

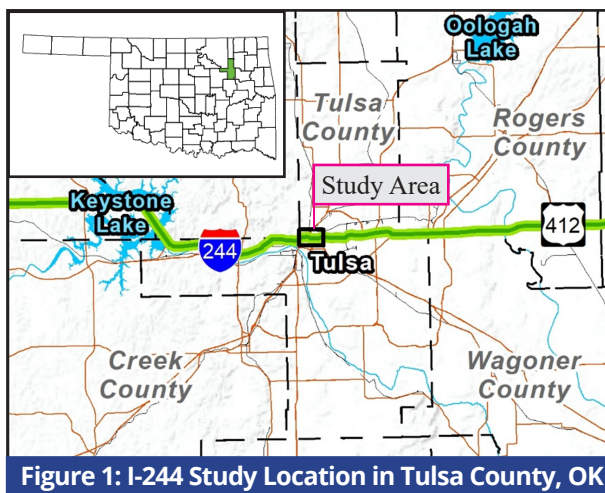
Overview

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) is requesting \$2 million in Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) discretionary grant funding to study potential opportunities to mitigate the impacts of and improve connectivity and mobility across a section of I-244/US-412 in and east of downtown Tulsa, Oklahoma. When what was originally known as the Crosstown Expressway was constructed in the late 1960s, it cut through established neighborhoods and created barriers to connectivity, access, and economic development.

All the area communities follow a similar trend of growth and prosperity in the early 20th century, followed by a decline in development after construction of I-244 in the late 1960s. Tulsa’s mid-century urban renewal priorities led to the acquisition of hundreds of structures for the I-244 facility. The neighborhoods in its path disproportionately felt the burdens of the new freeway, losing not only churches and homes, but also green spaces and businesses that contributed to the local economy and character. Today, these communities are considered Economically Disadvantaged Communities. This application will outline ODOT’s proposed plan to partner with the City of Tulsa, the Indian Nations Council of Governments (INCOG), and local community organizations to study ways to soften and mitigate connectivity concerns of the adjacent communities in the near term, while examining the prospect of relocating, rebuilding, or removing the facility in the long term.

The eligible facility under consideration for this planning grant is I-244 between the L.L. Tisdale Expressway and Lewis Avenue in the city of Tulsa (**Figure 1**). The facility carries the I-244 and US-412 designations (referred to as I-244 in this application). Spanning approximately 2.4 miles, this section of I-244 is elevated in the western section adjacent to downtown Tulsa, and transitions to a depressed facility east of US-75. I-244 carries three lanes of traffic in each direction in the western section, and four lanes in each direction east of US-75 to Lewis

Avenue. Average annual daily traffic volumes are approximately 73,800 vehicles per day (vpd) west of US-75 and 65,100 vpd to the east ([INCOG Traffic Volume Data](#)).



The 180-mile stretch of US-412 between I-35 in central Oklahoma and I-49 in northwest Arkansas is a congressionally designated future interstate highway. The segment has significant truck traffic enabling commerce with the large inland ports at Catoosa and Inola. Between L.L. Tisdale Expressway and US-75, I-244 functions as the north leg of the Inner Dispersal Loop (IDL), a series of highways that distribute traffic around downtown Tulsa and connect to the radial network of freeways and interstates that carry traffic in all directions. The IDL is a major part of Tulsa’s freeway system for automobiles and freight. Connected by four system interchanges, the IDL provides access to downtown and carries interstate through traffic. ODOT has invested \$245 million in the IDL since 2006.

The barriers posed by I-244 take different forms in the western and eastern sections of the study area. I-244 through the Greenwood District is an elevated interstate facility that is perceived as a physical and visual barrier. With a right-of-way of between 250 and 500 feet wide, I-244 consists of a solid berm approximately 20 feet high, punctuated by small windows where the local streets cross underneath. The entirety of the local street network, consisting of ten

city streets (all with sidewalks), connect under I-244. While the local street network has been preserved and maintained, underpasses are dark and provide few visual clues to what lies on the other side.

