



ISSUE BRIEFS

Town Hall Recommendations



*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*

Margaret Mead

IT IS 2032.
WHERE IN THE WORLD IS
OKLAHOMA?

The 2012 Oklahoma Academy Town Hall

It is 2032. Where in the world is Oklahoma?

The purpose of the 2012 Oklahoma Academy Town Hall was to evaluate the roles and relationships among the private sector (business), the public sector (government) and academia (education); to discuss their proper sizes and roles; and to determine how they might best collaborate to move Oklahoma into global prosperity by the year 2032.

After discussing the broad-ranging topics, their impact on Oklahoma and potential methods for implementing solutions, participants at the 2012 Town Hall developed an overall vision for Oklahoma and both short-term and long-term recommendations that are workable and optimistic.

In this document, you will find the prioritized recommendations - those recommendations deemed by Town Hall representatives as the most deserving of immediate attention and implementation. All the 2012 Town Hall recommendations are contained within the Final Report available at <http://okacademy.org/library.html>. While the prioritized recommendations will be given precedence, the Oklahoma Academy remains committed to the implementation of all Town Hall recommendations through community and legislative action.

From the Final Report:

“The Oklahoma of 2032 will unleash a new level of prosperity, community and economic development through improvements in education, innovation, job creation, public-private partnership and social transformation. The Oklahoma of 2032 will benefit from a diverse and robust economy, rich and healthy natural resources and strong families...As with previous visioning processes facilitated by the Oklahoma Academy, many of the recommendations included herein will become policy recommendations and some will become law. Ultimately, each one of us bears an obligation to implement these changes for a more prosperous, healthy Oklahoma.”

2012 Town Hall Participants: **Jane Abraham**, Oklahoma City; **Joe Alexander**, Stillwater; **Gordon Andersen**, Edmond; **Mike Ballard**, Oklahoma City; **Stephanie Beauchamp**, Oklahoma City; **Chris Benge**, Tulsa; **Phil Berkenbile**, Stillwater; **Roger Blais**, Tulsa; **Sarah Brewer**, Lawton; **Steve Buck**, Oklahoma City; **Mike Burdge**, Sand Springs; **Teresa Burkett**, Tulsa; **Brian Bush**, Oklahoma City; **Ron Bussert**, Tulsa; **Mary Jane Calvey**, Oklahoma City; **Brett Campbell**, Tulsa; **Donna Carter**, Tulsa; **William Carter**, Durant; **Terri Cleveland**, Broken Arrow; **Christopher Collins**, Chickasha; **Jerry Cook**, Tahlequah; **Christian Cox**, Edmond; **Terry Detrick**, Oklahoma City; **Michael Dicks**, Stillwater; **Nick Doctor**, Tulsa; **Ron Duggins**, Stillwater; **Judy Elliott**, Tulsa; **John Feaver**, Chickasha; **Michael Figgins**, Oklahoma City; **Amy Ford**, Durant; **Shawn Freie**, Fort Cobb; **Evan Fry**, Norman; **Phillip Gillham**, Enid; **Kay Goebel**, Oklahoma City; **Leigh Goodson**, Tulsa; **Bevan Graybill**, Oklahoma City; **Susan Hardy Brooks**, Oklahoma City; **John Harper**, Tulsa; **Claudean Harrison**, Lindsay; **Justin Hazzard**, Stillwater; **Alisa Hicklin Fryar**, Norman; **Kari Hoffhines**, Oklahoma City; **Theresa Hottel**, Oklahoma City; **Taber Hunt**, Tulsa; **Kelly Hurt**, Allen; **Aleisha Karjala**, Chickasha; **Brent Kisling**, Enid; **Gary Knight**, Oklahoma City; **Craig Knutson**, Oklahoma City; **Jeri Koehler**, Claremore; **Lou Kohlman**, Oklahoma City; **Terry Kordeliski**, Oklahoma City; **Steve Kreidler**, Edmond; **Crystal LaGrone**, Coweta; **Hope Lairson**, Oklahoma City; **Michael Lapolla**, Tulsa; **Randie Lee**, Tuttle; **Thomas Lewis**, Oklahoma City; **Greg Main**, Shawnee; **Pat Marshall**, Oklahoma City; **Scott Martin**, Oklahoma City; **Cheryl Matherly**, Tulsa; **Josh McClintock**, Oklahoma City; **Kara Joy McKee**, Oklahoma City; **Jerry McPeak**, Oklahoma City; **Jerry Moore**, Beggs; **Susan Neal**, Tulsa; **Michael Nealeigh**, Chickasha; **Homer Nicholson**, Ponca City; **Buddy Odom**, Lawton; **Leslie Osborn**, Mustang; **Todd Pauley**, Oklahoma City; **John Pearson**, Edmond; **Gene Perry**, Tulsa; **Bob Perry**, Shawnee; **J.T. Petherick**, Oklahoma City; **Anna Politano**, Oklahoma City; **Anita Poole Endsley**, Moore; **Dennis Portis**, Oklahoma City; **Ryan Posey**, Chickasha; **Daniel Pullin**, Norman; **Kelsey Quillian**, Oklahoma City; **Earlyne Reynolds**, Tulsa; **Jamaal Richardson**, Lawton; **Anne Roberts**, Oklahoma City; **Ross Robinson**, Norman; **Dennis Ruttman**, Fort Cobb; **Kimberly Sadler**, Stillwater; **Bud Scott**, Oklahoma City; **Lori Sears**, Tulsa; **Austin Slaymaker**, Oklahoma City; **Clark Southard**, Duncan; **Christopher Staine**, Oklahoma City; **Sheri Stickley**, Oklahoma City; **Shane Stuart**, Norman; **Marnie Taylor**, Oklahoma City; **Arun Tilak**, Lawton; **David Tillotson**, Tulsa; **Eric Turner**, Oklahoma City; **Robyn Undieme**, Tulsa; **Richard Wansley**, Tulsa; **Matthew Watson**, Chickasha; **Matthew Weaver**, Oklahoma City; **Demetra Wilkerson**, Durant; **Steve Wilson**, Tulsa; **Susan Winchester**, Chickasha; **Waldo Zerger**, Edmond; **April Zimmerman**, Durant

