



OKLAHOMA
Transportation



Hochatown Community Access and Pedestrian Safety Project

Project Requirements

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MPDG Request: \$30 million

1. Rural Project Requirements

This document references Section C, "Eligibility Information," for further information to be described. For a rural project to be selected, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) must determine that the project meets five requirements described in 23 *United States Code* § 173(g) and in the following numbered requirements, and further described in Section D.2.vii and Section E.1.v.b as it appears in the notice of funding opportunity.

Rural Project Requirement #1: The project will generate regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits.

The Hochatown Community Access and Pedestrian Safety Project (Project) will have a significant positive impact on the regional economy, improve overall mobility and accessibility, and increase safety for the community. The US Highway 259 (US 259) corridor through Hochatown experiences traffic collision rates that are 3 times higher than the statewide average. Project elements, such as the dedicated center turning lane and the installation of street and permanent traffic lighting, will reduce the risk of vehicular crashes by 34%. The Project will also protect nonmotorized travelers and communities from safety risks by constructing crossing improvements, installing new traffic lights at intersections, and completing a multiuse bicycling and pedestrian trail adjacent to US 259.

Once the Project is completed, it will provide long-term economic and mobility benefits for the area, including reduced travel time, increased travel time reliability, enhanced tourism, and expanded job opportunities in the region. Along with safety benefits, the addition of the dedicated center turning lane will provide more efficient and timely access to daily destinations, local businesses, lodging areas, and planned future job opportunities, stimulating growth and economic development.

Rural Project Requirement #2: The project will be cost-effective.

The benefit-cost analysis value of 1.29 indicates cost-effectiveness for this Project. Most of the calculated benefits come from travel time savings and safety benefits. Improved active health benefits, enhanced active travel journey quality and performance, and reduced emissions are also key components. For this study, all costs were converted to 2022 dollars. The total discounted cost of the Project is estimated at \$51,406,816 with the total discounted value of benefits totaling \$66,097,965.

$$\text{Benefit-Cost Ratio} = \$66,097,965 / \$51,406,816 = 1.29$$

Rural Project Requirement #3: The project will contribute to the accomplishment of 1 or more of the national goals under 23 U.S.C. § 150.

The Hochatown Community Access and Pedestrian Safety Project meets the following three goals under Section 150:

- **Safety.** The Project will improve the overall safety conditions along the US 259 corridor as it passes through Hochatown. This specific stretch of road has

witnessed collision frequencies that surpass the statewide average by a factor of three. The proposed Project components, notably the dedicated central turning lane, coupled with the introduction of permanent traffic lighting infrastructure, are projected to result in a 34% reduction in the likelihood of vehicular accidents occurring. Moreover, the Project is intended to safeguard pedestrians and cyclists, who are among the most vulnerable roadway users, along with the surrounding communities, from potential safety hazards. This safeguarding will be achieved by implementing enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities, strategically installing new traffic signal systems at critical intersections, and realizing a versatile shared path designed for both bicyclists and pedestrians, thoughtfully situated alongside the US 259 route.

- **Congestion reduction.** The Project addresses the congestion issues currently plaguing the US 259 corridor through Hochatown. Because of the substantial growth in tourism in the Hochatown area, congestion along US 259 is becoming more frequent, and the safety of its users is increasingly threatened as traffic volume and collision rates increase. No secondary roads to US 259 bypass Hochatown. As a result, all traffic must use US 259 through Hochatown. The Project will address this traffic congestion along the US 259 corridor in Hochatown by incorporating a center turning lane and access management to reduce conflict points.
- **Freight movement and economic vitality.** The Hochatown Community Access and Pedestrian Safety Project improves freight movement and the region's economic development. Tourism and logging are the primary industries in this region. The US 259 corridor through Hochatown plays a vital role in the transportation of timber to outside markets. However, the large transport trucks are required to share the very tourist-dense highway through Hochatown. No secondary roads to US 259 bypass Hochatown. As a result, all traffic must use US 259 through Hochatown, and because of this, US 259 within the Project area is considered a critical bottleneck within ODOT's Freight Transportation Plan. The congestion along the US 259 corridor leads to slower traffic flow, resulting in delays for freight trucks and reduced overall efficiency and productivity of freight transportation. Addressing congestion in this corridor will allow for far more efficient freight movement, including for timber transportation.

Rural Project Requirement #4: The project is based on the results of preliminary engineering.

The preliminary engineering for the Hochatown Community Access and Pedestrian Safety Project will be completed in May 2024. Preliminary design plans (30% design) were completed in March 2023, and design continues on schedule for completion of 90% engineering plans and estimates targeted for May 2024, with the environmental review expected to wrap up by April 2024. Final design plans are anticipated to be finalized by July 2024. Design for this Project, however, started well over 5 years ago. The following is a summary of Project-related activities that have occurred in preparation for this Project:

- US-259 Traffic Study, McCurtain County, OK, was completed in 2018.

- Traffic Impact Analysis, Choctaw Hochatown Resort was completed in 2018.
- Project costs (items and quantities) have been developed based on completed 30% and 60% design.
- Reconnaissance Data Collection Report was completed in May 2021.
- Preliminary Engineering Technical Memorandum was completed in March 2022.
- US 259 Typical Section Matrix Technical Memorandum was completed in January 2023.
- Multiple public outreach and engagement efforts have occurred since 2022.

Rural Project Requirement #5: The project is reasonably expected to begin construction not later than 18 months after the date of obligation of funds for the project.

ODOT has proposed an aggressive schedule to complete the Hochatown Community Access and Pedestrian Safety Project. Completion of 90% engineering plans and estimates is targeted for May 2024, with the environmental review expected to wrap up by April 2024. Final design plans for Phases 1 and 2 are anticipated to be finalized by July 2024, with ongoing utility relocation and modification. Construction for Phase 1 is scheduled to begin by the start of 2025 and be complete and fully operational by early 2026. Phase 2 construction will commence in mid-2026 and be complete and operational by mid-2027. Following this timeline and sequence of events, ODOT can successfully complete Phases 1 and 2 of this Project before the initial grant funds obligation date of September 30, 2028.