

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 18, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We are pleased to write this letter in support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) program. This project would improve the connection of I-35 over the Oklahoma River, ensuring that this critical corridor will continue to serve the state and nation's interstate system.

Interstate 35 in Oklahoma City intersects two other major east-west freight corridors, I-40 and I-44, making the I-35 bridges in Oklahoma City critically located at the crossroads of intercontinental movement, 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 a highly travelled 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, neighborhoods south of the river lack connections to Central Oklahoma City for access to healthcare, education, and employment.

The project proposes to replace the two existing I-35 bridges over the Oklahoma River, including a ramp bridge connection, and the addition of a pedestrian bridge to provide multimodal access across the river. ODOT has secured commitments from the City of Oklahoma City to contribute to the pedestrian, bike, and scooter bridge. Completion of this project would provide safety for freight and pedestrians, increase capacity for future generations, and allow for continued contributions to the national economy.

Thank you in advance for your strong consideration of ODOT's application for the MPDG program. Please contact our offices if you need any further assistance as you consider this important proposal.

Sincerely,



James Lankford
United States Senator



Markwayne Mullin
United States Senator



Stephanie Bice
Member of Congress



Frank D. Lucas
Member of Congress



Josh Brecheen
Member of Congress



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

The Chickasaw Nation
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BILL ANOATUBBY
GOVERNOR

August 8, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
United State Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

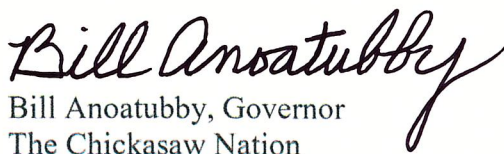
The Chickasaw Nation is pleased to support the Oklahoma Department of Transportation in its efforts to construct a signature bridge spanning the Oklahoma River on Interstate 35 near downtown Oklahoma City. The new span will serve as a visual touchstone the millions of travelers who pass through Oklahoma City at the intersection of Interstates 35 and 40, often referenced as the Crossroads of America.

The Chickasaw Nation recently broke ground on the OKANA Resort and Indoor Waterpark, a \$400 million resort-style destination adjacent to the recently opened First Americans Museum in the area where this bridge would stand. We believe the creation of a signature bridge crossing the Oklahoma River at this location will greatly enhance access to both our resort development and the museum.

As proposed, this bridge will serve as both a tangible and symbolic link between the numerous successful tourism attractions and businesses on the north side of the river, including the OKC Boat House District, Bricktown entertainment area, and Oklahoma City's new convention center, and the historically economically depressed communities along the south bank of the Oklahoma River that our OKANA development seeks to uplift. Additionally, this project will significantly expand cooperation between private, city, state, tribal, and federal partners while serving as an integral part of Oklahoma City transportation infrastructure.

Thank you for your time and attention. It is our sincere hope the project will receive favorable consideration for available federal funding opportunities.

Sincerely,


Bill Anoatubby, Governor
The Chickasaw Nation

August 17, 2023

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

RE: **Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River**

Honorable Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG), I am writing to support the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) 2023/2024 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) application for Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River.

This project proposes to replace the existing two I-35 bridges over the Oklahoma River, including a ramp bridge connection. This new and improved facility would provide additional safety, opportunities for more efficient freight movement, and a positive economic impact. With over 145,000 vehicles a day using this NHS, STRAHNET, NHFN facility, the added capacity will provide a safer option for all vehicles. This proposed project will provide better access for freight vehicles to the I-40 and I-44 corridors.

Additionally, a separate pedestrian bridge is proposed with the project to provide safe multimodal connections from the Capital Hill District, located on the south side of the river, to downtown. The City of Oklahoma City is partnering on this project and will be committing funds toward the pedestrian bridge. ODOT and the City continue to develop management plans for the future pedestrian bridge that will provide additional connectivity to the extensive trail system along the river and the regional system.

The Oklahoma River, adjacent to downtown Oklahoma City, is a major recreational area and is designated as a US Olympic and Paralympic Training Site. This project location also falls within a HUD Opportunity Zone and an Empowerment Zone.

ACOG supports this project for its vital contribution to the region, state, and nation. We strongly urge your support for 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,



Mark W. Sweeney, AICP
Executive Director



**THE CITY OF
OKLAHOMA CITY**

Mayor David Holt

200 N Walker, 3rd Floor
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

ph 405/297-2424
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August 15, 2023

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

RE: Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River

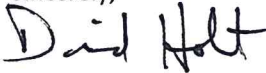
Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the City of Oklahoma City, I am writing to voice our strong support for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River. Our City is a partner with ODOT on this vital and prominent project in the downtown core of Oklahoma City. These Interstate 35 bridges are part of a highway that links the North American continent, and they are perilously close to becoming structurally deficient at any future bridge inspection. Right now, 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.