ISSUE BRIEF

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A 2012 Town Hall Prioritized Recommendation



Develop and Implement a Unified, Integrated PreK-20 Education System

Implement a Career Pathways methodology that integrates PreK-12, Career Technology and Training and Higher Education (both public and private) while horizontally meeting the needs of business and industry to provide Oklahoma with a homegrown workforce that is competitive in the global economy of the future.

A unified, integrated education system should encourage and include:

- Consistent academic and career counseling throughout the educational process
- Access to mentoring, internship and training opportunities with potential employers and vocational education
- Concurrent enrollment with Career Tech and higher education institutions with direct support from the private sector
- A continual learning model for the primary and secondary school calendar
- Comprehensive education combining STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) curriculum as well as critical thinking, problem solving and liberal arts education
- Consistent monitoring of academic progress, potential career placement, higher education focus and drop-out risk assessment using new software and technology

Additional Education Recommendations

- Develop a unified Oklahoma higher education model that encourages collaboration among the state's higher education institutions, regional universities and career technology centers. Include entities such as OCAST and i2E in the strategic development of a unified higher education model.
- To attract entrepreneurs, CareerTechs and regional colleges should collaborate on business incubators and innovation centers to focus resources on business development programs. When possible, collaboration should include immigrant students and foreign partners, the latter of which might be able to help with limitations related to the current visa requirements.

Oklahoma Academy History

Improving Oklahoma's education system has always been and will continue to be at the heart of the Oklahoma Academy's program of work. The 2009 Town Hall on Education and the 2011 Town Hall on Economic Development produced similar recommendations for a unified, integrated education model.

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Develop a Standardized Education Program for Health, Nutrition and Exercise

Oklahoma should develop a standardized education program for health, nutrition and exercise to teach young Oklahomans about life long healthy habits and healthy lifestyles.

A standardized health education program should encourage and include:

- Involvement in the development of health education curricula and extra-curricular activities from not only school officials and teachers but also from parents, health care providers and the community
- Meaningful physical education programs in every school's curriculum that teach children to exercise for at least 30 minutes every day and include activities and exercises they can do throughout life
- Healthy food options on menus and in vending machines for primary and secondary school aged students

Additional Health Recommendations

- Oklahoma should opt into the Medicaid expansion plan under the Affordable Care Act to improve primary and preventative care

Oklahoma Academy History

The statewide Certified Healthy Businesses, Schools, Campuses and Communities program (a collaboration among The Oklahoma Academy, the Oklahoma Department of Health, Oklahoma Turning Point and The State Chamber of Oklahoma) is an example of a Town Hall recommendation come to life. Originally a recommendation from the 2002 Town Hall on Oklahoma's health, in 2012 the Certified Healthy program recognized over 500 businesses, schools and communities dedicated to the importance of good health and its relationship to education and work productivity.

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Commit to Funding Maintenance and Development of Oklahoma's Infrastructure

Instrumental to maintaining and expanding Oklahoma's export industry is the infrastructure for transporting these products. Oklahoma must dedicate ample funding for the maintenance and construction of Oklahoma's roadways, bridges, railways, airports and navigable rivers to ensure continued growth in export and international trade, regardless of barriers for funding at the federal level.

Specifically, the state must address the deficiencies with the Port of Catoosa and the Kerr-McClellan Navigation System by implementing a plan for dredging, expanding and deepening the Port and the System, raising the bridges and relocating rail access to the Port.

