

Skydance Bridge about to rise up in Oklahoma City

The Skydance Bridge will grace Oklahoma City's skyline next month. The steel parts of the bridge's sculpture elements, which will resemble Oklahoma's state bird, have been completed.

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This artist's drawing shows what the Skydance Bridge will look like. Drawing Provided

The Skydance Bridge soon will begin to rise in the Oklahoma City's skyline.

The huge steel components that will form the bridge have been completed, and by Dec. 8 the sculpture that evokes Oklahoma's state bird will be in place, city Public Works Director Eric Wenger told the city council Tuesday.

City leaders say they hope it will become one of central Oklahoma's defining structures.

The steel was manufactured by the local company W&W Steel.

The \$5.2 million pedestrian bridge, paid for by bond funds, will span the new Interstate 40, which is scheduled for completion next spring. It will connect the northern and southern parts of the 70-acre, Core to Shore urban park included in MAPS 3.

The U.S. Transportation Department required the city to build a pedestrian bridge

when it approved the rerouted I-40, which will replace the problematic Crosstown Expressway. City officials chose to take it as an opportunity to build something that motorists passing through town will remember.

“Our team interpreted the mayor's challenge with the competition a few years ago as designing something that you could really identify from afar and is really distinct, but perhaps most of all, distinctly Oklahoman,” said Hans Butzer of MKEC/Butzer Design, the project's architect.

The sculpture is intended to represent the “sky dance” of the scissor-tailed flycatcher. It will be 192 feet tall.

Engineers had to build the project timeline to coincide with the completion of I-40 in April, because construction on the bridge must be finished before traffic can move underneath it.

“It took a lot of early planning and comparing schedules,” Wenger said. “We're at the point today where those schedules are merging.”

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