Though a vital linkage for our nation and our city, these bridges also have a unique standing in our community as they span River that has emerged as one of the global hubs for rowing and other paddlesports. Since these bridges were built over three decades ago, the people of Oklahoma City taxed themselves to place dams on the Oklahoma River. This was followed by further public and private investment that has led to a venue that is now internationally known and plays host regularly to elite international rowing, canoe and paddlesport events. Adjacent to the River is also now the RiverSport complex, which includes one of the premiere whitewater venues in the world. Collectively, this area is an official Olympic training facility.

This section of the Oklahoma River is also home to 13 miles of paved trails that have reinvented outdoor recreation in our capital city. A pedestrian bridge element to a reconstructed and reimagined I-35 crossing will provide access to those trails and provide unique and needed access to the largely Hispanic Capitol Hill district and Historically Disadvantaged Community located on the south side of the Oklahoma River.

We strongly support the I-35 Bridge Replacement and Trail Connections over the Oklahoma River for their 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 me should you have questions or if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

David Holt
Mayor



August 1, 2023

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

Dear Mr. Secretary,

First Americans Museum (FAM) is happy to support the effort by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to create a signature bridge near downtown Oklahoma City. FAM opened in September 2021 and has received over 200,000 visitors from all 50 states and over 30 countries. A signature bridge crossing the Oklahoma River will allow more access to the museum and the development district being built adjacent to the museum. It will also benefit the greater Oklahoma City community.

Creating another iconic landmark in the Oklahoma City metro area helps create a unique sense of place. The bridge has the power of becoming recognizable at a central and important intersection. Enhancing access to many attractions and businesses near the river will have significant and positive impact on the economic development all along the waterfront, including the OKC Boat House District, Skybridge Park, Bricktown and Deep Deuce.

First Americans Museum welcomes and supports the Oklahoma City signature bridge project. Please feel free to reach out to discuss any concerns or questions associated with this important new addition to the OKC metro landscape.

Sincerely,

CEO & Executive Director





RIVERSPORT™

Thursday, August 10, 2023

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Michael J. Knopp

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Ann Lacy

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

RE: Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River

Honorable Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of RIVERSPORT, I am writing to support the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) 2023/2024 MPDG application for Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of this I-35 bridge replacement project is the tremendous impacts that the bridge replacement will offer to the Oklahoma City community. Since these bridges were built over three decades ago, the Oklahoma River, which previously existed as a barren dividing line in our community, has been dammed and is now host to elite national rowing races and features the world class Boathouse District and RIVERSPORT community programming. The Boathouse District spans the north bank of the Oklahoma River just west of the I-35 bridges and is home to US Olympic and Paralympic Team training and ever-growing community programming to get people on the water.

The current I-35 bridges have 10 piers in the Oklahoma River which limits the racing from being classified at the highest level which would enable international competition or NCAA rowing events. A primary goal of major stakeholders in this project is that the new I-35 bridge have no piers in the race lanes and span the race course portion of the Oklahoma River while also including a pedestrian component. This brings additional cost to the project but it is paramount that this is the design to support the tremendous investment the community stakeholders have made in and along the Oklahoma River.

We believe this bridge project poses an important opportunity for pedestrian connectivity between the north and south sides of the river. With the First Americans Museum now open on the south bank, as well as OKANA resort now



U.S. OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC
TRAINING SITE
RIVERSPORT OKLAHOMA CITY

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RIVERSPORT™

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Ronnie Irani

Ann Lacy

Tom McDaniel

under construction, we see this bridge a key connector between RIVERSPORT and the cultural and lodging destinations along the south bank. It will also further our ongoing efforts to improve health and wellness by encouraging use of our growing trail system while providing an ideal spot to view races, overlooking the world's only lighted rowing course.

Over \$120 million has been invested in RIVERSPORT facilities through a multi-year public/private effort and has become a true landmark at the Crossroads of America. RIVERSPORT is a nonprofit organization with a mission to inspire excellence, enhance communities, and change lives through Olympic sports and outdoor urban adventures.

RIVERSPORT supports this project 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



U.S. OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC
TRAINING SITE
RIVERSPORT OKLAHOMA CITY

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Friday, August 11, 2023

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

RE: Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River

Honorable Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA) dba EMBARK, I am writing to voice our organization's strong support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) 2023/2024 MPDG application for Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River.

This project proposes to replace the existing two I-35 Bridges over the Oklahoma River, including a ramp bridge connection. Collisions on the existing bridges are equivalent to 1.2 collisions per day over 10 years and have included some pedestrians and cyclists even though pedestrians and cyclists are prohibited from utilizing interstate facilities.

In Oklahoma City, I-35 intersects other major east-west freight corridors, I-40 and I-44, and thus the I-35 bridge in Oklahoma City is critically located at the crossroads of intercontinental goods movement. It links west and east coast ports to major urban areas throughout the country and it is the largest single North-South truck freight corridor in the Central United States. The Project location is on a segment of I-35 that has been identified as a freight bottleneck in the Oklahoma Freight Transportation Plan. The new I-35 bridges are anticipated to reduce congestion and improve reliability for freight movement.

Additionally, a separate pedestrian bridge is proposed with the project to provide safe multimodal connections from the Capital Hill district located on the south side of the river. Adding a new multimodal path across the Oklahoma River will protect non-motorized travelers from safety risks. The City of Oklahoma City is partnering on this project and will be committing funds toward the pedestrian bridge. ODOT and the City continue to develop management plans for a pedestrian bridge.

