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Friday, February 16, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant opportunity for **Bridging the Gap: New Multimodal Connections over the Oklahoma River**

Honorable Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of Bike Oklahoma, I am writing to voice our organization's strong support of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for the RAISE Grant for Bridging the Gap: New Multimodal Connections over the Oklahoma River. This project is a marquis project in the downtown core of Oklahoma City. This RAISE Grant application is to construct a separate bicycle and pedestrian bridge adjacent to I-35 as a component of the I-35 bridge replacement project.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of this I-35 bridge replacement project is the tremendous community impacts that the bridge will offer the Oklahoma City community. Since the I-35 bridges were built over three decades ago, the Oklahoma River has been dammed and is now host to elite national rowing races. In addition, near the edge of the river is the new Riversport Complex which is home to US Olympic Team training.

Along the edge of downtown Oklahoma City runs the scenic Oklahoma River, a 7-mile-long waterway and 13 miles of paved trails that has reinvented outdoor recreation in the capital city. The new bridge would provide a safer independent facility for bicycle and pedestrian access to the amenities on both sides of the river. This will link to 10 interconnected trails that cover over 80 miles and can take you to almost every point in Oklahoma City. This project includes connections to the new Horizons District, including the First Americans Museum and OKANA resort, with the historically disadvantaged Capitol Hill District.

Personally, this bicycle and pedestrian bridge will improve the safety of my commute. Currently, my best options for crossing the river between my daughter's daycare and my office involve large arterial streets, sharing space with 40mph traffic. This project provides connectivity for much safer alternative routes, making me, and the drivers frequently around me, happier.

Bike Oklahoma strongly supports the New Multimodal Connections over the Oklahoma River Project in Oklahoma County for its vital contribution and urge your support of full funding for the project. Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to call on us should you have questions or if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Carfang".

Tony Carfang
President, Bike Oklahoma