



**OKLAHOMA**  
Transportation



**Merit Criteria**

# **Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections over the Oklahoma River**

Oklahoma Department of Transportation  
**RAISE Grant Application**

---

February 28, 2024

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Outcome Criteria</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Safety</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Safety Summary .....	2
Safety Benefits for Non-Motorized Travelers .....	2
<b>Environmental Sustainability</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Reduce VMT by Modal Shifts .....	3
Impacts on Disadvantaged Communities .....	5
Land Use .....	6
Resiliency .....	6
<b>Quality of Life</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Affordable Active Transportation Choices .....	7
Improve Access to Daily Destinations .....	7
Equity .....	8
Planning and Workforce .....	9
<b>Mobility and Community Connectivity</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Universal Design .....	9
Accessibility for Non-Motorized Travelers .....	10
<b>Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Facilitate Tourism Opportunities .....	11
Promote Private Investment .....	12
<b>State of Good Repair</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Future Maintenance Costs, Savings, and Responsibilities .....	12
<b>Partnership and Collaboration</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Public Engagement .....	13
Job Creation & Workforce Training Programs .....	13
<b>Innovation</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Technology Innovations .....	14
Project Delivery Innovations .....	14
Financing Innovations .....	15

## FIGURES

Figure 1: S. Lincoln Boulevard Sidewalk (facing North) .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 2: First Americans Boulevard Sidewalk (facing South) .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 3: Annual Vehicle Miles Traveled per Household and Project Area .....	3
Figure 4: BikeWalkOKC Survey Results .....	4
Figure 5: HDC and APP near Project .....	5
Figure 6: Disadvantaged Component Scores .....	6
Figure 7: Employment, Medical Facilities and Parks .....	7
Figure 8: Pedestrian Counts 2019-2022 .....	10
Figure 9: OKANA Resort Site and Rendering .....	12

## TABLES

Table 1. I-35/I-40 Interchange Collisions .....	2
---	---

## Merit Criteria

### Safety

Today, residents and visitors in Oklahoma City (OKC) who wish to cross the Oklahoma River to access opportunities, entertainment, and amenities near the existing I-35 bridges have few safe bicycle or pedestrian crossing options. According to a 2022 Smart Growth America analysis, Oklahoma ranks 15<sup>th</sup> worst state and OKC is 33<sup>rd</sup> worst metro for pedestrian safety.<sup>1</sup> There have been multiple pedestrian and pedal cycle fatalities and serious injuries on the existing I-35 bridges, even though pedestrians are not permitted, which may indicate demand for a safe crossing for active transportation users near the interstate bridges.

Currently, residents and visitors who want to access both OKC downtown amenities and opportunities, as well new developments and attractions south of the river such as the First Americans Museum southeast of the I-35 bridges have limited safe and direct active transportation options. Residents and visitors who wish to use active transportation to access opportunities in OKC's downtown core and along both sides of the river must travel to the closest existing pedestrian facilities on South Lincoln Boulevard or First Americans Boulevard to cross. South Lincoln Boulevard, which is over .6 miles or 1 km west of the Project location, is a four-lane undivided bridge with minimal shoulders; the bridge has a sidewalk, but it is narrow and minimally separated from vehicular traffic (**Figure 1**). First Americans Boulevard nearly 1 mile or 1.6 km west of the Project location and has similar design (**Figure 2**).

*Figure 1: S. Lincoln Boulevard Sidewalk (facing North)*



*SOURCE: GOOGLE STREET VIEW, AUGUST 2023*

<sup>1</sup> <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>

Figure 2: First Americans Boulevard Sidewalk (facing South)



SOURCE: GOOGLE STREET VIEW, AUGUST 2023

Adding a new multimodal path near the I-35 SB bridge across the Oklahoma River will protect non-motorized travelers from safety risks.

### Safety Summary

Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) recorded nine fatal or serious injury collisions involving pedestrians or pedal cycle users on the I-35 bridges illegally crossing the Oklahoma River between January 1, 2012, and December 31, 2021 (latest available data) as shown in **Table 1**. The 2 pedestrian fatalities represent 10% of all fatalities (20) in the area.

Table 1. I-35/I-40 Interchange Collisions

Type of Collision	Fatality	Injury	Property Damage	Total
Pedestrian	2	6		8
Pedal Cycle		1		1
<b>All Collisions</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>3,221</b>	<b>4,371</b>
SOURCE: ODOT				

### Safety Benefits for Non-Motorized Travelers

Although interstates do not permit pedestrians and cyclists, the I-35/I-40 interchange has had nine collisions involving pedestrians or cyclists, two of which resulted in fatalities. With the Oklahoma River trails currently under construction (**Figure 3** in the **Equity, Multimodal Options, and Quality of Life** section) along the north and south banks of the Oklahoma River, there is also the potential for a greater number of pedestrians or cyclists trying to cross the existing bridge upon the completion of the trails which could increase the number of collisions. The Project would provide a safe connection for non-motorized travelers between the north and south side of the Oklahoma River and would be the primary crossing within a mile of the current riverfront development at the First Americans Museum and Riversport development (described further in the **Equity, Multimodal Options, and Quality of Life** section). The Project would help reduce pedestrian and cyclist crashes along the interstate at this interchange in the

future. The **Benefit Cost Analysis Narrative** includes additional details about the safety benefits of the bridge replacement.

