



OKLAHOMA
Transportation



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I-35

McClain County Safety & Capacity Improvement Project

Project Description

FY26 BUILD Grant Application

BUILD Grant Request:
\$20,000,000



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Summary

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) requests \$20 million in U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) funding for construction of the **I-35 McClain County Safety & Capacity Improvement Project** (the Project). The Project will widen Interstate 35 (I-35), a critical National Highway System corridor, from four to six lanes from the Johnson Avenue Bridge, north 2.3 miles, to enhance safety, reduce congestion, and support regional economic growth.

I-35 is a major north-south interstate highway serving as a key artery for interstate mobility, economic development, and freight traffic throughout Oklahoma. The interstate spans nearly 1,600 miles and provides a direct link between Oklahoma City and major metropolitan areas in Texas, Kansas, and Minnesota. Continued growth south of the Oklahoma City Metropolitan area and the growth north of the Texas Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area has placed tremendous stress on this rural segment of I-35. The Project provides immediate capacity relief and safety benefits through the following improvements:

- One additional lane in each direction, using the existing right-of way of the center median
- Update of existing tapered acceleration and deceleration lanes at Johnson Road to parallel acceleration and deceleration lanes
- Overlay of existing mainline pavement
- Drainage upgrades
- New median barrier wall and lighting

The Project will provide essential congestion relief on I-35, eliminating a bottleneck between south central Oklahoma and the Oklahoma City Metropolitan area. If left unaddressed, commuters, families, tourists, and freight would experience impactful delays and safety risks.

The Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) indicates the Project is expected to generate value, resulting in a benefit-cost ratio (BCR) of 1.55 and \$2.7 million in cost savings (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Benefit Cost Analysis Cost Savings Findings

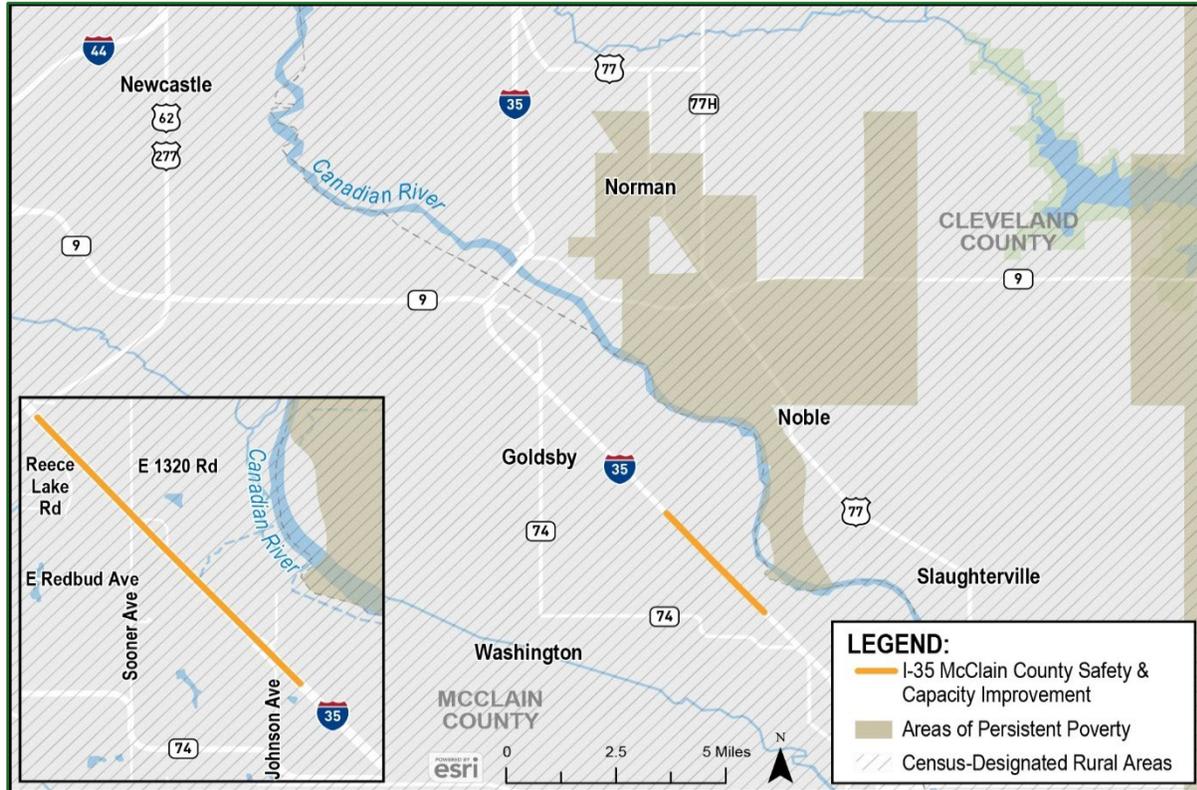


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Project Location

The Project is located along I-35 in Goldsby, Oklahoma, within McClain County and Chickasaw Nation between Mile Marker 98.43 and 100.42 (Figure 2). The Project is adjacent to an Area of Persistent Poverty.