East of US-75, I-244 transitions to a depressed facility with few local street crossings. Access across the interstate is provided at three locations within the 1.25-mile stretch (Peoria Avenue, Utica Avenue, and Lewis Avenue). First Street and Admiral Boulevard, once a thriving commercial street, now act as one-way frontage roads on either side of the interstate. While the freeway is less of a visual barrier in this location, access across the facility is more restricted, and the local street network less connected. I-244 is directly adjacent to residential neighborhoods and contributes to noise and affects air quality.

Location and Map

I-244 runs east-west on the north side of downtown Tulsa (Figure 2).

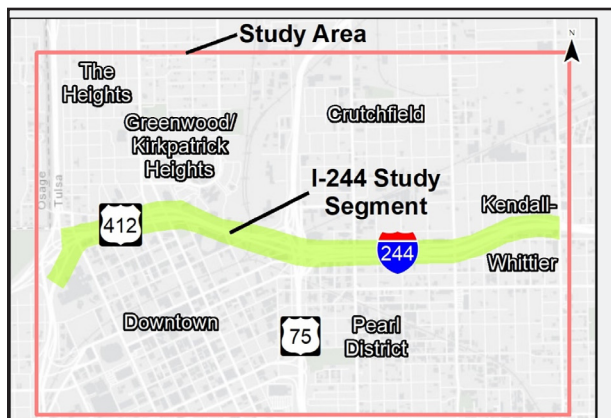


Figure 2: I-244 Study Area

Other major highways in the study area include US-75, which runs north-south on the east side of downtown and is a major freight route between Oklahoma and Texas. Major Class I railroads Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) and Union Pacific (UP) converge within the study area as well as the South Kansas and Oklahoma (SKOL) line that connects to the Tulsa Port of Catoosa. These rail lines, along with US-75 create additional major barriers limiting connectivity between downtown and

the adjacent neighborhoods to the east. Archer Street is the only connection across both the railroads and US-75 linking Greenwood and Crutchfield. This connection has sidewalk on one side of the road only and is not continuous across the at-grade railroad crossing. Bicycle lanes are often blocked by parked vehicles (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Archer Street under I-244

The pedestrian and bicycle networks are densest in the downtown core, much sparser in the Greenwood District/ Kirkpatrick Heights, and almost non-existent east of US-75. While there are several designated bicycle routes, on-street facilities such as bike lanes or markings are rare. Sidewalks are common but are typically narrow and directly adjacent to traffic. Many are in poor condition and not ADA-compliant. Similarly, downtown Tulsa is well served by transit, but routes are fewer in the surrounding neighborhoods. Tulsa Transit recently installed the AERO Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system on Peoria Avenue, which has the highest ridership in the system and provides access to 20% of the jobs in the city. The city also recently helped fund the “This Machine” bicycle share program with over 200 bikes and 45 stations across the city. See the detailed map at [I-244 Study](#).

Description of the Communities

All neighborhoods in the study area experienced residential, industrial, and commercial growth that benefitted from connectivity to Downtown Tulsa and adjacent rail lines. After the construction of I-244, these neighborhoods were isolated from the community amenities and proximity they once enjoyed. Today, the study area is considered an Economically

Disadvantaged Community due to areas of persistent poverty. More than half of the study area consists of minority populations. These communities have been disproportionately affected by the loss of investment, homes, businesses, and pedestrian connectivity.

Land use adjacent to I-244 in downtown Tulsa is markedly different on the north and south sides of the facility. South of I-244 is primarily commercial and includes the Tulsa Arts District, a cluster of galleries, restaurants, and entertainment venues including the historic Cain’s Ballroom, a minor league baseball stadium, the remaining commercial area of Greenwood Avenue, John Hope Reconciliation Park, and a newly constructed history center (Greenwood Rising). North of I-244, land use consists of The Heights Historic District, the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Tulsa campus, the Vernon AME and Mt. Zion Baptist historic black churches, and several parcels of excess land originally acquired for OSU but now identified for redevelopment (Kirkpatrick Heights). The presence of large institutional blocks such as OSU’s campus further fragments the neighborhood and results in a continued reliance on auto-centric transportation. Industrial areas around US-75 and the BNSF and UP railroads are transitioning to other uses, including the new headquarters for USA BMX and a planned mixed use destination district. East of US-75, the area transitions to mixed commercial and residential in the Crutchfield and Pearl Districts, to predominantly residential in the Kendall-Whittier neighborhood.