## Environmental Sustainability

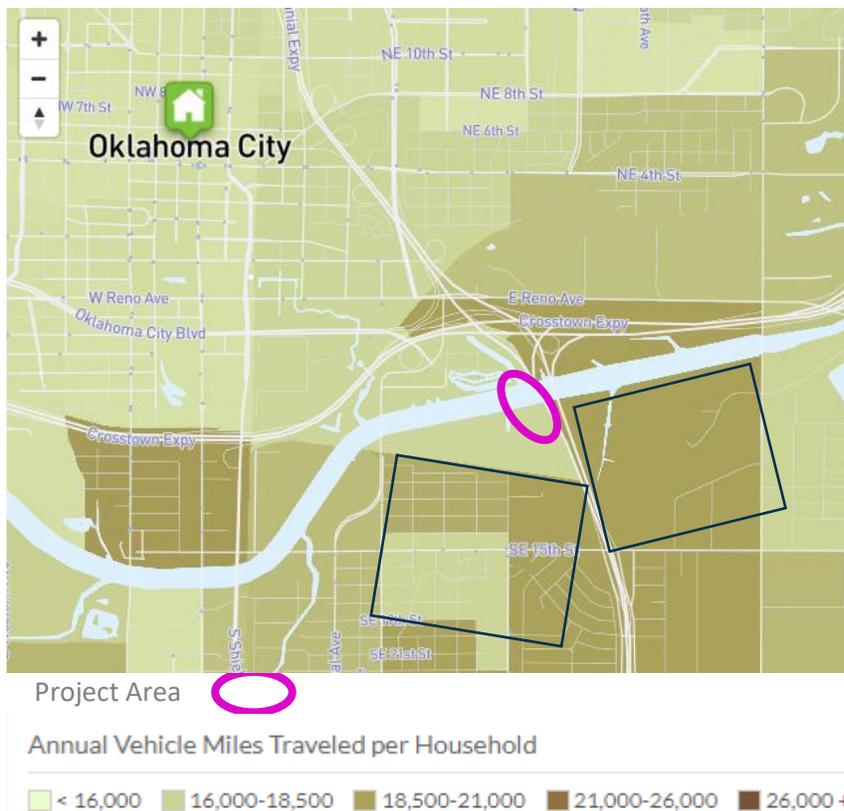
### Reduce VMT by Modal Shifts

Oklahoma’s [Carbon Reduction Strategy](#) identifies individual modal choice as a key factor influencing transportation emissions, noting that walking and biking are the least carbon intensive modes of personal transportation.

The addition of a new, safe, and accessible bike and pedestrian connection across the Oklahoma River to downtown would allow and encourage residents and visitors to safely access opportunities via lower or no emissions active transportation modes like walking or bicycling and reduce their annual Vehicles Miles Traveled (VMT).

According to analysis by the Neighborhood Center for Technology, currently households in residential areas south of the Oklahoma River drive more per year (as measured in VMT) than households in neighboring areas north of the Oklahoma River near the downtown core of OKC (**Figure 3**).

*Figure 3: Annual Vehicle Miles Traveled per Household and Project Area*



SOURCE: CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD TECHNOLOGY

There is local evidence to suggest that improved active transportation infrastructure would result in mode shift to active transportation and potentially reduce VMT. OKC recently

completed a resident survey as part of its active transportation plan, [BikeWalkOKC](#) to understand what kinds of projects would encourage more residents to walk and bike instead of drive.

Respondents indicated that the primary factors that discouraged them from walking and bicycling in OKC were “A lack of connected trails, sidewalks and bike lanes” and “automobile traffic” as shown in **Figure 4**. Respondents also indicated that they would like to reach parks and existing trails as well as commercial districts and places of work. The Project will address these concerns by connecting to existing trails, parks, and sidewalks on both sides of the Oklahoma River; it will also be fully separated from automobile traffic. The Project will provide safe and comfortable access to commercial districts such as Bricktown, a historic district now featuring restaurants, bars, shops, museums, galleries, the Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark where the OKC Triple-A baseball team plays and other attractions and job opportunities. A recent economic impact study estimates that the Bricktown district supports over 5,000 jobs.<sup>2</sup>