Figure 2. Project Location



The Project is a part of a network that is essential to a wide range of daily traffic and serves as a critical freight corridor between the Texas border and Oklahoma City. The Project area has the following designations:

- **National Highway System**, which includes roadways important to the nation's economy, defense, and mobility
- **Primary Highway Freight System (PHFS)**, a network of highways identified as the most critical highway portions of the U.S. freight transportation system
- **Federal Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET)**, which includes roads deemed necessary for emergency mobilization and peacetime movement of heavy armor, fuel, ammunition, repair parts, and other commodities to support U.S. military operations

Project Background and History

The Project has years of research and evaluation through the work and collaboration of the ODOT, state, county, and municipal officials, third-party consultants, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The improvements along this rural portion of I-35 reflect ODOT's broader strategy to widen the highway and bridges along segments of I-35 that have reached or exceeded current capacity as part of its [Forward 35](#) initiative.

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Forward 35 efforts include a series of analyses along I-35 to assess which segments of the highway are operating beyond functional capacity and the urgency of an investment timeframe for identified improvements. This Project is classified as capacity deficient; therefore, the segment requires immediate capacity improvements to accommodate growing congestion in the area. Because of the demand of roadway improvements, the investment timeframe for this Project is immediate.

Transportation Challenges and Solutions

The I-35 corridor continues to experience substantial growth driven by increases in population and employment in areas adjacent to the Project location. The added capacity to the Project area will improve the I-35 corridor and provide safe, reliable, and productive freight transportation to support a growing economy and population.

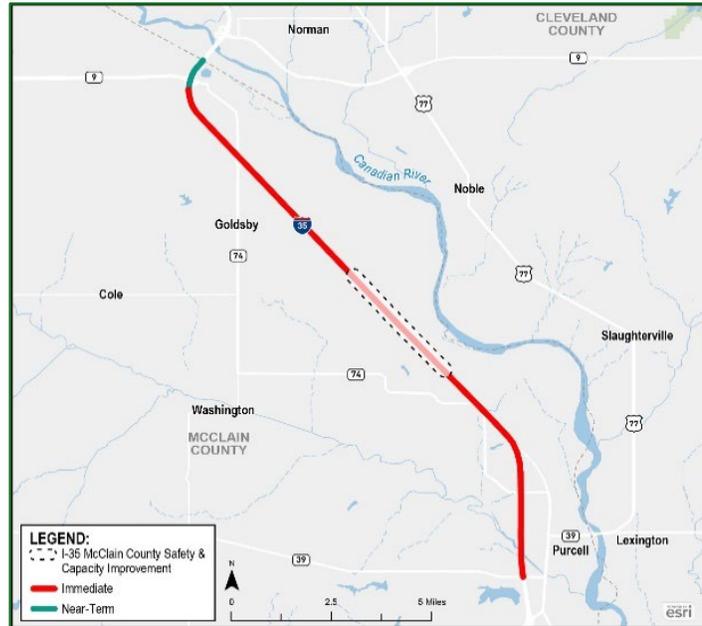
The I-35 corridor serves as one of 10 identified Megapolitan areas in the United States. These are highly urbanized regions that are key centers of national and regional socio-economic activity. According to data in the Forward 35 initiative, the I-35 corridor carries up to 150,000 vehicles per day, with traffic South of Oklahoma City anticipated to grow by as much as 1.4 million vehicles per day over the next 20 years (Figure 4).

Figure 4. I-35 Corridor Statistics



Of the 10 Megapolitan areas, the I-35 corridor ranks first in 2005 to 2022 population growth with a growth rate of 31% and ranks first in job growth for the 2005 to 2022 period with a job growth rate of 28%. In contrast, between 2005 and 2022, the population growth rate in the United States was 13%, and the job growth rate was 12%.

Figure 3. Capacity Deficiency in I-35 Corridor Segment



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The recommended timeframe for capacity improvements within the Project limits is categorized in the January 2024 [I-35 Corridor Report](#) as “immediate” (Figure 3). The “immediate” category includes segments along the I-35 corridor that are at near-failing conditions based on capacity and traffic volumes. Specifically, Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) in the Project area is projected to rise from 57,300 AADT in 2023 to 66,840 AADT in 2030, with traffic volumes increasing at a rate of 2.6% annually. Out of the total AADT, heavy trucks comprise 25% of vehicles along the Project area. The current four-lane configuration no longer provides adequate capacity or operational performance for existing and forecasted traffic demand for regional travel, commuter traffic, and the substantial volume of heavy trucks along I-35. The need for capacity improvements is further amplified by the lack of adjacent reliever routes. The Project’s construction of an additional lane in each direction and associated improvements will increase safety, improve traffic flow, reduce congestion, and increase travel time reliability along this 2.3-mile segment of I-35.

Broader Transportation Infrastructure Investments

The Project aligns with ODOT’s broader transportation infrastructure investments identified in state initiatives such as [Forward 35](#). Recognizing sustained congestion, safety concerns, and economic growth pressures, Forward 35 guides long-term investment and modernization of I-35. The Project is included in ODOT’s efforts to improve I-35 in southern Oklahoma, from the Red River (the Oklahoma-Texas border) to the Oklahoma River (the Oklahoma City metropolitan area). The four segments of Forward 35 are shown in Figure 5.