Greenwood and Kirkpatrick Heights

Following World War I, Tulsa was recognized nationally for its affluent black community, the Greenwood District (Figure 4). The district’s main thoroughfare, Greenwood Avenue, was known as “Black Wall Street” due to its thriving retail, businesses, schools, entertainment, newspapers, movie theaters, doctors, lawyers, etc. Greenwood soon became the place of wealth, education, and advancement for the black community.



Figure 4: “Black Wall Street”, Tulsa, OK, June 1, 1921 (21516.91.B, Mary E. Jones Parrish Collection, Courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society)

By 1920, Greenwood included more than 35 bustling city blocks. In the spring of 1921, underlying social and economic tension in Tulsa sparked the events of the Tulsa Race Massacre. The Greenwood District, the thirty-five square block area that comprised the city’s entire African American community, was burned to the ground. Dozens to hundreds of residents were killed and thousands more made homeless (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Tulsa Race Massacre, June 1921 (1984.002.021, Courtesy of Tulsa Historical Society & Museum)

The event resulted in over \$2 million in losses of real estate and personal property, an amount equivalent to \$30 million today.

Recovery began immediately, with many residents left with few choices but to rebuild. By 1928, the Greenwood District exceeded the number of businesses it had in 1921, and continued to thrive as a black enclave in the northern part of the city for decades.

The IDL appeared in Tulsa’s comprehensive plan in 1957. The Federal Aid Highway Act, passed one year previously, gave state and local officials authority to construct new highways. The Crosstown Expressway was planned as the northern leg of a loop of highways to encircle downtown and as a reliever for I-44. The Tulsa Urban Renewal Authority acquired property on the north side of downtown Tulsa for the expressway and to eliminate slums and blight. After four decades of recovery and rebuilding, Greenwood was impacted by the construction of I-244 (Figure 6).

Construction of the freeway created a physical and social barrier between Greenwood and the rest of the city. The physical fabric of the once dynamic, walkable community was dissolved. This, coupled with public disinvestment, predatory lending, and the redistribution of spending and wealth that followed desegregation, led to long-term community members relocating to other parts of the city and spending their dollars elsewhere. Urban renewal changed the once densely populated neighborhood, leaving behind vacancy and reminders of previous development.

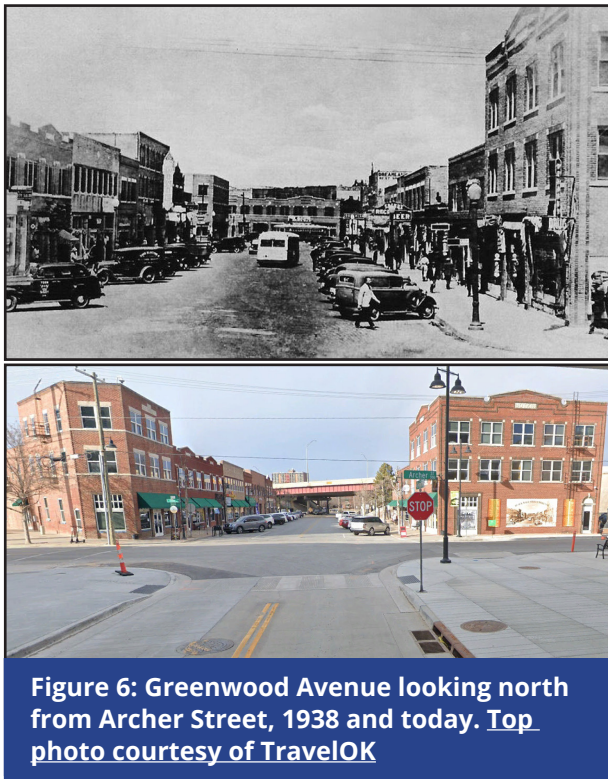


Figure 6: Greenwood Avenue looking north from Archer Street, 1938 and today. Top photo courtesy of TravelOK

Crutchfield, Pearl District, and Kendall-Whittier
The Crutchfield, Pearl District, and Kendall-Whittier neighborhoods are in the eastern portion of the study area and were once vibrant communities that benefitted from the connectivity to downtown Tulsa. The construction of I-244 created a physical barrier and took away homes, businesses, and community centers, resulting in disinvestment, vacant structures, and a deterioration of the neighborhood (Figure 7). A large proportion of the then-predominantly white neighborhoods was employed at the adjacent industrial, commercial, and manufacturing sites. This led to a tremendous amount of growth between the 1920s and 1940s of mixed-use development. Both Crutchfield and the Pearl District had main arterial roads of Admiral Boulevard and 6th Street with commercial and residential buildings that directly served downtown Tulsa.