*Figure 4: BikeWalkOKC Survey Results*

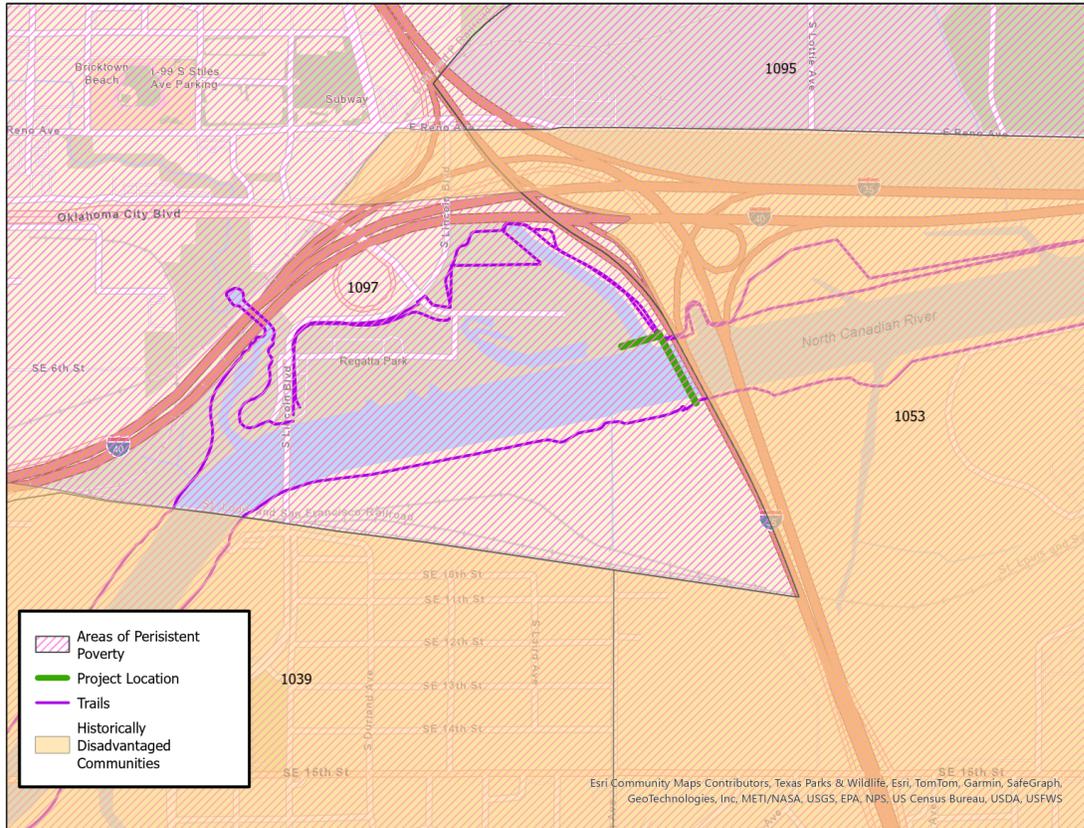
<b>KEY RESULTS FROM THE RESIDENT SURVEY:</b>	
<b>What factors discourage bicycling and walking in Oklahoma City?</b>	<b>What destinations would you most like to reach by bicycling or walking?</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of connected trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes</li> <li>2. Automobile traffic</li> <li>3. Unsafe street crossings</li> <li>4. Aggressive motorist behavior</li> <li>5. Deficient or unmaintained existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parks and Existing Trails</li> <li>2. Commercial Districts</li> <li>3. Places of Work</li> <li>4. Libraries</li> <li>5. Public Transit</li> <li>6. Schools and Universities</li> </ol>

As the Project aligns with what residents have requested, it’s reasonable to assume it will encourage and allow mode shift from driving to affordable options like walking and cycling. Mode shift to active transportation may also help improve local air quality and reduce emissions in disadvantaged communities as described below and shown in **Figure 5**.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.visitokc.com/articles/post/2023-bricktown-economic-impact-study-shows-significant-contribution-to-oklahoma-city-economy/>

Figure 5: HDC and APP near Project



### Impacts on Disadvantaged Communities

As illustrated in **Figure 5** Census Tract 1097, which includes the majority of the Project, has been categorized as Area of Persistent Poverty based on the USDOT Grant mapping application. While the Project’s exact location is not in a census tract categorized as a “Historically Disadvantaged Community”, it is directly adjacent to tracts whose residents are likely to use and benefit from the addition of the Project and which are historically disadvantaged.

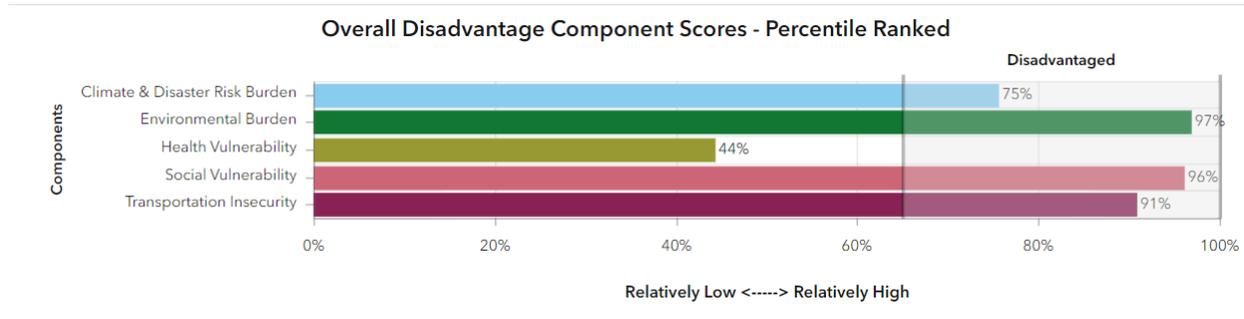
Census Tract 1053, which directly borders the Project location, has over 3,400 residents. Over 50 percent of its population is Hispanic or Latino, and the share of people who have asthma is in the 94<sup>th</sup> percentile. The tract’s assessment for “low life expectancy” is in the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile, according to Justice40 data from the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. The National Institutes of Health have determined that there is “consistent evidence that exposure to traffic-related air pollution...is associated with an increased risk of developing asthma.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7648850/>

Encouraging mode shift to walking or biking by investing in safe active transportation connections to downtown OKC, as described above, may reduce residents' exposure to potentially dangerous air pollution. Census Tract 1039 has approximately 4,200 residents directly adjacent to Tract 1053 are in the 87<sup>th</sup> percentile for diesel particulate matter exposure and 84<sup>th</sup> in PM2.5.

The USDOT Equitable Transportation Community Explorer also indicates that the census tracts adjacent to and including the Project location rank high for disadvantaged indices for transportation insecurity as well as environmental burden, as illustrated in **Figure 6**. The Project will both provide additional low-cost multimodal transportation options to improve transportation insecurity.

