



**THE CITY OF  
OKLAHOMA CITY**

**Mayor David Holt**

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November 20, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
U.S. Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of The City of Oklahoma City I am writing to voice our city's strong support for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application to the Bridge Investment Program (BIP) to replace the Interstate 35 bridges over the Oklahoma River. Our city is a partner with ODOT on this high priority project in the downtown core of Oklahoma City. The Interstate 35 bridges are perilously close to becoming structurally deficient at any future bridge inspection. Unfortunately, three of the key inspection criteria currently carry a rating of 5 and if any of them drop to a rating of 4 then the bridges will be structurally deficient. That would be a devastating outcome for the nation's transportation system. This project would sustain the I-35 connection over the Oklahoma River, ensuring that this critical corridor continues to serve the nation's interstate highway system.

Interstate 35 in Oklahoma City intersects two other major east-west freight corridors, Interstate 40 and Interstate 44, making the I-35 bridges in Oklahoma City critical nodes at the crossroads of intercontinental travel, linking the west and east coasts to major urban areas throughout the country. The existing northbound and southbound I-35 bridges that cross the Oklahoma River do not meet the current and future demands of this high traffic interstate corridor. The two bridges in Oklahoma City see nearly 18,000 trucks per day and ODOT has identified the corridor as a freight bottleneck. Additionally, the highly diverse neighborhoods south of the river lack other connections to central Oklahoma City for access to healthcare, education, and employment.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of this I-35 bridge replacement project is the tremendous economic development opportunity that the bridge replacement offers our community and the United States sports world. Since these bridges were built over three decades ago, the Oklahoma River has emerged as one of the premiere rowing destinations in the world and is an official United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) training facility. It would be our intention that the design process for the new bridges will afford an opportunity to better accommodate these uses.

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This project also proposes to include the addition of a pedestrian bridge to provide multimodal access across the river. The City of Oklahoma City has committed to contribute to the pedestrian, bike, and scooter bridge. This would be a critical link in our city's trails system that now totals 100 miles.

Completion of this project would enhance safety, increase capacity for future generations, and allow for continued contributions to the national economy on multiple levels. Thank you for your consideration of ODOT's application for the Bridge Investment Program. Please feel free to contact me if you need any further assistance as you consider this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Holt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end of the name.

David Holt  
Mayor