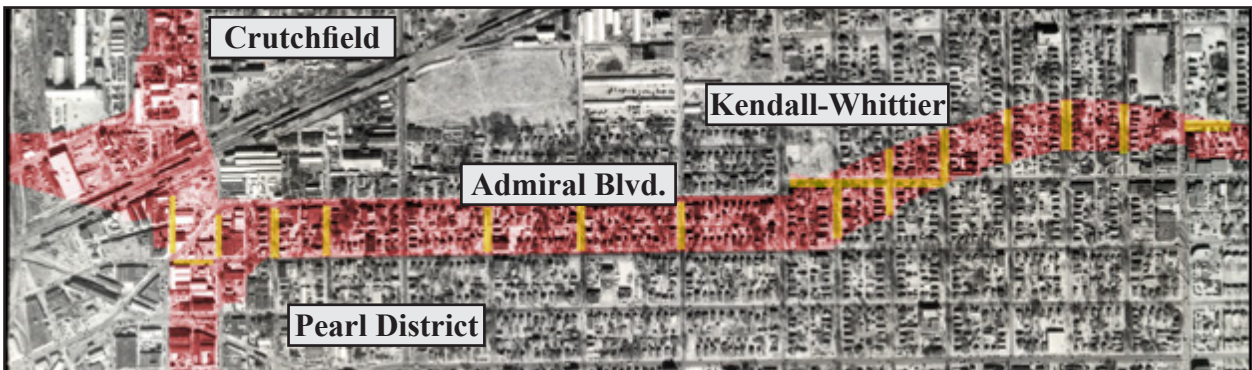


Figure 7: Path of I-244 from US-75 to Lewis Avenue (red=structures lost, yellow=street connections lost). Our Legacy, Our Community Existing Conditions

While these neighborhoods were thriving parts of Tulsa in the early to mid-20th century, I-244 fragmented and cut off the connectivity that the areas once benefitted from.

Response to Merit Criteria

The following sections address the merits of the I-244 Study. ODOT and the City of Tulsa will use RCP Planning Grant funds to accomplish the following:

- Through community engagement, partnership, and input, inventory and propose ways to address the equity, mobility, safety, and connectivity impacts that resulted from the construction of I-244. Community input will be obtained and implemented per an established Community Participation Plan under the direction of ODOT and City of Tulsa with assistance from the Community Advisory Board.
- Identify opportunities for near-term projects to enhance mobility and connectivity across the existing barrier of I-244, potentially including improving visibility, safety, and aesthetics of existing crossings, establishing new crossings, and other projects to support the community’s mobility goals.
- Support implementation actions related to transportation infrastructure envisioned in the Kirkpatrick Heights-Greenwood Master Plan and other neighborhood plans.
- Complete a high-level feasibility analysis of facility removal in the long-term (i.e. 30+ years).

Equity, Environmental Justice, and Community Engagement

According to EPA’s EJSCREEN and FHWA’s Screening Tool for Equity Analysis of Projects (STEAP), the population of the study area has high percentages of low-income and minority populations, two demographic factors explicitly named in Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice. See the 2020 Census data and the STEAP report at [I-244 Study](#).

All the Census Tracts in the I-244 study area except for downtown Tulsa are majority non-white neighborhoods. Those on the west side of US-75 tend to have higher black populations, while east of US-75 the Hispanic population is predominant, with a high incidence of limited English proficiency. Renter occupancy is high and there is a high percentage of disabilities. The percentage of people below the poverty level is high across the board. All tracts in the I-244 study area are defined by USDOT as Areas of Persistent Poverty and therefore Economically Disadvantaged Communities (**Figure 8**).

