



**THE CITY OF
OKLAHOMA CITY**

Mayor David Holt

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July 22, 2022

Secretary Peter Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Honorable Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of The City of Oklahoma City I am writing to voice our city's strong support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for the Bridge Investment Program (BIP) Grant to assist with the I-35 Bridge Replacement Project. This project is a top tier project in the downtown core of Oklahoma City. The I-35 bridges are perilously close to becoming structurally deficient at a future bridge inspection. Three of the key inspection criteria currently carry a rating of 5, and if any of them drop to a rating of 4 then the bridges will be structurally deficient.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of this I-35 bridge replacement project is the tremendous community impacts that the bridge replacement will offer our community. Since these bridges were built over three decades ago, the Oklahoma River has been dammed and is now host to elite national paddlesport competitions, below and adjacent to this bridge. Within sight of the bridge are official Olympic training facilities for rowing and canoe/kayak.

The current I-35 bridges have 10 piers in the Oklahoma River that limit the racing from being classified at the highest level. A primary goal of major stakeholders in this project is that the new I-35 bridge have no piers in the water and span the entire Oklahoma River. This brings additional cost to the project, but such a design would support the tremendous investment that community stakeholders have made in and along the Oklahoma River, and would support the United States Olympic Committee's efforts at this site as well.

Based on the Interchange Capacity Study and Long Span Bridge Study, there is local momentum and support to construct a long span bridge over the Oklahoma River. The current I-35 NB and SB bridges are 803 feet in length, with eight approximate 100' spans. The new long span bridges would be 820 feet in length, with one 520 foot signature span and three 100 foot conventional back spans. The new long span bridges would provide six 12 foot lanes in each direction, 12 foot inside shoulders, and outside shoulders varying between 12'-0" and 18'-10". Currently, the I-35 bridges have four 10 foot lanes in each direction, but the travel lanes and shoulder widths are inadequate and both bridges are functionally obsolete.

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Along the edge of downtown Oklahoma City runs the scenic Oklahoma River, a 7-mile-long waterway and 13 miles of paved trails that have reinvented outdoor recreation in the capital city. The new I-35 bridge would accommodate bicycle and pedestrians on the bridge and separated from traffic with a concrete barrier. Access to the paved trails on both the sides of the river will be provided off of the new I-35 bridge. This will improve the access to the recreational trails and provide direct bicycle and pedestrian access in and out of downtown Oklahoma City. The new bridge and multimodal connections would also provide unique and needed access to the largely Hispanic Capitol Hill district and Historically Disadvantaged Community located on the south side of the Oklahoma River.

We strongly support the I-35 Bridge Replacement Project in Oklahoma County 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 me should you have questions or if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Holt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and "H".

David Holt
Mayor