



August 22, 2022

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

RE: Bridge Investment Program (BIP) for the I-40 corridor over Portland Ave. and I-44 K Interchange Project in Oklahoma City

Honorable Secretary Buttigieg:

The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) would like to voice our organization's strong support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for the Bridge Investment Program (BIP) Grant to assist with the I-40 corridor improvements over Portland Ave. and I-44 K Interchange Project in Oklahoma City.

Interstate 40 (I-40) is an important national interstate corridor and also serves as the primary east-west route through the central business district of Oklahoma City. The I-40 corridor has undergone numerous improvements to keep up with the revitalization and expansion within the Oklahoma City region. There are several key attractions adjacent to the interchange, including the Oklahoma River, River Trail system, and the Oklahoma City Fairgrounds. The business district along Portland Ave. features multiple regional and national businesses, including Dell Computers and Mathis Brothers Furniture. In the late 2000's, the realignment of the I-40 corridor was undertaken to upgrade the highway.

After the completion of the expanded I-40 Crosstown in 2015, adjacent to downtown, ODOT expressed the goal of widening the existing I-40 corridor and improving the bridge structures within the interchange extents, with the primary focus on the bridges over Portland Avenue and I-44. The proposed improvements include widening of the roadway and bridges to a minimum of three lanes along the I-40 corridor. The expanded I-40 Crosstown carries five through lanes of traffic, and proposed improvements west of the bridges over Portland Ave. are being designed to carry four through lanes. The addition of the through lanes on the bridges would allow for driver continuity by providing lane balance/safety through the interchange. Currently, the I-40 bridges over I-44 carry two through lanes, which leads to congestion and safety issues.

The project also seeks to replace or rehabilitate multiple bridge structures within the interchange. The goals of the bridge improvements are to provide additional lane capacity, improve operations within the interchange, and ensure the structures meet current design standards. There are ten bridges within the Portland Ave. and I-44 K Interchange project extents. Within the project, eight of those bridges are in danger of becoming rated structurally deficient with a 2022 National Bridge Inventory (NBI) rating of at least five in one of the primary categories. If a rating of four is received, the bridge is considered structurally deficient. The bridges were constructed in the late 1960's and are showing signs of reaching the end of their design life.

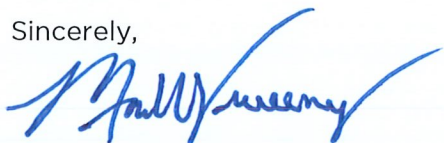
Six of the eight at-risk bridges would be addressed within the proposed project. The four mainline bridges over Portland Ave. and I-44 are proposed to be improved with additional lane capacity, proper width shoulders, and meet AASHTO vertical clearance requirements. The I-40 EB and WB bridges over I-44 also contain fracture critical members. Two ramp bridges would undergo rehabilitation and pier relocation to enable widening of roadways and improve their superstructure and decks. The final two structures being improved within the project are large multi-cell reinforced concrete box structures that will undergo improvements to the end sections.

The I-40 corridor through the project area currently carries an average annual daily traffic (AADT) of 127,660 east of the I-40/I-44 interchange (177,660 by 2051 – 28% increase); 59,390 on the bridges over I-44 (87,112 by 2051 – 32% increase), and 124,660 west of the I-40/I-44 interchange (173,104 by 2052 – 28% increase). The average annual daily truck traffic on I-40 in the project area is 16 percent; on average there are nearly 20,000 trucks per day crossing the I-40 eastbound and westbound bridges over I-44. Based on the 2051 traffic projections, truck traffic could approach 28,000 per day in the project area.

In summary, the I-40 corridor improvements over Portland Ave. and I-44 K Interchange Projects' primary goal is to construct improved bridges and roadways on the present alignment to promote safer operation and replace facilities that are close to the end of their design life. The bridges included in the project are rated structurally deficient or have the potential to be in the near future. The proposed I-40 bridge replacements would help to provide lane balance across the I-40 corridor through the interchanges, add capacity, include proper shoulder widths to allow vehicles to pull-off on the shoulder, and meet AASHTO vertical clearance requirements. The improvements should enhance operation, congestion mitigation, and reduce the high collision rates that are common within the project extents.

ACOG strongly supports I-40 corridor bridge improvements over Portland Ave and I-44 K Interchange Project in Oklahoma City 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,



Mark W. Sweeney, AICP
Executive Director

Chair
Josh Moore
Edmond Councilmember

Vice-Chair
Brian Grider
Mustang Mayor

Secretary/Treasurer
Glenn Berglan
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