



OKLAHOMA
Transportation



Project Readiness

Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections over the Oklahoma River

Oklahoma Department of Transportation
RAISE Grant Application

February 28, 2024

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Project Readiness

Environmental Risk Assessment

As shown in Figure 1, the preliminary study for the Project is ending, and the survey update and design process are being started. The Project designer has been selected by ODOT and 65 percent construction plans for right-of-way and proposed NEPA process will begin in June 2024. Right-of-way acquisition is scheduled to be completed in December 2025 and utility relocations are scheduled to be completed by April 2026. A final Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) submittal is scheduled for early 2026.

Figure 1: Project Schedule

I-35 River Bridge Replacement Project								
Task	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Pre-Construction								
Preliminary Study	█							
Survey		█						
30% Preliminary Design Plans		█						
Access Justification Report (AJR)		█						
60% Preliminary Right of Way Plans		█						
65% Right of Way and Utility Plans		█						
NEPA (EA)		█						
Right of Way Acquisition			█					
Utility Relocation				█				
Final PS&E Plans				█				
Authorization & Letting					█			
Construction								
I-35 Bridge Multimodal Path Construction						█	█	█

ODOT intends to authorize the Project in early 2027 and let the Project in spring 2027. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2028 and be completed by the end of 2030. The Project is sufficiently advanced to begin plan development in a timely manner and construction completed within the funding deadlines for the RAISE program. RAISE funds are in little danger of expiring prior to the obligation and expenditure deadline. As described in the **Environmental Permits and Review** section, ODOT has sought input on the Project through public involvement, which included features of meaningful public involvement identified in U.S. DOT’s *Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-making* to engage the underrepresented communities adjacent to the Project area.

Required Approvals

Environmental Permits and Reviews

ODOT will apply for NEPA approval from FHWA Oklahoma Division to construct the Project once preliminary plans have been approved in 2025.

For this Project, a Documented Categorical Exclusion (DCE) is the anticipated level of analysis to obtain environmental clearance for this Project. A Section 4F statement will be required for the multimodal bridge since it connects to existing trails, but since it is an enhancement to those facilities ODOT is not anticipating any conflicts with this improvement. The NEPA documents are anticipated to include a biological assessment, a cultural resources survey, an initial site assessment for hazardous waste, a detailed noise study, and a socioeconomic and environmental justice review.

Right-of-Way Acquisition and Relocation Plan

Relocations will not be required for this Project. Minor right-of-way acquisitions are identified in the on-going preliminary study. All right-of-way acquisitions will be completed according to the Uniform Relocation Act and applicable regulations.

Public Engagement

ODOT has performed preliminary stakeholder engagement in the early concept development for this Project. ODOT initially presented the Project to key stakeholders in 2016 and then reinitiated stakeholder engagement in 2023 as part of the preliminary engineering study. The 2016 meeting presented three I-35 bridge concepts for spanning the Oklahoma River; the idea for a multimodal path built on the same structure as the I-35 southbound bridge was initially included in these meetings. After years of concept development, two additional stakeholder meetings were held in 2023 to discuss the separate multimodal bridge and finalize bridge aesthetics and potential funding partnerships. The public engagement will follow the ODOT Public Involvement Plan (PIP) and include features of meaningful public involvement identified in U.S. DOT's *Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-making*.

State and Local Approvals

The Project is currently programmed in ODOT's, [Eight-Year Construction Work Plan](#) and construction is scheduled in 2028 (JP Number 30444(04)). Preliminary meetings with the City of Oklahoma City have been held to review the bridge concepts and funding commitments. The Project has widespread community support.

Federal Transportation Requirements Affecting State and Local Planning

Regional Active Transportation Plan (RATP): The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) is the metropolitan planning organization for OKC. The ACOG RATP, [Encompass 2045](#), includes the I-35 River Bridge Project, which aligns with the 2045 goals related to safety, infrastructure condition, congestion, freight movement and economic vitality, and environmental viability and resilience.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP): The [ODOT STIP](#) incorporates the first four years of the ODOT Eight-Year CWP. If this Project receives RAISE funding, ODOT will include it in the biennial update for the 2023-2026 STIP that will be developed in 2024.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP): The [ODOT LRTP 2020-2045](#) is a policy document that provides a strategic direction for the development of the Oklahoma multimodal transportation system. This Project aligns with ODOT's long-range strategic direction. The Project improves system resilience and reliability and is consistent with the goals set out in ODOT's [2019-2028 Transportation Asset Management Plan \(TAMP\)](#) with the intent of maintaining and preserving Oklahoma's transportation network.

Carbon Reduction Strategy: The [ODOT Carbon Reduction Strategy \(CRS\)](#) documents ODOT's existing carbon reduction efforts and provides guidance for future ODOT transportation system investments. The Project is consistent with advancing the ODOT CRS goals related to safety and security, mobility and accessibility, economic vitality, and environmental responsibility.

