

March 3, 2021

Secretary of Transportation
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington D.C. 20590

RE: Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) funding for I-40/Douglas Interchange Reconstruction Project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, I am writing to voice our strong support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for an Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant to assist with Interstate 40/Douglas Boulevard interchange reconstruction and related interstate widening in Oklahoma County. As a large metropolitan chamber and economic development organization with over 3,000 members, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber has been a longstanding advocate for infrastructure investment and development. We work closely with the professional staff at ODOT in pursuit of the chamber's transportation priorities.

The award of an INFRA grant for the I-40/Douglas Boulevard project is vitally important to the future expansion of Tinker Air Force Base. The Greater OKC Chamber has been focused on growing and protecting the national security assets at Tinker ever since we played a central role in attracting its predecessor, a U.S. Army Air Field, during the Second World War. As such, we dedicate staff and resources every day to support Tinker. Therefore, this project is on our major priority list and is vitally important to regional and state economic development. Tinker AFB is the largest single-site employer in the State of Oklahoma and vital to the nation's defense system. Impressively, 44 of Oklahoma's 77 counties provide workforce to Tinker. Therefore, an efficient interstate corridor serving Tinker AFB supports over 24,000 jobs, commerce, and safe travel in the area. It is a corridor with national significance.

It is important to underscore that Tinker AFB is continuing to experience enormous growth which require transportation improvements. Recently, the Greater OKC Chamber led a coalition of local and state governments in acquiring 158 acres of land from a former BNSF railyard that will allow the construction of a new depot maintenance facility for the new KC-46A Pegasus. This expansion will result in over a thousand new jobs and over a billion dollars in investment to the Tinker corridor. We have also experienced tremendous private sector growth with the relocation of 3,000 jobs Boeing jobs to the area. These developments, while tremendously positive in economic development terms, will further congest a corridor that is already experiencing higher traffic volumes, delays, and accidents that impede the safety and efficiency of Interstate 40. We believe the proposed improvements will update old infrastructure and enhance the system by widening the highway.

The Chamber strongly supports the I-40/Douglas Interchange Reconstruction project for its vital contribution to the region, state, and nation. We sincerely hope you will award an INFRA grant to this project with critical importance to economic development.

Sincerely,



Roy H. Williams
President and CEO
Greater OKC Chamber