

G R E A T E R
O K L A H O M A C I T Y
C H A M B E R

November 7, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As an economic development organization with over 3,000 members, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber would like to express our emphatic support for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application "*Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections on I-35 over the Oklahoma River*" for the Bridge Investment Program (BIP). Funding for this critical project would serve a number of key purposes: 1) Improve the nationally strategic and economically vital connection of I-35 over the Oklahoma River; 2) Facilitate increased sporting events and tourism in the U.S. Olympic Committee-designated training site the Boathouse District and the landmark Chickasaw Nation's First Americans Museum and OKANA Resort; and 3) Encourage increased economic opportunity in the underserved Horizons District south of the river which lacks access to health care, education, and employment.

Interstate 35 in Oklahoma City intersects two major east-west freight corridors, Interstates 40 and 44. Therefore, the I-35 bridges in Oklahoma City are critically located at the crossroads of intercontinental commerce and movement, linking the west and east coasts to major urban areas throughout the nation. The existing northbound and southbound I-35 bridges that cross the Oklahoma River are simply inadequate for the current and future demands of a highly traveled interstate corridor. The two bridges see nearly 18,000 trucks per day and ODOT has identified the corridor as a freight bottleneck.

The specific project referenced above seeks to replace the two existing I-35 bridges over the Oklahoma River, including a ramp bridge connection and the addition of a pedestrian bridge to provide multimodal access across the river. ODOT has secured financial commitments from the City of Oklahoma City to contribute to the pedestrian, bike, and scooter bridge.

The completion of this iconic project in the heart of Oklahoma City and the nation's interstate highway system would provide increased safety for freight movement and pedestrians, increase capacity for future growth, and allow for continued strategically vital contributions to the national and local economies.

Thank you in advance for your strong consideration of ODOT's application for the Bridge Investment Program. Please contact the Chamber if you need any further assistance as you consider this critically important proposal.

Sincerely,



Christy Gillenwater
President and CEO