Oklahoma Active Transportation Plan: The [Oklahoma Active Transportation Plan \(ATP\)](#) is currently in public comment includes policies, programs, design tools and resources to support active transportation planning, design and implementation so that residents and visitors may safely and comfortably walk, bike and use active modes across Oklahoma. The Project aligns with the ATP principles and goals of Safety, Equity, Mobility, Livability, Connectivity, and Coordination. The ATP identifies that statewide annual fatalities of pedestrians and bicyclists have increased from 88 in 2017 to 115 in 2021, and that OKC has had the highest number of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries in Oklahoma.

Technical Capacity

ODOT has the technical capacity to successfully complete this Project. ODOT has a close partnership with the FHWA Oklahoma Division through which it receives its federal aid allocation and discretionary grant funding. ODOT has been awarded several discretionary grants from various programs and is familiar with developing grant agreements, administering the funding, and providing the necessary reporting. ODOT has the technical expertise and resources dedicated to the project to provide quality control over all aspects of design and construction, ensure the project meets all federal requirements, and keep the public informed of the project's progress. ODOT's Contract Compliance Division oversees the Department's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program and ensures that ODOT and all its consultants and contractors comply with applicable Civil Rights requirements.

Civil Rights and Title VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the main legal authority for ODOT's external nondiscrimination programs. ODOT ensures that no person or groups of persons shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, retaliation or genetic information, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any and all programs, services, or activities administered by ODOT, its recipients, sub-recipients, and contractors. ODOT complies with Title VI by conducting internal and external compliance reviews, conducting training for staff, suppliers, vendors, contractors, local governments, and other ODOT sub-recipients of federal funds, and developing Title VI compliance information for internal and external dissemination.

Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Potential Project risks and mitigation strategies to minimize the potential impact of the risks are summarized in **Table 1**. References to other sections of this application are included.

Environmental and right-of-way related risks are significantly reduced given that minimal right-of-way acquisition is required, and the Oklahoma River is a controlled waterway. Meaningful public involvement is anticipated to engage the environmental justice and disadvantaged communities affected by the Project.

ODOT has sufficient capacity to implement the proposed activities according to the schedule presented in **Figure 1**. ODOT and the City of Oklahoma City have committed state and local matching funds. This match will ensure ODOT can begin construction in a timely manner until grant funds are reimbursed.

Table 1. Project Risk and Mitigation Strategies

Project Risk(Probability of Occurrence)	Mitigation Strategies
<p align="center">Cost Increases(Moderate)</p>	<p>1) ODOT has included the project in its 8 Year Work Plan and remains committed to adjusting as needed to meet all RAISE and statutory deadlines for funding obligation and expenditure.</p> <p>2) Construction estimates are complete to a 30% level and contain 30% contingency, allowing for a margin of increase.</p>
<p align="center">Delays Securing Right-of-Way (Minimal)</p>	<p>1) Minimal Right-of-Way acquisitions are anticipated. Potential acquisitions required will be from stakeholders that have been engaged in the study phase. Retaining Walls are anticipated to minimize required acquisition.</p>
<p align="center">Section 404 Permitting Delays(Moderate)</p>	<p>1) The Project is anticipated to fall under an Individual Permit. Work in the Oklahoma River will be required for construction of the bridge piers and superstructure.</p> <p>2) ODOT has a liaison in place at the USACE to accelerate and streamline approvals if needed.</p>
<p align="center">Weather Related Construction Delays (Moderate)</p>	<p>1) ODOT works closely with contractors to renegotiate project time while still meeting project commitments.</p>
<p align="center">Issues with City of Oklahoma City Maintenance Agreement (Low)</p>	<p>1) ODOT and City of Oklahoma City have negotiated numerous maintenance agreements on previous projects and have standard language and terms.</p>
<p align="center">Public Opposition (Low)</p>	<p>1) ODOT has initiated key stakeholder involvement through the preliminary study process. ODOT has experience in methods to specifically engage the local low-income and minority community.</p> <p>2) The I-35 River bridge project will provide additional connectivity and mobility to the Oklahoma River Trail system, which will directly benefit the local community.</p> <p>3) Stakeholder involvement participants have been extremely supportive of the project.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Contamination from Industrial Use/Underground Storage Tanks (Moderate)</p>	<p>1) ODOT has a well-defined, successful approach for addressing potential contamination and LUST sites. Locations where these issues may arise are identified and included within the construction plans as “Areas of Environmental Concern” to put the contractor and their employees on alert that the potential exists for encountering contamination.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Earthquakes (Low)</p>	<p>1) Oklahoma’s drilling practices have reduced the number of earthquakes in the state. All structures have seismic designs.</p>