Recommendations for addressing the infrastructure needs of the Port of Catoosa and Kerr-McClellan Navigation System include:

- Expand the powers of the Port Trust Authority to authorize them to address and assess regional transportation needs
- The State of Oklahoma, the State of Arkansas, the impacted tribal governments and the City of Tulsa could form a partnership to collaborate on the longterm maintenance and development of the Navigation System and its support infrastructure, initially conducting a return on investment study on a strategic plan for this system.

Additional Infrastructure Recommendations

- Form public-private partnerships to raise funds for infrastructure. In these partnerships, the public entity would transfer property rights to the private entity. The private entity would invest in infrastructure and sell use of the infrastructure. Once the private entity receives an agreed upon return on investment or after passage of a predetermined amount of time, the private entity would transfer the improved property back to the public entity.
- Develop a regional multi-modal public transportation system including the existing bus systems and a new high-speed passenger rail system connecting each of the metropolitan areas of Oklahoma to other metro areas in the region. The development of the high speed rail system should be done through public-private partnerships. The development of this intermodal system should incorporate existing technology to enhance its efficiency.

Oklahoma Academy History

In 1998, the Oklahoma Academy utilized a complete scenario thinking process to develop four plausible futures for Oklahoma by 2015. Recommendations included high-speed passenger rail and a major airport serving as a hub. Together high-speed rail and the airport would connect critical mass within the state and to other major cities across the nation.

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Abolish or Consolidate Current County Structure by 2032

The current 77 county system is antiquated, inefficient, ineffective and increases competition among municipalities and counties for resources. Oklahoma should encourage intergovernmental and interlocal cooperation to reduce the duplication and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of services such as jails, courts, schools, roads and administrative services.

Because consolidating the county structure will require a constitutional amendment, the Town Hall made suggestions for approaching and incentivizing regionalization over the next five years.

In the short-term, an approach to regionalization should be determined based on not only the current but predicted cultural and economic trends:

- Using a map of Oklahoma without existing county lines, identify the natural order and boundaries of population density, topography and economic activity in order to assist resulting regional structures in developing a common vision and creating a strategic plan.
- Encourage intergovernmental and interlocal cooperation in the provision of services. For example, encourage lawmakers to introduce legislation that allows municipalities to create fire districts, which require people in the district to pay a tax to support the service.

Oklahoma Academy History

The Oklahoma Academy has recommended and supported the consolidation of county governments since our "Better Government" competition in 1995.

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Enhance Oklahoma's Overall Business Climate

In Oklahoma, nearly 80% of the 1.6 million wage and salary jobs reside in the private sector. Our overall economy continues to out perform the US economy in terms of both output and income growth rates, and Oklahoma business optimism remains quite high. Yet, according to the FallinforBusiness.com survey, only half of respondents believe the regulatory climate is favorable.

To support and enhance Oklahoma's overall business climate:

- **Expand available venture capital** to Oklahoma companies utilizing regionalization, giving greater control and more choices to a region, and crowd funding, allowing individuals to contribute small amounts of capital to form large investment pools.*
- **Create an Oklahoma Opening Fund.** This fund should be initially created with annual funding of \$10 million (eventually increased to \$50 million) and used as a one-stop funding source for Oklahoma start-up and growing businesses. Companies accepting these funds would be required to stay in Oklahoma.
- **Establish a business start-up database.** In order to make it easier and more streamlined to start a new business, all agencies' permits, licensing requirements and forms should be accessible through a common statewide database or clearing house.
- **Review and, if necessary, revise or reform the tax structure.** The review of the tax structure should be conducted by a blue-ribbon panel formed by the governor. Tax reform should aim to achieve a tax structure that is conducive to growth, fair to all Oklahomans and provide adequate funding for Oklahoma's needs.*
- **Encourage collaboration between state agencies and tribal governments.** State agencies and tribal governments should create formal and informal relationships to consult on mutual interests, similar to Executive Order 13175. Each agency should be staffed with its own employee designated to work with the tribes. Further, the current tribal liaison position for Tribal Affairs should be made a cabinet level position.*
- **Consolidate all energy related agencies and commissions into a single Oklahoma Department of Energy** to effectively implement the Oklahoma Energy Plan. Agencies eligible for consolidation could include the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, The Oklahoma Department of Mines and the LP Gas Commission.

Additional Business Recommendations

- Partnerships with tribal governments and their economic development entities should be pursued as a means of expanding import and export opportunities, in addition to expanding Foreign Trade Zone business.

Oklahoma Academy History

*Similar recommendations have been made in previous Town Halls

You can download the Oklahoma Academy's two volume Town Hall Resource Book and the complete Final Report at <http://okacademy.org/library.html>

Prioritized Recommendations Inside

2012 Town Hall



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Moving Ideas Into Action