



RIVERSPORT™

Thursday, May 23, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

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RE: Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) Grant opportunity for **Bridging the Gap: New Multimodal Connections over the Oklahoma River**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the RIVERSPORT Foundation, I am writing to voice our organization's strong support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for the ATIIP Grant for Bridging the Gap: New Multimodal Connections over the Oklahoma River. This project is a marquis opportunity in the downtown core of Oklahoma City as the Oklahoma River has transformed into a vibrant hub for the Oklahoma City outdoor recreation as well as international rowing and canoe/kayak sporting events that have become transformational for our community.

As such, perhaps the most unique aspect of this new multimodal bridge project is the tremendous community impacts that the bridge will offer the Oklahoma City community. Since the I-35 bridges were built over three decades ago, the Oklahoma River has been dammed and is now host to elite international rowing and paddlesports events. It is the only river in the world that features stadium lighting for night racing. What was once a barren "ditch that divided Oklahoma City is now a gathering spot for the community and point of pride. Near the edge of the river is RIVERSPORT which is home to a wide array of programming that provides life-changing opportunities for all sectors of our community as well as being an official US Olympic and Paralympic Training Site allowing athletes to pursue their Olympic dreams on the Oklahoma River.

Along the edge of downtown Oklahoma City runs the scenic Oklahoma River, a 7-mile-long waterway and 13 miles of paved trails that has reinvented outdoor recreation in the capital city. The new bridge would provide a safer independent facility to provide non-vehicular access to amenities and the paved trails on both sides of the river. This will improve the access to 10 interconnected trails that cover over 80 miles and can take you to almost every point in Oklahoma City. This project includes connections to the First Americans Museum and the largely Hispanic Capitol Hill district and Historically Disadvantaged Community located on the south side of the Oklahoma River. This bridge will be a critical connector for RIVERSPORT and will allow RIVERSPORT to attract world championship events to Oklahoma City, dramatically elevating the quality of the venue while providing significant economic impact benefits to the surrounding community.

The RIVERSPORT Foundation strongly supports the New Multimodal Connections over the Oklahoma River Project in Oklahoma County for its vital contribution to the region, state and nation. We strongly urge your support of full funding for the project. Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to call on us should you have questions or if you require additional information.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Knopp
Executive Director



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