*Figure 6: Disadvantaged Component Scores*



SOURCE: USDOT *EQUITABLE TRANSPORTATION COMMUNITY (ETC)*

## Land Use

The [planOKC Interactive Map](#) from the OKC Comprehensive Plan, [planOKC](#), shows that the Project location will connect Urban Medium Intensity and Downtown land use areas. Medium intensity urbanized areas are reflective of the historic urban core, which balances small-and medium-lot housing and commercial districts. High intensity areas apply to the area surrounding the central business district, where developments may likely have notably higher densities, scale, and mixture of uses. The Project also aligns with numerous safety, streets, sidewalks and trails, health, parks and recreation, economic development, land use and urban design goals laid out in [planOKC](#).

The Project will support greater active transportation connectivity and public and private investments in land use productivity and mixed-use development. The OKANA resort is a mixed-use development just one mile from the easternmost point of the Project location.

## Resiliency

Due to its geology, rivers, and flood plains, ODOT has long recognized the vulnerability of its transportation assets to extreme weather and the risks it can present to the condition and performance of pavements and bridges; therefore, ODOT has integrated resiliency considerations into its life cycle planning and project programming. ODOT has developed well-regarded resiliency focused design guidelines for bridges and roadways in flood-prone areas to reduce potential damage from extreme weather events and minimize overall life cycle costs and is increasingly incorporating resiliency and redundancy considerations into its decision making.

## Quality of Life

As described in the **Safety** and **Environmental Sustainability** sections, the Project will create a new, safe, and comfortable walking and bicycling connection across the Oklahoma River and in Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities and will fill a notable gap in OKC's existing and proposed bicycle network of on-road facilities, multimodal paths, and greenways to significantly improve quality of life for residents and visitors. Primary purposes of the Project are to improve and expand active transportation choices in disadvantaged communities, improve access to daily destinations through active transportation, and improve safety and public health by adding new facilities to promote active transportation.

### Affordable Active Transportation Choices

The Project will increase affordable and healthy transportation choices in the Project area and reduce transportation cost burdens by improving and expanding active transportation options. The multimodal bridge will potentially help reduce auto dependence and support mobility for residents that do not own a vehicle in this underserved community as detailed in the Reduce VMT by Modal Shifts section above.

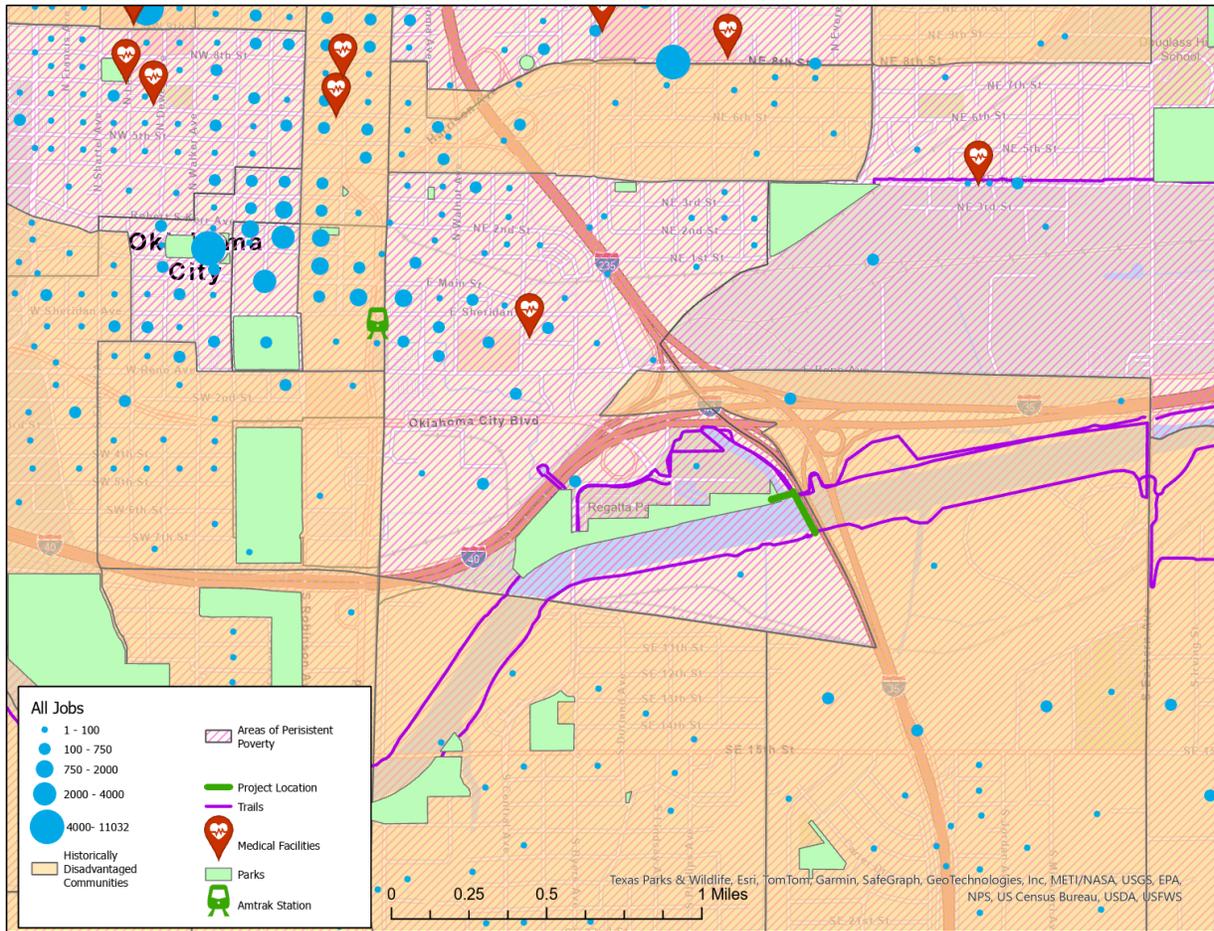
The Project will also provide a new affordable accessible active transportation connection between two brownfield grant redevelopment sites which now feature green space and trails on the banks of the Oklahoma River: the Riversport Rapids in Regatta Park and the First Americans Museum (FAM). The First Americans Museum is a one-of-a-kind center highlighting the trials and triumphs of the Indigenous People of North America. Its unique landscaping and architecture provide a place of cultural history and a sanctuary for learning and solitude. The Project will provide further access to free and accessible green space surrounding the First Americans Museum and upcoming OKANA development, the north and south Oklahoma River trails, as well as Regatta Park and the Bricktown River Walk Park on the north side of the Oklahoma River. The Bricktown River Walk Park provides green space and access to the Bricktown District, an entertainment and dining district reconstructed from an underused warehouse district. The multimodal bridge will enable residents and visitors to access jobs, healthcare, shopping, parks, and events on the Oklahoma River.

