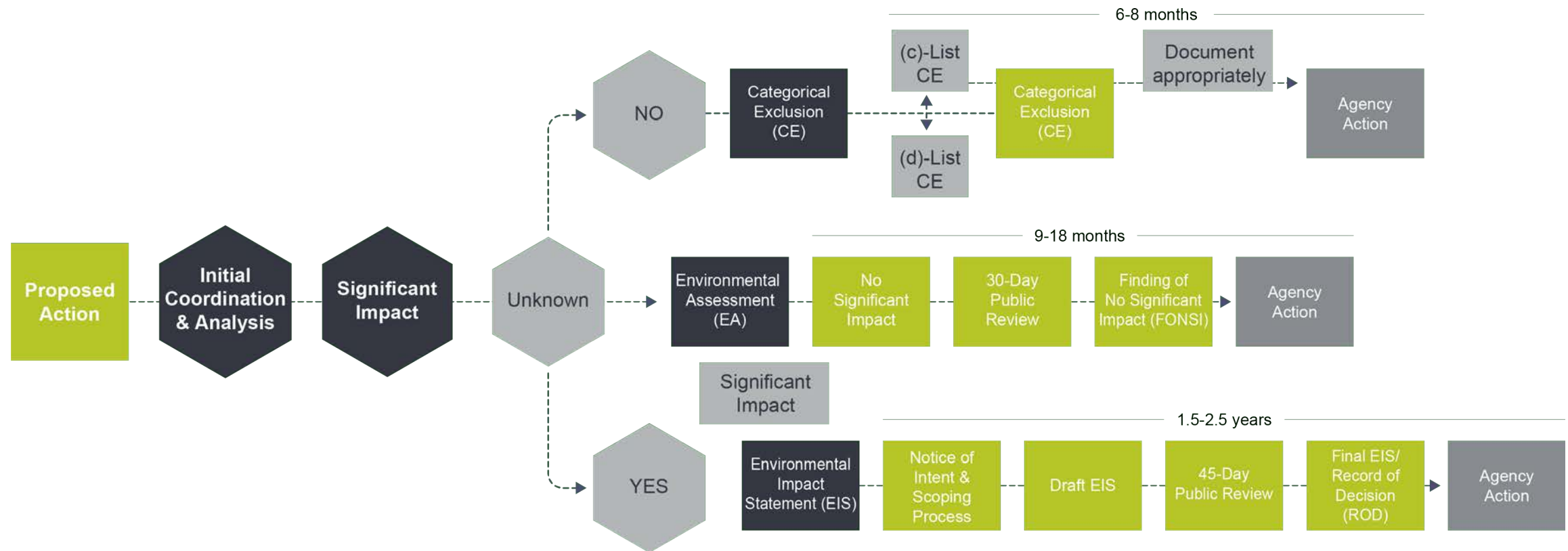
## New and Small Starts Project Evaluation and Rating under FAST Act





# Understanding the Environmental/NEPA Process

## NEPA CLASS OF ACTION DECISION TREE



# Risks, Challenges, Conflicts and Potential Mitigation

- KEY**
- Challenge
  - Constraint
  - Opportunity
  - Station Locations Identified 2015 Study

- 1 Areas along the BNSF right-of-way are narrow and close to nearby residential neighborhood. Mitigation measures like barriers, or sound dampening may be needed.
- 2 Multiple bridge crossings will need to be closely examined including proximity to the Kilpatrick Turnpike, I-44, and 36th Street.
- 3 Design solutions may be needed for the interface with the recent ODOT project that included a new rail truss.
- 4 Further exploration of the Classen Streetcar extension will be a significant opportunity to connect communities with new transit mode.
- 5 Opportunity for smart land use, transit and mobility connections which is viewed favorably by FTA CIG Rating Assessment.
- 6 Transit service to OK's largest employer is a significant opportunity, but interfaces with military installations create challenges that will need to be factored into the Project Schedule for NEPA and delivery.
- 7 Former Crossroads Mall is an opportunity site for future station and TOD.
- 8 BNSF Railyard could be shared use with new passenger rail.
- 9 Proximity to residences or sensitive areas may require mitigation.
- 10 Crossings and right-of-way constraints along the corridor may require creative design solutions such as Robinson Street.
- 11 Downtown Norman poses excellent land use and economic development opportunity and area for high ridership capture with employment centers such as OU.
- 12 Exploration of potential sites for maintenance facility within the corridor.

# Potential Risks

## Risk: Project Funding

- **Solution** – Diversification of funding sources
- **Solution** – Innovative funding or financing strategies

## Risk: Maintenance and Auxiliary Facilities

- **Solution** – Listen first, understand prior work, and operational impacts
- **Solution** – Site locations during service development and include capital cost into projects assumptions

## Risk: COVID-19 Impacting Project Pace

- **Solution** – Stay nimble and utilize digital tools

## Risk: Schedule Management

- **Solution** – Build time into the project schedule from the beginning
- **Solution** – Understand objectives early on and plan accordingly

# Potential Opportunities

## Opportunity: Leverage work done to date

- **Strength** – Build on what was done before us
- **Strength** – Learn from others and create the program of projects in Central OK

## Opportunity: Transit Oriented Development

- **Strength** – Exciting sites to explore
- **Strength** – Increase mobility choices across the region

## Opportunity: Building Consensus

- **Strength** – Serving major job centers to where people live
- **Strength** – Bring communities together
- **Strength** – Good planning and community support favorably viewed by FTA



# Look-Ahead: Upcoming Discussion Topics



TEAM INTRODUCTION, APPROACH, AND SCOPE



OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL RAIL SYSTEM PLAN

Why it's Important • How FTA Views System Planning • How it relates to ACOG Process



VIRTUAL CORRIDORS TOUR



REVISIT AND CONFIRM GOALS & OBJECTIVES



INTRODUCTION TO SERVICE GOALS

# Open Discussion

# Closing Remarks

**Thank you!**