

# Oklahoma State Senate

## KEVIN L. MATTHEWS

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*Democratic Caucus Chair  
Oklahoma Legislative Black Caucus Chair  
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## COMMITTEES:

Energy  
Public Safety  
Transportation  
Appropriations  
Retirement & Insurance  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
General Government & Transportation

October 10, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

While you may have heard of how the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre violently razed Greenwood, you may be unaware of the years that followed. The community divulged in an act of defiance: they rebuilt the district. Homes and businesses repopulated the hallowed streets and the neighborhood flourished for decades. However, a second, more persistent destructive force was unleashed upon the community: The Federal-Aid Highway Acts of 1965 and 1985. The I-244 and US 75 sections of Tulsa's Inner-Dispersal Loop were designed to displace the Greenwood neighborhood once more.

On May 4, 1967, an article in the Tulsa Tribune commented on the destruction of the community, stating: "The Crosstown Expressway slices across the 100 block of North Greenwood Avenue, across those very buildings that Edwin Lawrence Goodwin, Sr. (publisher of the Oklahoma Eagle) describes as 'once a Mecca for the Negro businessman—a showplace.' There still will be a Greenwood Avenue, but it will be a lonely, forgotten lane ducking under the shadows of a big overpass."

As the State Senator for District 11, I represent Greenwood. As the Founder and Chair of the 1921 Race Massacre Centennial Commission, I champion justice. As a native Tulsan, I seek restoration. While the physical work contemplated by this grant is of the utmost importance to our community and city, its result will be vital in healing the soul of our nation.

I am in strong favor of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's decision to pursue the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) discretionary grant funding and pledge to support with community input throughout the duration of this project to ensure that Greenwood is reunited and that it is liberated from the shadows of an overpass.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin L. Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Senator Kevin Matthews