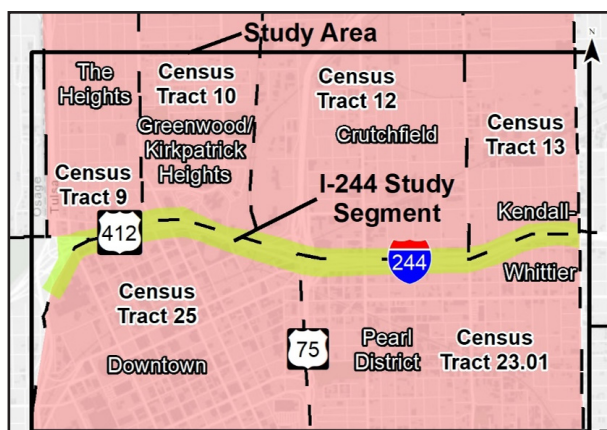


Figure 8: Economically Disadvantaged Census Tracts in the I-244 Study Area

Environmental burdens have also been disproportionately born by the population of the study area. EJSCREEN indices for particulate matter, ozone, air toxics cancer risks and respiratory hazards, traffic proximity, lead paint, superfund proximity, risk management plan (RMP) facility proximity, and hazardous waste proximity are all in the 80-100th percentile for the populations on both sides of I-244. The existing economic disparities and environmental burdens are a product of both local events and more general historical policy trends. The I-244 Study will conduct additional data collection to establish a baseline of existing conditions and populations in the project area and to gain an understanding of the communities involved, how to mitigate historical impacts, and how best to engage and strengthen community members.

Community Participation Plan

With the input of the neighborhoods and business communities most affected by I-244 construction, ODOT intends to study solutions to mitigate the impacts of I-244 and more equitably distribute benefits. The Community Participation Plan (CPP) will specifically focus on identifying the needs of the surrounding community by engaging as many of its members as possible, especially the communities most directly affected by I-244. The CPP will be developed with a focus on the Environmental Justice populations where socioeconomic disparities exist and more targeted methods may be needed.

In order to achieve meaningful engagement, the CPP will incorporate vital lessons and leverage relationships forged during past projects in the area, such as the city of Tulsa’s completion of Small Area Plans for Unity-Heritage Neighborhoods, Crutchfield, the Pearl District, and Kendall-Whittier, all of which had Citizen Advisory Teams (CAT) engaged throughout the process (see [I-244 Study](#)). Most recently, the city of Tulsa is finalizing [Our Legacy, Our Community](#), a Renewed Vision for North Tulsa for the Greenwood District and Kirkpatrick Heights neighborhood. This master plan was a product of input and engagement from focus groups, stakeholder interviews, multiple agencies, and a citizen Leadership Committee who worked to ensure the Plan met resident needs and directed redevelopment of public lands in a way that will bring economic benefits to the local area.

In addition to the city’s history with working with area neighborhoods, ODOT recently completed the Pathway to Hope, a multimodal path connecting John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park with Greenwood Avenue. Located adjacent to I-244, the project used the freeway retaining walls as a canvas for art and displays interpreting the history of the Greenwood District (**Figure 9**). ODOT utilized the relationships built during the Pathway to Hope project to move forward with



Figure 9: Pathway to Hope

the Pathway to Hope Public Art Trail, working with the Oklahoma Arts Council to commission art for six I-244 underpasses between Main Street and Greenwood Avenue, similar to the Black Wall Street mural added to the I-244 retaining wall in 2018 (**Figure 10**). This project is ongoing, and artwork is anticipated to be installed in 2023.



Figure 10: Black Wall Street Mural on I-244

One of the most important lessons learned from these past projects is the importance of local community advocates. Therefore, implementation of the CPP will begin by reaching out to community leaders identified through previous ODOT and City of Tulsa planning efforts and securing those community members as advocates to participation in the I-244 Study. Finding community champions to spearhead the CPP will more successfully reach hard-to-access members. Additionally, the Planning Study will initiate conversations with local entities (such as nonprofit organizations, churches, schools, businesses, and neighborhoods) to identify appropriate points of contact within the community. Identified

community leaders will be asked which methods (e.g. workshops, on-line engagement, survey apps, door flyers, etc.) will be the most effective measures to equitably disseminate information and increase and facilitate involvement. Multi-lingual collaboration will be important in the neighborhoods east of US-75 where the Spanish speaking population is high.