### Improve Access to Daily Destinations

The addition of a direct, safe, and accessible bike and pedestrian connection across the Oklahoma River connecting downtown to disadvantaged residential areas and new developments south of the river will allow residents and visitors to safely access more opportunities and daily destinations via active transportation.

Currently, residents south of the Oklahoma River must primarily rely on vehicles to directly access opportunities, jobs, parks, medical facilities and other amenities and destinations which are concentrated North of the Oklahoma River less than a mile (as the crow flies) away. When the Project is built, those residents will be able to safely and comfortably access jobs, medical facilities, parks, Amtrak station, transit center, and other destinations more directly through affordable active transportation modes.

*Figure 7. Employment, Medical Facilities and Parks*



SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU, ONTHEMAP, 2020 TOTAL JOBS<sup>4</sup>

The Project will connect the Oklahoma River trails on the south side of the river with the recreation amenities of the Boathouse District, as well as with the Bricktown River Walk Park. This park has walking and biking trails which lead to OKC’s bustling downtown, passing by a light rail stop and the city’s Amtrak station. This Project, therefore, provides increased affordable and accessible transportation choices for the disadvantaged communities in Capitol Hill, improving walkability and the accessibility of a growing area of OKC for pedestrians and bikers. As shown in **Figure 7**, the multimodal bridge provides a new, safe, and accessible pedestrian and bike connection to the employment centers in downtown OKC.

### Equity

One of the primary purposes of the Project’s connection across the Oklahoma River is to remove barriers and reconnect communities, especially for non-motorized travelers from underserved communities. This project sits on the edge of three census tracts, connecting Census Tracts 1039 and 1053 in Capitol Hill on the south side of the Oklahoma River with Census Tract 1097 on the north side. Both Census Tracts 1039 and 1053 are largely residential

<sup>4</sup> <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

and are designated as Justice40 disadvantaged tracts as defined by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool and Areas of Persistent Poverty. Tract 1053 is also a Historically Disadvantaged Community. Tract 1097 is an Area of Persistent Poverty. The populations of both Tracts 1039 and 1053 are over 60 percent Hispanic/Latino, compared to a countywide average of 18 percent and a statewide average of 11%.<sup>5</sup> On the USDOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer, both Tracts 1039 and 1053 rank as disadvantaged for Climate and Disaster Risk Burden, Environmental Burden, and Social Vulnerability, while Tract 1039 ranks as disadvantaged for Transportation Insecurity, and Tract 1053 also ranks as disadvantaged for Health Vulnerability. Meanwhile, the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool identifies Tract 1053 as disadvantaged in health, housing, and transportation, while Tract 1039 is disadvantaged in health, housing, and workforce.

In addition to mobility and accessibility benefits described here, the Project may also improve public health by connecting this area of OKC to the entire OKC trails system which offers a network of 10 inter-connected trails that cover over 80 miles and can take users to almost every point in OKC.

### **Planning and Workforce**

ODOT has instituted equity-focused policies related to project procurement and construction to ensure equity in the overall project delivery and implementation. The mission of ODOT's Contract Compliance Division is to ensure equal employment opportunity within ODOT, to level the playing field for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) by providing full and meaningful participation opportunities in ODOT's federally funded highway projects and to plan, implement and provide guidance to prevent discrimination in federal aid programs and activities. ODOT Contract Compliance Division (CCD) implements and oversees the ODOT DBE Program and the Unified Certification Program for USDOT funded recipients, assuring compliance with 49 CFR Part 26. Both consultants and construction contractors are required to meet the stated DBE commitments. ODOT CCD conducts reviews of contractors and subcontractors at any time to ensure compliance. In addition, ODOT requires the verbatim attachment of Appendices A & E of the Title VI Program Manual to all federally assisted contracts. The appendices specifically and directly address the non-discrimination efforts required.

