



Thursday, January 23, 2025

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

Subject: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Request for *Hochatown Community Access and Pedestrian Safety Project*

Dear Secretary,

We are pleased to write this letter in support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program. The Hochatown Community Access and Pedestrian Safety Project will expand a section of highway in rural Southeast Oklahoma which has seen substantial growth over the past decade.

Hochatown has become a popular attraction for many across Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas. Home to Broken Bow Lake and Beavers Bend State Park, along with numerous other attractions and businesses, this area of Southeast Oklahoma has become a hub for tourism and economic development. The growth has led to the community of Hochatown incorporating in November 2022, establishing a local government for the first time which lacks the resources to develop the highway infrastructure. The existing two-lane highway lacks shoulders and turn lanes which has increased the collision rates and restricts movement. The increased development and tourism have exacerbated the current lack of capacity and the need for major improvements.

The project proposed by ODOT will upgrade a four-mile section of US-259 by expanding the roadway, providing safety and operational improvements, along with improved access management. ODOT also looks to address alternative, multimodal transportation options by providing accessibility through sidewalks and trails. The improved US-259 will help incentivize economic development and sustain the growth that Hochatown has seen in recent years. Construction of the project will create a modernized, safer expanded highway with a shared-use path to support connectivity along the corridor and improve overall conditions for the community and visitors alike.

Thank you in advance for your strong consideration of ODOT's application for the RAISE program. Please contact our offices if you need any further assistance as you consider this important proposal.

Sincerely,

Chad Warmington
President & CEO
The State Chamber of Oklahoma