



OKLAHOMA
Transportation



Project Description

Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections over the Oklahoma River

Oklahoma Department of Transportation
RAISE Grant Application

February 28, 2024

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Project Description

Bridging the Gap: Multimodal Connections over the Oklahoma River is a marquis project in Oklahoma City that will have tremendous community impacts. The project features a new “shared use” multimodal bridge which will be constructed west of the I-35 southbound bridge and which will connect to the recently constructed Oklahoma River Trail system on both sides of the river and provide safe active transportation connections to work, education, housing, entertainment, and cultural opportunities in downtown Oklahoma City.

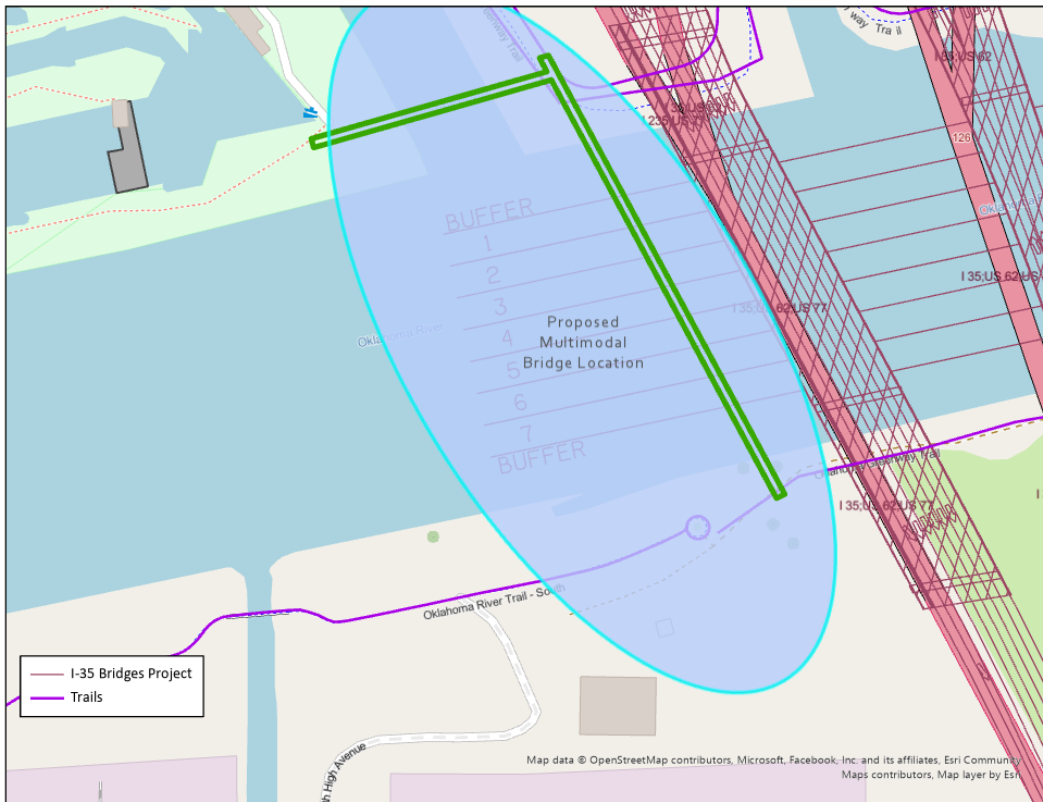
Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) is requesting \$17.4 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 RAISE funds to construct a new “shared use” multimodal bridge adjacent to the I-35 SB bridge in the urban area of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The Project cost totals \$21,696,120. In addition to the \$17.4 million requested in RAISE funds, ODOT will contribute 20 percent or \$4,339,224 of state funds (Funding Commitment Letter). More detailed budget information is included in the **Project Budget** section.

ODOT is dedicated to supporting a safe and effective transportation system that provides multimodal opportunities for active transportation users of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Consisting of sidewalks, bikeways, multimodal trails, and other infrastructure, Oklahoma’s growing active transportation system provides and promotes health and safety for users which benefits Oklahoma’s environment and economy. Oklahoma City is anticipating that trends of growth and redevelopment near the project location will. In consultation with stakeholders in the Project area, ODOT identified a terrific opportunity to build a multimodal bridge adjacent to the SB I-35 bridge and more information on this critical connection is included in **Equity, Multimodal Options, and Quality of Life** section in the Outcome Criteria Narrative.