## **Mobility and Community Connectivity**

### **Universal Design**

The Project will incorporate Universal Design features to ensure that any user will be able to use the multimodal bridge comfortably and conveniently, including those who use mobility devices such as wheelchairs, children, and the elderly. To connect the Project to the Oklahoma River trail system, ADA-compliant ramps will branch off the existing Oklahoma River trail to provide pedestrians and cyclists access to the multimodal bridge. Handrailing will be installed along the extent of the paths under the bridges on both banks of the river to deter pedestrians from straying toward the I-35 traffic. Lighting and other aesthetic enhancements will be

---

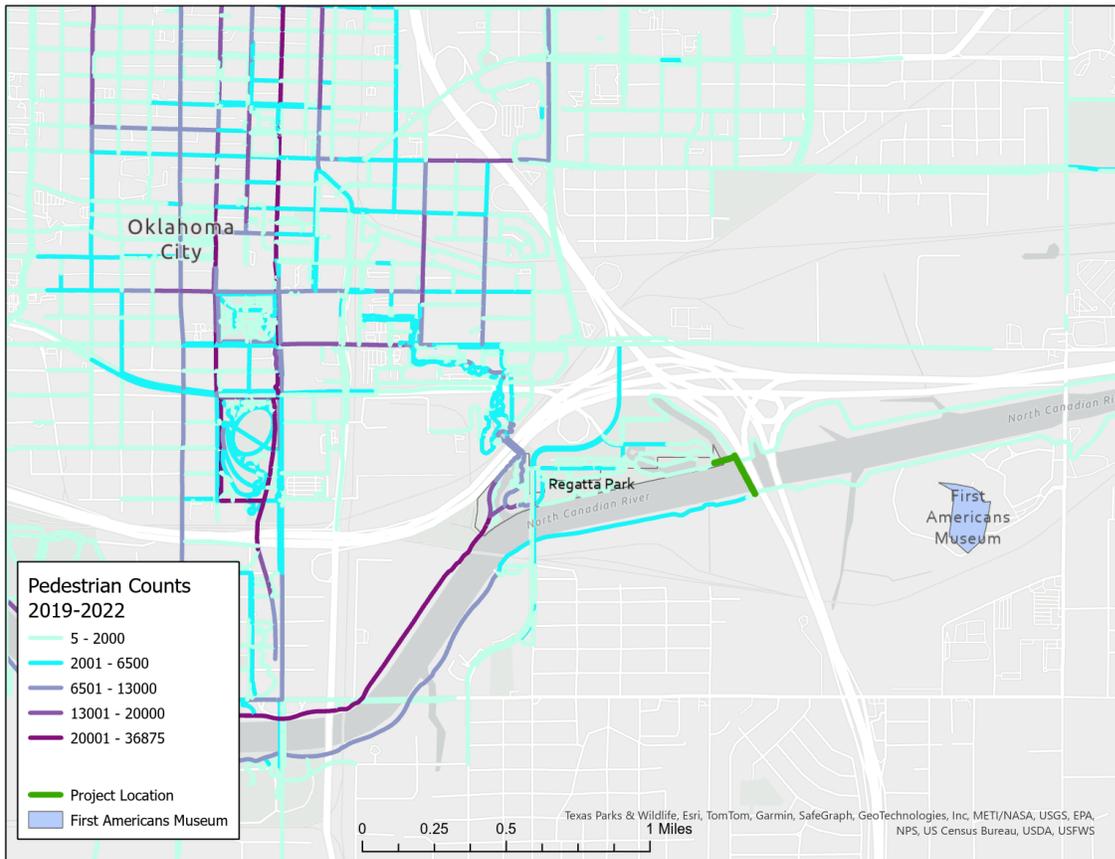
<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2017-2021). *Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Retrieved from <<https://censusreporter.org>>

provided on the multimodal bridge and along the trail pathway to enhance the user experience and provide additional safety. The Project will have limited right-of-way acquisition, but there will be no displacements.

### Accessibility for Non-Motorized Travelers

Counts of recreational pedestrian users currently indicate that many users stop their trips just east of the I-35 bridges, directly where the Project location would allow a safe crossing as shown in **Figure 8**; a new accessible pedestrian connection such as the Project would allow those users to extend their journeys, access emerging attractions including Regatta Park on the north side of the river and the First Americans Museum and OKANA resort southeast of the I-35/I-40 interchanges, and safely connect Historically Disadvantaged Communities and Areas of Persistent Poverty south of the Oklahoma River to popular pedestrian routes in downtown OKC. Pedestrian counts over the S. Lincoln Bridge (west of the Project) also are lower than the surrounding trails and paths, potentially due to the narrow, minimally protected sidewalk.