Community involvement will be the key to developing solutions to mitigate the impacts of and increase connectivity across I-244. ODOT's study will build on existing community plans and will be influenced and directed based on direct feedback from the communities and people that live and work in the area. A goal of the Study will be to develop access and mobility solutions the community is not only proud of but one in which they feel a sense of ownership.

Measuring the effectiveness of the CPP will be one of the performance indicators of the Study. Tracking participation in various meetings and other outreach opportunities will provide data on the numbers of engaged participants, and which methods are most successful. ODOT routinely tracks participation in its in-person and on-line events, using website analytics to determine the number of unique visitors to a site, time spent, and the most popular pages.

Mobility and Community Connectivity

While the historic context, existing disparities, and CPP provide the foundation on which the I-244 Study will be based, the primary goal of the Study is to identify solutions to community connectivity that remove the barriers to access, mobility, and economic development presented by I-244. These solutions will consist of short-term improvements to improve mobility and connectivity across the existing facility, and a study of long-term feasibility of facility removal. Informed by existing neighborhood plans, ODOT will work with the community to identify ways to implement mobility and connectivity goals associated with I-244. All the existing neighborhood plans identify crossing I-244 as a goal. The Our Legacy, Our

Community Plan identifies opportunities for gateways at the intersections of local streets and the I-244 underpasses. The Kendall-Whittier Sector Plan suggests screening I-244 from the adjacent neighborhoods through buffers, walls, and/or landscaping, and to improve aesthetics and enhance neighborhood identity at the Lewis Avenue interchange. Opportunities to improve mobility and connectivity present somewhat differently on the east and west sides of the study area. On the west side where I-244 is elevated, Currently, ten local city streets cross under I-244 within the 1-mile extent (see **Figure 11** for an example).



Figure 11: I-244 Underpass at Cheyenne

These streets consist primarily of two-lane roadways with curb and in most cases a sidewalk on both sides of the roadway. The underpasses are the only connections through the I-244 highway embankment. This physical and visual barrier limits access and mobility, particularly for non-vehicular travelers that are more focused on the safety of their surrounding environment than vehicles. Potential opportunities to mitigate the I-244 barrier in the western section of study area (Greenwood/Kirkpatrick Heights) will be identified through the I-244 Study, and could include (but are not limited to):

- Improved lighting in the I-244 underpasses to increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety.
- Capitalize on the Oklahoma Arts Council Pathway to Hope Art Trail to create public spaces under I-244, for example lighting and landscaping.
- Extension of the multimodal Pathway to Hope west to Main Street and the OKPOP Museum and Cains Ballroom.

- Providing right-of-way for fixed guide way transit such as streetcar.
- Widening of the underpasses (lengthening of the existing I-244 bridges) to remove embankment, improving the visual obstruction and creating more open space under the freeway.

East of US-75, improving mobility and connectivity across I-244 will likely consist of improving existing crossings such as Peoria, Utica, and Lewis Avenues, and consideration of additional crossing locations, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. Currently, the only non-vehicular accommodations consist of narrow sidewalks. There are few crosswalks or pedestrian signals. Pedestrians wanting to cross I-244 must do so in close proximity to vehicles on major arterial streets with no barrier separation. This results in increased bicycle and pedestrian collisions, show in **(Figure 12)**. These collisions are concentrated on the arterial streets that cross I-244. The Study will identify potential opportunities for mitigation in the eastern study area neighborhoods of Crutchfield, Pearl District, and Kendall-Whittier. These opportunities could include (but are not limited to):

- Improving the safety of existing crossing infrastructure to provide wider, more accessible pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. This corridor has potential for multimodal and transit-oriented development with the AERO bus rapid transit (BRT) line on Peoria Avenue.

- Enhancing existing crossings with aesthetics signaling individual neighborhood identities.
- Improvements such as landscape buffers within the I-244 right-of-way to protect the adjacent neighborhoods from noise and light pollution,
- Construct new crossings to reconnect the street network that was lost when I-244 was built, including a potential land bridge or deck park, similar to what was built at the Tulsa’s Gathering Place **(Figure 13)**. This type of amenity could provide community space as well as potential recreational opportunities.

