



**OKLAHOMA**  
Transportation



# Hochatown Community Access and Pedestrian Safety Project

## *Project Readiness*

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**FY23 MPD GRANT APPLICATION**

**MPD Grant Request: \$20 million**

## 1. Project Readiness

This section provides an overview of the project readiness of the Hochatown Community Access and Pedestrian Safety Project (Project).

### 1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL RISK

A Reconnaissance Data Collection Report was developed in May 2021 for ODOT to review the potential environmental constraints on the project area. Some of the constraints include potential impacts to streams and wetlands, protected species and habitats, the Hochatown Cemetery, federal properties, and Choctaw tribal ownership. ODOT does not anticipate any major challenges or risks associated with the Project resulting in a clear and concise schedule. This Project is expected to receive a categorical exclusion (CE) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act indicating it will not have a significant effect on the human environment.

#### 1.1.1 DETAILED PROJECT SCHEDULE

ODOT has proposed an aggressive schedule to complete the Hochatown project as shown in Figure 1. The initial design began in the early months of 2023, and preliminary engineering plans and estimates are currently being reviewed by ODOT staff. Completion of 65 percent engineering plans and estimates are scheduled for December 2023 followed by the completion of environmental review by March 2024. Relocating and modifying utilities will be completed by August 2024, and final plans, specifications, and estimates and project permitting will be completed six months later. Construction bid letting is targeted for August 2024 and construction will commence in December 2024. The Project is anticipated to be completed and fully operational by May 2026.

**Figure 1. Project Schedule**

Project Tasks	2023				2024				2025				2026											
	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL
Finalize Preliminary Engineering	█																							
Preliminary Design Plans	█																							
Environmental Review					█																			
Right-Way & Utilities					█																			
Final Design Plans					█																			
404 Permit					█																			
Final PS&E Plans									█															
Construction Letting Process									█															
Construction													█											

✓ - Project Opening

Based on this timeframe and sequence of events, ODOT can complete this project before the initial grant funds obligation date of September 30, 2026. ODOT is committed to improving safety and operational performance by establishing a project schedule that gives the Hochatown area immediate relief from the issues they are currently experiencing.

### 1.1.2 REQUIRED APPROVALS

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS AND REVIEWS

ODOT capital projects demonstrate receipt of all environmental approvals and permits necessary for the project to proceed to construction on the timeline specified. The aggressive design schedule and accompanying environmental review schedule will be documented and completed well in advance of the final plans and start of construction.

This Project is expected to receive a categorical exclusion (CE) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act indicating it will not have a significant effect on the human environment.

#### PERMITTING

This Project is expected to fall under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Section 404 Nationwide Permit 14. Work will be within ODOT right-of-way (ROW), and it is not anticipated to require an individual permit. Also, ODOT has agency liaisons at the USACE, who will accelerate and improve the consistency of permitting reviews for approval.

#### RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

Relocations and ROW acquisitions will not be required for the Project. The US-259 corridor has at least 65 feet of ROW from the roadway's centerline, with some variations in offset reaching 130 feet. This large right-of-way footprint minimizes the typical challenges associated with construction project impacts to residential and commercial property.

Use of retaining walls, rural curb and gutter, drainage structures, and access management will be considered throughout the design of the project to resolve potential issues around right-of-way constraints along US-259.

#### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

ODOT has held multiple community outreach events to engage the public on the proposed Project. The first public event was held on October 27, 2022, at the Broken Bow Senior High School auditorium in the town of Broken Bow that included a presentation detailing a brief background, and a description of existing conditions in the Project area, Project goals, interim improvements, current operational traffic volumes, and the findings of the level of service analysis.

ODOT hosted another open forum in Broken Bow on May 16, 2023, to receive community feedback on the decision-making process. This meeting delivered new data and information on the suggested safety improvements intended to address the concerns resulting from the substantial growth of tourism and new development (see Figure 2). ODOT will continue to stress stakeholder engagement and will continue to engage the community throughout the Project development process with additional community forums scheduled for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.



**Figure 2. Project Visualization Video Presented During Public Meeting**



## STATE AND LOCAL APPROVALS

The Project is currently programmed in ODOT's Eight-Year Construction Work Plan (CWP). In fact, the Project is also included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) which incorporates the first four years of ODOT's Eight-Year CWP. The Project has widespread community support. All letters of support are provided in the Appendix of this application.

## FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS AFFECTING STATE AND LOCAL PLANNING

The Project is along a designated high-truck-volume corridor. ODOT recognizes high-truck-volume corridors as crucial to the movement of goods. Identifying these corridors allows ODOT to focus its investment, maintenance activities, and enforcement efforts.

### 1.1.3 ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT RISKS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Potential risks and mitigation strategies to minimize the potential impact of those risks are summarized in Table 1. ODOT will continue to evaluate the potential project risks and adjust the mitigation strategies as coordination and design advance.

**Table 1. Project Risk and Mitigation Strategies**

Project Risk (Probability of Occurrence)	Mitigation Strategies
Cost Increases (Moderate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ODOT has included the project in its Eight-Year CWP and remains committed to adjusting as needed to meet all Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant and statutory deadlines for funding obligation and expenditure.</li> <li>▪ ODOT's construction estimates will contain a 20 percent contingency allowing for a margin of increase.</li> </ul>
Public Consensus (Low)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ODOT will continue its close coordination with the community as design advances.</li> <li>▪ ODOT will acknowledge the public's support of the purpose and need of the Project to improve safety, and provide additional connectivity and mobility, which will benefit the local community and tourists.</li> <li>▪ ODOT will finalize scope details to address stakeholder and community concerns and incorporate public comments.</li> </ul>
Utility Relocation and Right-of-Way—Acquisition (Low)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ODOT will engage with residents and business owners to effectively address right-of-way challenges as the project progresses.</li> <li>▪ ODOT will continue to collaborate with the community to develop creative, community-driven solutions to meet the needs of roadway users and protect Hochatown's thriving business and economic growth.</li> </ul>

## 1.2 TECHNICAL CAPACITY

As the project sponsor, the ODOT has decades of experience with receipt and expenditure of federal transportation funds, and a long history of delivering projects of a similar level. ODOT is committed to improving traffic conditions and safety on Oklahoma bridges and roads. ODOT obligates all required construction funding prior to advertising a project for construction and again prior to awarding a contract for construction. In addition, ODOT has consistently seen a contract growth of less than 3%, which is covered by other formulas federal funds or Oklahoma State Rebuilding Oklahoma Access and Driver Safety (ROADS) funds. Additionally, this Project will align with ODOT's progress to date of addressing safety and capacity improvements.

ODOT manages a large portfolio of federal funds that are programmed within the ODOT Eight-Year CWP. This \$8.4 billion program, which annually re-prioritizes projects based on available state and federal appropriations, is currently 55% federally funded. Specific to competitive federal grant funding, ODOT has experience with multiple large infrastructure projects funded in part by the U.S. Department of Transportation, such as the INFRA, RAISE, BUILD, CHBP, and TIGER grant programs. ODOT has a successful history of partnering with other agencies including local governments and tribal nations to complete projects.