*Figure 8: Pedestrian Counts 2019-2022*

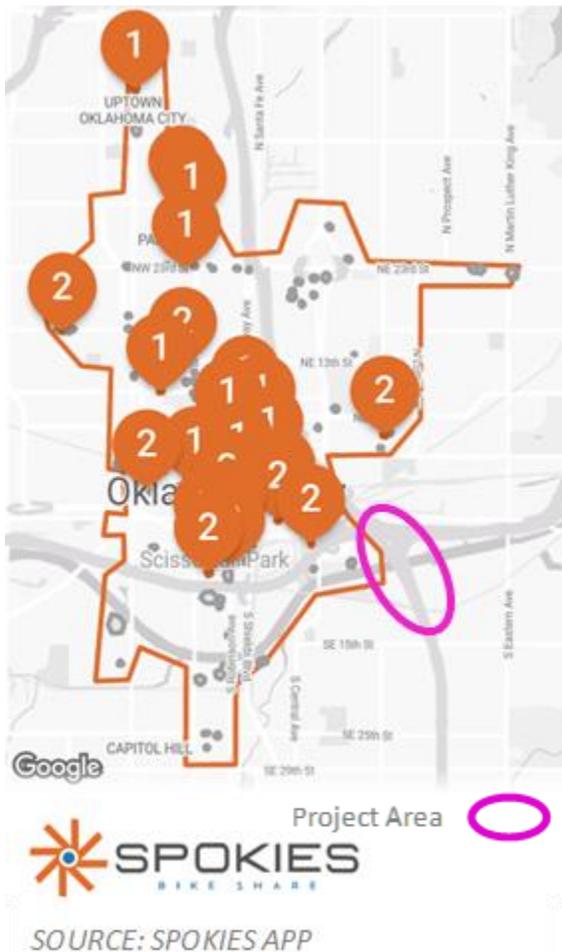


SOURCE: STRAVA METRO

In addition, EMBARK planning managers indicate that completing the Project would allow EMBARK’s pedal-only bike and e-bike share program Spokies to extend its service area east, south, and southeast into the Historically Disadvantaged Community and an Area of Persistent Poverty census tracts which currently do not have direct access to the program (Figure 9). In

tandem with the physical connection from the Project, access to the Spokies program would improve low-cost, non-motorized connectivity for households in those neighborhoods to extensive employment, educational, medical, cultural, and recreational destinations and opportunities in Spokies’ service area in central Oklahoma City. In addition to Spokies, Oklahoma City has several private micro-mobility services including Lime and Bird scooters. The extended Spokies service area and improved access for micro-mobility users would allow residents and visitors to safely access new developments along the Oklahoma River, Bricktown, South of 8th historically Black community, the Innovation District (including the University of Oklahoma Medical Center), and Historic Uptown Oklahoma City via active transportation.

Figure 9: Current Spokies Service Area



## Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity Facilitate Tourism Opportunities

The Oklahoma River was dammed in 2004 as part of OKC’s first Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) capital improvement program for new and upgraded sports, recreation, entertainment, and cultural facilities. The \$54 million project, supported by a self-imposed sales tax increase, rejuvenated the dry riverbed of the former North Canadian River by creating a dam-controlled river segment flanked by landscaped recreation Oklahoma River trails that connect to the larger OKC Trails network. This transformative public investment led to the privately funded construction of the Chesapeake Boathouse in 2006. There are now numerous boathouses, including the University of Central Oklahoma Boathouse and the \$10 million Devon Boathouse which is home to the U.S. Rowing National High Performance Center.

Because of these investments, and a temperate climate that allows year-round training on the water, the Oklahoma River has quickly emerged

as one of the premier rowing venues in the world for both competition and training. In 2007, the USA Rowing World Challenge drew teams from Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, and Switzerland and in 2008, the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Olympic Trials for flatwater sprint were held on the Oklahoma River.

The Project will include spectator viewing areas providing exceptional pedestrian-accessible observation opportunities for residents and visitors. The previous investments and the

continued economic success of OKC will benefit from having a multimodal bridge over the Oklahoma River.

Riversport has estimated the economic impact of the races announced through 2025 will exceed \$10 million, with each competition drawing 400 to 800 athletes from more than 60 countries for pre-event training weeks the competitions. Executive Director Mike Knopp states, “Hosting international races at this level means that some athletes and coaches will actually move to OKC to live, work, and train ... You will also have officials, coaches, and family members as well as media. We will see the impact in our hotels, restaurants, transportation, tourism, and entertainment. That is not even considering the economic ripples that happen when a city is elevated like this on the world stage.”

The Project will provide access to OKC Parks Department’s Regatta Park on the north side of the river and will directly connect to OKC’s extensive bicycle and pedestrian recreational and transportation trail network illustrated in the Reduce VMT by Modal Shifts section.

### Promote Private Investment

The Chickasaw Nation is developing a \$300 million private [OKANA resort](#) next to the First Americans Museum on the downtown riverfront shore and adjacent to the Project (Figure 10). In addition to an 11-story, 404-room hotel riverfront hotel, the private resort will include a spa, outdoor adventure lagoon, indoor waterpark, gold center, conference space amphitheater, restaurants, Native American marketplace, and retail outlets. The Project will provide a direct walking or biking connection to and from downtown OKC and the OKANA resort, which should increase tourism in downtown OKC and at the OKANA Resort.

The OKANA resort is a mixed-use development and is projected to have a \$97 million impact on OKC within one year of completion and a billion-dollar impact within the next decade. It is estimated that within the first decade, OKANA resort will create 800 full-time jobs.

The Project will enhance tourism connectivity between downtown OKC and OKANA resort.

*Figure 10. OKANA Resort Site and Rendering*



SOURCE: UNITED FOR OKLAHOMA Project Area



## State of Good Repair

### Future Maintenance Costs, Savings, and Responsibilities

The multimodal bridge will be a new facility. Annual maintenance costs are anticipated to be approximately \$5,000.

ODOT and City of OKC have negotiated numerous maintenance agreements on previous projects and have standard language and terms and have successfully maintained infrastructure in states of good repair.