The multimodal bridge project is a priority project for ODOT, and if awarded will be included in the Eight-year Construction Work Plan (CWP) and STIP and scheduled for construction in 2028.

The multimodal bridge is part of a larger ODOT effort to also improve accessibility and mobility over the Oklahoma River by replacing the I-35 northbound and southbound bridges which will benefit passenger, freight, and transit users as illustrated in **Figure 1**. However, this application is for the separate multimodal bridge project only which is highlighted in **Figure 1**.

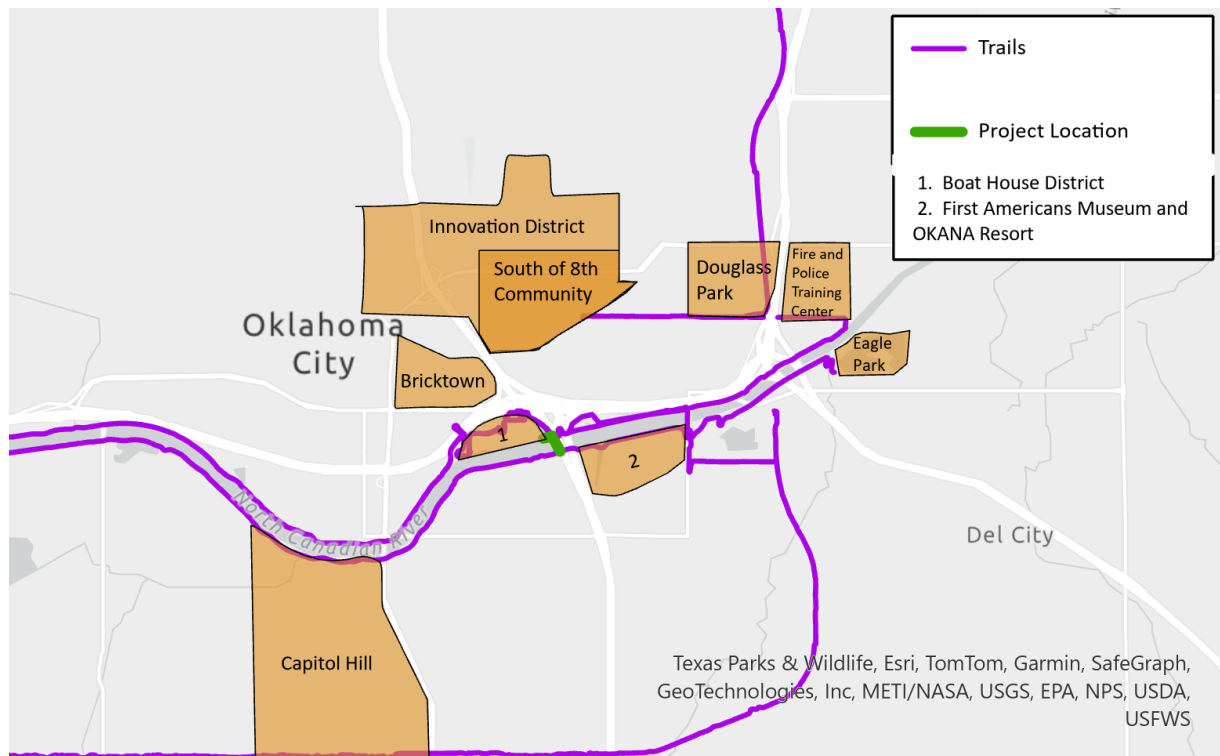
Figure 1: Multimodal Bridge and I-35 Bridges



Project Location

As shown in **Figure 2**, the Project is located 1.5 miles east and 0.5 miles south of downtown Oklahoma City and is in the Census-designated Urbanized Area of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Oklahoma City, located in central Oklahoma, is the state capital, and is the state's largest city. There are numerous employers, restaurants, parks, entertainment districts, and important neighborhoods including Bricktown, the historically black South of 8th community, the primarily Hispanic Capitol Hill neighborhood, and the Innovation District which will be accessible via the Project, as shown in the map below.