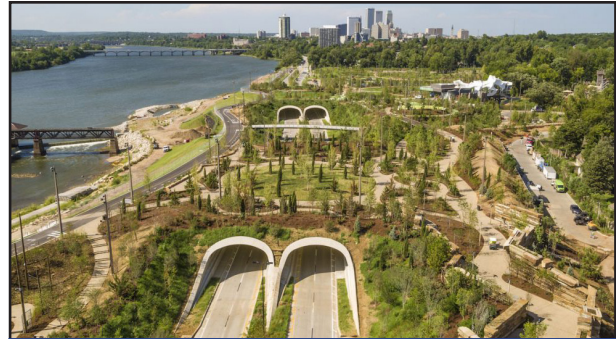


Figure 13: Land Bridges at the Gathering Place, Tulsa (Photo Credit: Miller Photography)

Increasing mobility and connectivity for the residents historically affected by I-244 construction will demand a comprehensive study of a wide range of options. Improving affordable transportation options such as bicycle and pedestrian connections is a high priority. While the study area neighborhoods have different

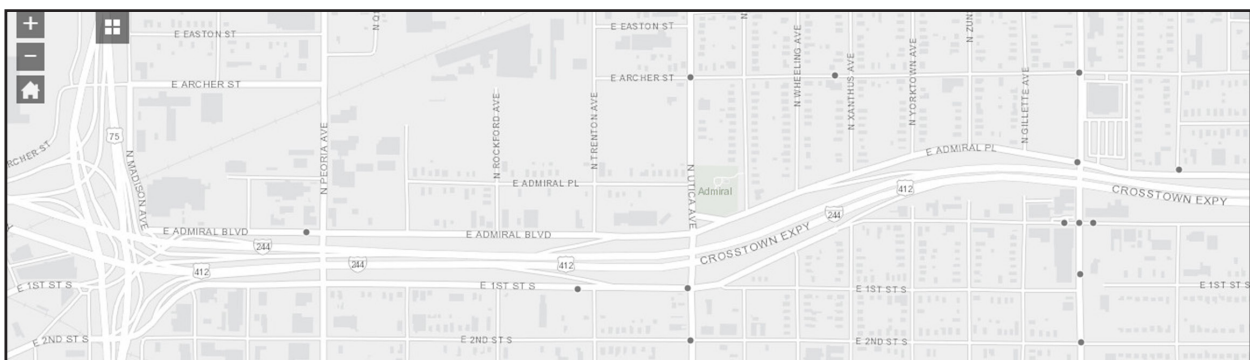


Figure 12: Pedestrian and Bicycle Collisions, 2008-2017 (INCOG)

needs and mobility challenges, a common theme is I-244 is a barrier rather than a destination or usable space. The Study will seek opportunities to create inviting, community focused places that celebrate local culture. Primary in this study is the consideration of safety, improved multi-modal and affordable transportation, and integration with the character, context, and land use desires of the community.

The I-244 Study will also include a feasibility analysis of eventual removal of the elevated portion of I-244 between L.L. Tisdale Expressway and US-75. Current estimates indicate that this facility has 30-40 years of remaining useful life, given that ODOT has invested \$245 million in pavement rehabilitation and bridges in the IDL. With comprehensive data on existing and future conditions, ODOT will investigate the system-wide needs to accommodate I-244 removal, potentially including additional capacity elsewhere in the network, safety countermeasures, and regional system and travel demand management strategies. The feasibility study will examine the costs of the needed improvements compared to the lifecycle costs of the existing facility and perform a benefit-cost analysis (BCA). The BCA will also consider the value of travel time savings, operation costs, collision reduction, emissions savings, as well as more qualitative benefits to equity, multimodal mobility, and long-term resiliency.

The resulting study will serve as a decision-making tool for ODOT, INCOG, and City of Tulsa for planning and programming future transportation improvements. The Study can be used to prioritize projects that will be needed to maintain network safety and capacity in the event I-244 is removed or otherwise reconfigured.

Community-Based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships

The affected communities of Greenwood and Kirkpatrick Heights, Crutchfield, Pearl District, and Kendall-Whittier all have robust plans in place that outline their needs and desires related

to mobility, land use, and community identity. The I-244 study will be driven by the needs and desires of the communities involved in working towards solutions that meaningfully redress inequities and provide benefits to those most affected by the highway's construction. These solutions will be an outgrowth of the CPP which will include multiple public engagement opportunities for the local community to create a new vision.