## **Partnership and Collaboration**

### **Public Engagement**

The Project is unique in that it is taking place in a new frontier of urban development with a unique meshing of cultural, commercial, and residential development with a broad partnership base. An Interchange Capacity Study, Long Span Bridge Study, and stakeholder involvement meetings have brought together a strong partnership between the State of Oklahoma (ODOT), Tribal Community (Chickasaw Nation), local municipalities and agencies (City of OKC, Riversport Oklahoma River Authority), community-based groups (ACOG, First American Museum, and OKC Chamber) and local resident groups (Capitol Hill Community), which is a historically underserved and underrepresented community.

Due to the proximity of the Project to the Oklahoma River and other features, including but not limited to trails, parks, lakes, the First Americans Museum, and the Riversport Adventures in the Boathouse District, stakeholder involvement and feedback was essential during preliminary multimodal bridge design. Thus, an integral part of the Project development process has been the consistent continued discussion with key stakeholders to arrive at a “consensus built” multimodal bridge solution for the Oklahoma River crossing that not only meets the needs of each stakeholder, but also meshes with the financial abilities of the Project sponsors.

The public involvement process will continue to partner with residents to ensure the equity considerations are integrated into the Project design. The public involvement process will continue to engage diverse input from community-based organizations, Historically Disadvantaged Communities, and Areas of Persistent Poverty.

In addition to ODOT’s public involvement activities, the City of OKC specifically included \$25 million in its 2019 “MAPS 4” debt-free, sales tax funded public improvement program for projects including beautification on I-35 over the Oklahoma River. (At the time that voters approved MAPS 4’s passage, the multimodal bridge concept was included in the I-35 replacement project.) MAPS 4 included extensive public input from 2018 – 2019 and was approved by voters on December 10, 2019.<sup>6</sup>

### **Job Creation & Workforce Training Programs**

As of July 2023, the average hourly pay for highway construction jobs in the OKC metro area is \$26.23 an hour, which is higher than the median hourly wage of \$24.54 for all jobs in the region according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Recognizing the opportunity these jobs present for economic upward mobility, ODOT annually sponsors a Transportation & Construction Job Fair with industry recruiters. The event is free of charge and allows job seekers to meet with recruiters from all aspects of transportation, civil engineering, surveying, trucking, highway construction and heavy equipment operations. Special emphasis is placed on recruiting women and minorities to attend the event. According to a [recent study](#) by Today’s Homeowner reports,

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.okc.gov/government/maps-4/ideas-4-maps-fags#What%20is%20MAPS>

Oklahoma ranks in the top 25 of states with the highest percentage of female construction trade workers and there is great opportunity to expand those numbers. A local nonprofit Women Accessing Non-Traditional Trade (WANTT) is also encouraging more women to consider construction as a career path. WANTT provides a free, eight-week pre-apprenticeship training program to teach women skills in tools, construction math, and CPR.

ODOT has also established an On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program in accordance with regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation at 23 CFR Part 230, Subpart A, Equal Employment Opportunity on Federal and Federal aid Construction Contracts. It is the policy of the Department to require full utilization of all available training and skill improvement opportunities to assure the increased participation of minority groups, disadvantaged persons, and women in all phases of the highway construction industry. The federal OJT program targets disadvantaged individuals, minority groups, and women for entry into journey level positions to ensure that a competent workforce is available to meet highway construction hiring needs, and to address the historical under-representation of members of these groups in highway construction skilled crafts.

## **Innovation**

### **Technology Innovations**

**3D Digital Project Plans** – ODOT commits to providing 3D digital project plans as part of the contracting process. This technology will allow contractors to use state-of-the-art GPS-controlled automated equipment in the construction process, which reduces the risk of human error in establishing grades and elevations while improving efficiency in earthmoving during the construction process and reducing the overall cost of construction.

**Accelerated Bridge Construct (ABC)** – ODOT will use Accelerated Bridge Construct (ABC) to improve site constructability, total project delivery time, and work-zone safety for the public, as well as reduce traffic impacts, onsite construction time, and weather-related delays. ABC uses innovative planning, design, materials, and construction methods safely and cost-effectively to reduce the onsite construction time that occurs when building new bridges. The use of precast bridge elements is anticipated to minimize construction time.

**Aesthetic Improvements** – Aesthetic improvements to the bridge will be incorporated to enhance the cultural and innovative development that is occurring directly adjacent to the I-35 corridor. These aesthetic improvements could reflect the local cultures including Native American and Capitol Hill Hispanic District and nearby amenities such as Riversport in the Boathouse District. Improvements will be added by utilizing form liners, reveals, stains, lighting, and other treatments.

**Viewing Platform** – A viewing platform will be included in the Project and will provide spectator seating and other amenities to enhance the boat racing experience.

### **Project Delivery Innovations**

**“No Excuses Bonus”** – For construction, ODOT will incentivize contractors to achieve early delivery of the whole project and minimize traffic closures by deploying no excuses bonuses, including a substantial completion incentive valued at 5 to 10 percent of the contract and smaller incentives for internal milestones tied to key project elements.

## **Financing Innovations**

**Increased Revenue** – Bills passed by the Oklahoma State Legislature in 2018 increase state revenue to ODOT by \$194.0 million per year, generated from the ownership or operation of a motor vehicle, and reduce transfers of general-purpose state revenue to ODOT by the same amount. Increased state revenue improves ODOT’s ability to meet the needs of the Project.

**Funding Partnerships** – ODOT will utilize multiple funding partners to unite the cultural, ethnic, and economic development districts that surround or will be accessed by the Project. Project partners such as ACOG, OKC, Chickasaw Nation, and WATCO railroad all have a history of financial partnership on transportation projects in Oklahoma.