Southern Oklahoma represents one of the highest-priority investment areas under Forward 35 because of cross-border traffic with Texas and freight demand. ODOT estimates it will ultimately require approximately \$2.5 billion to widen I-35 to six lanes statewide, with southern Oklahoma representing the first phase of that vision. This Project is part of ODOT’s broader initiative to have at least six lanes of traffic throughout the entire interstate corridor.

There are a number of ODOT projects in various stages of construction that are increasing the capacity of I-35 from a four-lane to a six-lane highway. Projects adjacent to the study area include the Ladd Road Project. This ODOT project focuses on improving I-35 from approximately 1 mile south of Ladd Road north to the SH-74 interchange. The Project will widen I-35 from four lanes to six lanes by adding one 12-foot lane in each direction, with no new right-of-way acquisition required. Additional improvements include the following:

- Widening the inside shoulders to 10 feet
- Installing a continuous median barrier
- Updating interchange ramps to ensure proper connections with the widened roadway
- Completing grade, drain, bridge, and surface improvements

ODOT’s coordinated roadway capacity improvement projects will improve traffic flow, enhance safety, and support both regional and local connectivity along I-35.

Widening projects have been identified and advanced to address increasing traffic congestion throughout this corridor. This includes Texas Department of Transportation

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plans to widen I-35 to six lanes from Sanger, Texas, to the Oklahoma state border, which will tie directly to the impending improvements at Red River crossing to provide safe and efficient interstate travel.

Project Renderings

The Project is an active programmed project at ODOT, and its current design level is at [60%](#). Figure 5, Figure 6, and Figure 7 are different section renderings.

Figure 5. Typical Section with Ramp Rendering

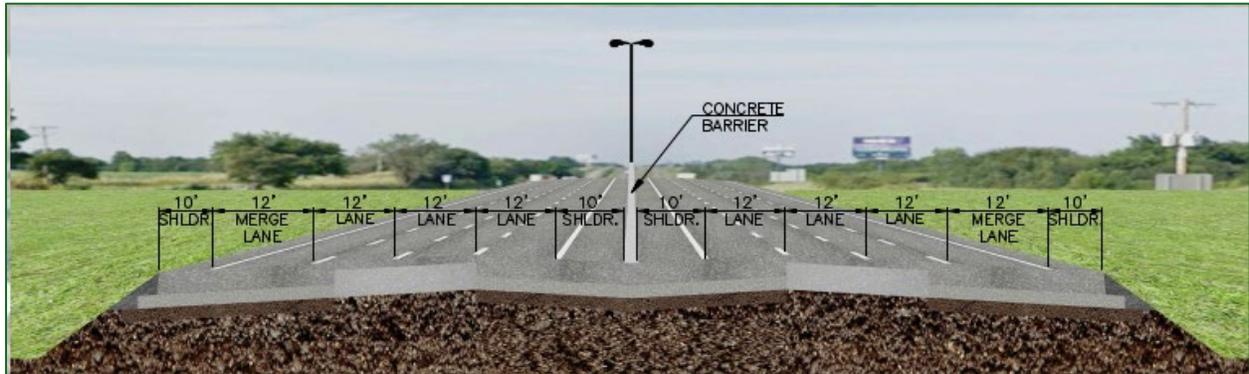


Figure 6. Typical Mainline Section Rendering

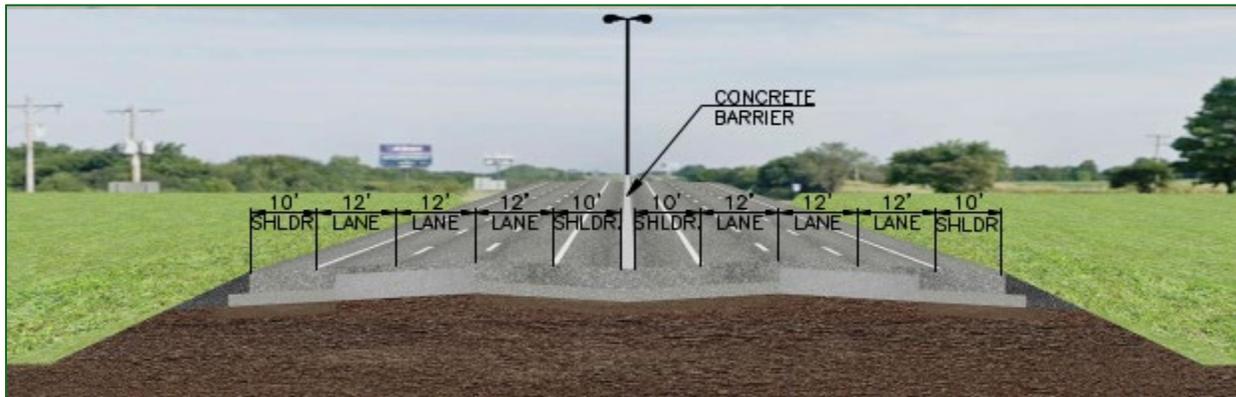


Figure 7. Project Design Typical Section Rendering