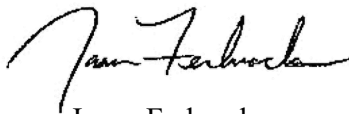
Along the edge of downtown Oklahoma City runs the scenic Oklahoma River, a 7-mile-long waterway, and 13 miles of paved trails that have reinvented outdoor recreation in the capital city. Access to the paved trails on both sides of the river will be provided by the pedestrian bridge. This will improve multimodal access to 10 interconnected trails that cover over 80 miles and take you to almost every point in within Oklahoma City. This Project location is in within a HUD Opportunity Zone and within an Oklahoma City Empowerment Zones and will provide a much-

needed local connection for the nearby poorly connected or disconnected urban neighborhoods. Over 20 percent of households near the Project area do not have access to a vehicle and therefore can't safely utilize the existing I-35 bridge crossing nearest their homes to access jobs, education, healthcare, and other opportunities in central Oklahoma City by non-motorized means.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of this I-35 bridge replacement project is the tremendous community impact that the bridge replacement will offer the Oklahoma City community. Since these bridges were built over three decades ago, the Oklahoma River has been dammed and is now host to elite national rowing races. In addition, near the edge of the river is the new Riverport Complex which is home to US Olympic Team training. The 2028 Summer Olympic Committee is considering including Riversport OKC as a candidate to host some 2028 events. The proposed pedestrian connection will provide the multimodal connection needed to continue to host such international events.

EMBARK supports this project 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Ferbrache". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "F".

Jason Ferbrache
Director
EMBARK



August 14, 2023

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

RE: Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River

Honorable Secretary Buttigieg:

As chairman of the Oklahoma City Riverfront Redevelopment Authority (“OCRRA”), I am writing to support the Oklahoma Department of Transportation’s application for a 2023/2024 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant for ***Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River (“Project”)***. OCRRA is the public trust that manages the Oklahoma River property.

The Project involves replacing the I-35 bridges over the Oklahoma River and adding or improving related pedestrian and trail connections—including a new, multimodal path across the river. Since the existing infrastructure will soon be functionally obsolete, the Project will help meet travel needs along this important interstate corridor for many years to come.

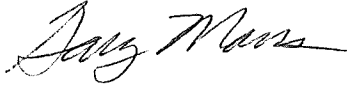
The redesigned and updated bridges and paths will provide greater safety for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. The new, multimodal travel options will also allow residents in surrounding neighborhoods to better access jobs, education, healthcare, and other opportunities throughout central Oklahoma City.

The Project will ease travel and support commerce by facilitating the efficient transport of goods along one of America’s most significant trucking corridors. In addition, the multimodal trail connections may lead to better health outcomes through added walking and biking access points to Oklahoma City’s trail system, including to the paved trails along both sides of the Oklahoma River.

The Project will also improve multimodal access to the Boathouse District, which is an official U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Training site and routinely hosts elite paddle sport events attracting athletes and spectators from across the country and around the world.

For these reasons, the Project has the potential to vitally contribute to the state, region, and nation. Therefore, I urge that it be fully funded. Thank you for your consideration. Please contact us if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary Marris".

Gary Marris, Chairman
Oklahoma City Riverfront Redevelopment Authority

- c: Aubrey McDermid, OCRRA Surrogate General Manager
Melinda McMillan-Miller, OCRRA Surrogate General Manager
Jerod Beatty, Assistant Municipal Counselor



Wednesday, August 16, 2023

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

RE: Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River

Honorable Secretary Buttigieg:

As the “*voice of trucking*” in Oklahoma, we represent the unified interest of our member companies that literally have a front row seat to the needs of infrastructure across our state. Having polled our members, the Oklahoma Trucking Association, believes this project meets the desired goals state for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) 2023/2024 MPDG application for Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River.

As “*the voice of trucking*” safety is imperative to the industry, and we believe the following to be beneficial: Adding a new multimodal path across the Oklahoma River will protect non-motorized travelers from safety risks. Providing wider shoulders and increasing the number of travel lanes on the proposed bridges will greatly improve safety for motorized travelers. Collisions on the existing bridge are equivalent to 1.2 collisions per day over 10 years. These collisions included some pedestrians and cyclists even though pedestrians and cyclists are prohibited from utilizing interstate facilities.

The Oklahoma Trucking Association strongly supports this project for its vital contribution to the region, state and nation. We 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,

Jim Newport
CEO/President
Oklahoma Trucking Association

Zac Kannady
Chairman

Mario Archaga
First Vice Chairman

Bobby Smith
Second Vice Chairman

Jim Newport
President & CEO



OKLAHOMA TECHNOLOGY & MAINTENANCE COUNCIL
COUNCIL OF OKLAHOMA TRUCKING ASSOCIATION

OKLAHOMA SAFETY & SECURITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL OF OKLAHOMA TRUCKING ASSOCIATION