The I-244 Study will involve a multi-agency partnership and a dedicated public engagement process. The formal partnership between ODOT and the City of Tulsa has been established through joint participation in this grant application. These two entities have a long history of working together on projects within Tulsa, including the Pathway to Hope.

ODOT and the City of Tulsa will contribute equal shares of the required local match and will work in partnership to execute the CPP and complete the Study. INCOG has pledged support of the Study and will provide access to its data and analytics of the region, including the travel demand model. Many other entities and elected officials including the Tulsa Regional Chamber, the Tulsa Community Foundation, Greenwood Cultural Center, Tulsa Economic Development Corporation, Kendall-Whittier Main Street, and the George Kaiser Family Foundation have pledged their support of the project and will be important advocates when engaging stakeholders (see [Letters of Support at I-244 Study](#)).

From these formal partnerships, a new Community Advisory Group (CAG) will be formed to guide and advise ODOT on the completion of the Study. ODOT will solicit input from the communities on the membership of the CAG, anticipated to be comprised of community and business members, nonprofit organizations, and multimodal transportation advocates. The CAG will serve and provide coordination and collaboration to confirm the Study efforts have adequate and equal community and

technical support and are consistent with other community-based initiatives such as housing and economic development. The CAG will advise ODOT, City of Tulsa, and INCOG on methods to engage the communities, to facilitate discussion, and assist in the identification and prioritization of improvements.

Equitable Development / Shared Prosperity

The I-244 Study will provide a plan to implement the community’s visions, priorities, and policies for more equitable distribution of benefits. Improving multimodal mobility and connectivity will help the city of Tulsa and local organizations implement other strategies to restore and stabilize the study area communities, such as redevelopment of vacant land, affordable housing, park and recreation opportunities, and cultural spaces.

Initiatives such as the planned implementation of a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District to support development in the Kirkpatrick Heights-Greenwood area (and existing TIF in Downtown); public funding to support the development of the USA BMX Headquarters; a new healthcare professions complex at Langston University, the BRT line on Peoria Avenue, and Route 66 branding efforts at 11th Street and Lewis Avenue in Kendall-Whittier are all examples of city reinvestment into the community and are supported by increasing connectivity across I-244.

The recent \$50 million Choice Neighborhoods Grant awarded to City of Tulsa for the Envision Comanche Plan will revitalize an area of public housing and create new businesses and schools just three miles north of I-244. Improving and creating multimodal connections provides more equitable access to other community investments and will make the community a safer and more enjoyable place to walk, bike, and play.

ODOT has already made great strides in creative place-making with the Pathway to Hope and Art Pathway to Hope. These efforts both commemorate and memorialize events

of the past while celebrating local culture and a bright future. Also, it is important to note that the I-244 Study will assess what opportunities are present for utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, Minority-owned Businesses, Women-owned Businesses, or 8(a) firms. The Study will leverage Recent Memoranda of Understanding between USDOT and the Small Business Administration to help these agencies better support disadvantaged businesses by providing access to capital, resources, and relationships to fully engage in transportation projects.

Small and local businesses are anticipated to benefit from improved connectivity, as all modes can safely access the businesses. Placemaking such as urban parks have been known to benefit the local economic development of a region and build community wealth. Many local park and recreation amenities spur tourism to their respective locales, generating significant economic activity, including (but not limited to) increased sales at local restaurants/bars and hotels. The presence of such features can improve economic opportunities, affording the potential for community members to become entrepreneurs.

Reconnecting Communities Pilot Planning Grant funds, if provided, will be instrumental in ODOT’s first steps towards implementation of USDOT’s policies and priorities that were established with passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Improving connectivity and mobility across I-244 in Tulsa, Oklahoma will achieve many of the objectives set forth in the USDOT’s Strategic Plan Goals through redressing the harm caused by the highway’s construction. The I-244 Study seeks to transform the surrounding disadvantaged communities through reducing inequalities and improving safety and economic strength. Important and critical partnerships are in place to address the intended objectives and the financial commitments are in place to ensure the timely completion of the study.