Figure 2: Project Location



Source: [OKC Trail Map](#) and Google Maps

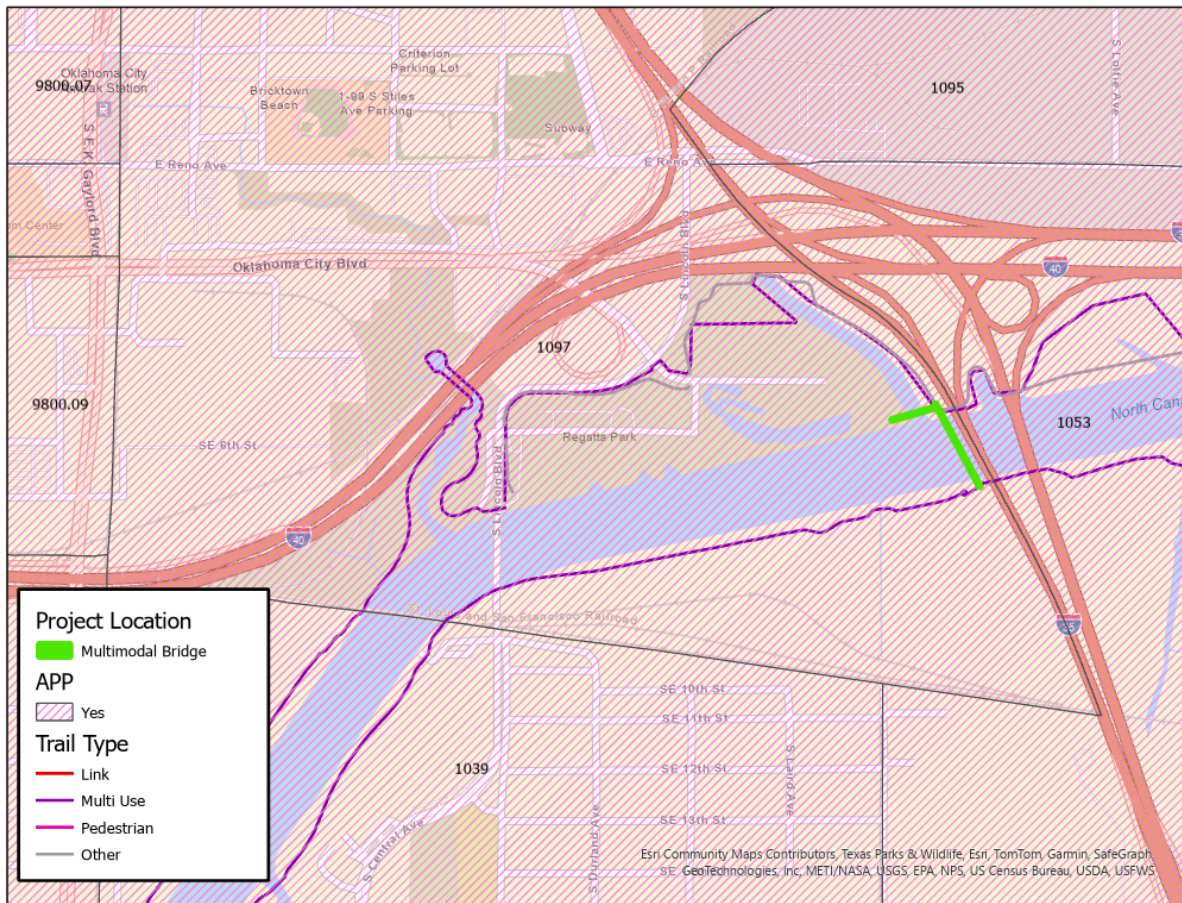
Areas of Persistent Poverty

Based on USDOT’s Transportation Disadvantaged Census Tract mapping tool and as shown in **Figure 3**, the multimodal bridge is in Census Tract 1097 which is designated as an Area of Persistent Poverty. While the multimodal bridge is fully in Census Tract 1097, it is directly adjacent to the boundary with Census Tract 1053 which is both an Area of Persistent Poverty and a Historically Disadvantaged Community. While the bridge is not located in Census Tract 1053, it will directly benefit residents in this community.

Federally Designated Opportunity Zones

Based on data provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council, the Project location is in Opportunity Zone 40109105300. There are also 11 Opportunities Zones in downtown Oklahoma City just north of the Project area. Also present in the Project area are Oklahoma City Empowerment Zones, which are part of an economic development initiative created by the Department of Housing and Urban development (HUD) to facilitate self-sustaining, long-term revitalization.

Figure 3: Areas of Persistent Poverty



Source: Grant Project Location Verification Tool¹

Transportation Challenges

There is a parallel effort to replace the I-35 Interstate Bridges across the Oklahoma River which ODOT has been developing since 2016. Since the I-35 river bridge replacement project was first conceived and particularly during the stakeholder meetings in 2022, ODOT and its local partners and community stakeholders emphasized the need to address local and non-motorized transportation challenges. Currently, the Oklahoma River is a barrier for residents to access jobs, healthcare, shopping, and events on the Oklahoma River. Over 20 percent of households near the Project area do not have access to a vehicle and therefore cannot safely utilize the existing I-35 bridge crossing nearest their homes to access jobs, education, healthcare, and other opportunities in central Oklahoma City by non-motorized means. In parallel, pedestrian and bike trips in the project Census Tract have increased from As a result, ODOT plans to develop the separate multimodal bridge to reflect priorities in Oklahoma City’s regional

¹ <https://maps.dot.gov/BTS/GrantProjectLocationVerification/> Persistent Poverty Census Tracts

transportation plans, and to connect local neighborhoods and improve safe, local non-motorized travel options for this Area of Persistent Poverty.

Statement of Work

The multimodal bridge will be about 20 feet wide and 820 feet long with a primary span extending at least 360'. The multimodal bridge will be offset west of the I-35 SB bridge.

To connect the multimodal bridge to the Oklahoma River Trail system, ADA-compliant ramps will branch off the existing Oklahoma River trail to provide pedestrians and cyclists access to the multimodal bridge. Vertical abutments will be used at the north bank to allow adequate clearance and spacing for the trail to run under the bridge. The Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) walls will be used to tie to the vertical abutments so that the alignment of the existing trail will not require extensive alteration. The MSE walls will also assist in minimizing the amount of additional right-of-way acquisition needed for the Project. Handrailing will be used along the extent of the paths under the I-35 bridges on both banks of the river to deter pedestrians from straying toward the I-35 traffic. Lighting and other aesthetic enhancements will be provided on the multimodal bridge and along the trail pathway to enhance the user experience and provide additional safety.

Project History and Incurred Costs

The following provides the ODOT work history to address these challenges. Currently, the design status is at 30 percent.

- **August 2016:** ODOT commissioned an Interchange Capacity Study. As part of the study, a multimodal pathway crossing the river was introduced as a design element within one of the concept alternatives. The initial multimodal pathway concept utilized a shared substructure of one of the bridges.
- **October 2017 – November 2022:** ODOT conducted a variety of public and stakeholder meetings to evaluate the I-35 bridge crossing and options for active transportation connections on the I-35 bridges.
- **May 2023:** ODOT held a stakeholder meeting with Oklahoma City Leadership and the Chickasaw Nation to discuss the multimodal bridge form and aesthetics; recommendation to develop multimodal bridge as separate structure from I-35 bridges.
- **June 2023:** ODOT held a Meeting with Oklahoma City Engineering Department to discuss the multimodal bridge.

To date, ODOT has incurred \$100,000 studying the multimodal bridge adjacent to I-35.

Project Parties

The Project is led by ODOT. As a state transportation agency, ODOT plans, constructs, and maintains the highway system in Oklahoma and manages a large portfolio of Federal funds that are programmed within its [Eight-Year Construction Work Plan](#). While ODOT will lead the Project, there is significant support from local, regional, and Tribal officials as evidenced from the following [letters of support](#) from The Chickasaw Nation, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, First American Museum, Oklahoma City Riverfront Development Authority, and Riversport.