

McAlester Planning and Zoning
Commission
NOTICE OF MEETING



Regular Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, February 17, 2026 - 6:30 PM
McAlester City Hall – Council Chambers
28 E. Washington

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of minutes for the Regular Meeting on January 20, 2026

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Staff Report on each item of scheduled business shall be presented by staff prior to applicant's discussion with Planning Commission.

1. Discussion and presentation on the Electric Avenue Infrastructure Planning Project
2. Discussion about the OML Planning Commission & Board of Adjustment Workshop on March 26, 2026.

NEW BUSINESS

STAFF REPORT

1. Annual Planning Commission Report to City Council

REMARKS & INQUIRIES BY THE COMMISSION

ADJOURNMENT

McAlester Planning Commission Minutes
Tuesday, January 20, 2026, Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
6:30 PM

Call to Order

Chairman Emmons called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Roll Call

Patti Hobbs called the roll and a quorum was present.

Commissioners Present: 9

Mark Emmons	Dewayne Hampton	Merrie Brenner	Levenia Carey
Stephanie Giacomo	Jeremy Spiegel	Karen Stobaugh	Chris Taylor
Robby Van Vekoven			

Commissioners Absent: 5

Michael Hull	Lyn Roberts
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Recognition

None

Consent Agenda

Approval of minutes for the Regular Meeting on November 18, 2025.

A motion made by Commissioner Stobaugh was seconded by Commissioner Taylor to approve all items on the Consent Agenda.

The vote was: 9 – 0

AYE: Emmons, Hampton, Brenner, Carey, Giacomo, Spiegel, Stobaugh, Taylor, Van Vekoven

NAY: None

The motion carried.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS:

Item 1

Public Hearing: Discussion and possible action on PC #455, a request to rezone the property from No Zoning Classification to C-5 Highway Commercial and Commercial Recreation District for the following property: 1501 S George Nigh Expy. A parcel of land lying in part of the Southwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (SW/4 NE/4) of Section Twenty-four (24), Township Five (5) North, Range Fourteen (14) East of the Indian Base and Meridian, Pittsburg County State of Oklahoma.

Community Development Director Jayme Clifton presented the staff report. She noted that notifications were sent according to ordinance. Ms. Clifton briefly explained the circumstances as to why the property was not zoned and why it would fit in the requested zoning. There were questions and discussion concerning access points and traffic. Josh Knott, representing the business, RaceTrac, explained this would be the first station within Oklahoma and the type of store; meaning it would be one of their smaller styles. Mr. Knott also addressed the mitigation of the flooding near the property, as well. A few questions about the sign and airport concerns along with the reason for the C-5 designation were discussed after the closing of the Public Hearing.

Public Hearing began at 6:32 pm and commenced at 6:36 pm. No members of the public spoke for or against the application.

Commissioner Stobaugh made the motion to approve the rezoning application per the staff recommendations. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carey. Roll was taken.

The vote was: 9 – 0

AYE: Emmons, Hampton, Brenner, Carey, Giacomo, Spiegel, Stobaugh, Taylor, Van Vekoven

NAY: None

The motion carried. The item moves to the City Council on February 10, 2026.

Item 2

Public Hearing: Discussion and possible action on PC #456, a request to rezone the property from C-3 General Commercial District to R-1B Single Family Residential District for the following property: 3001 N Main Street. Part of Lots Two (2) and Three (3), Block Sixty-one (61), in the City of McAlester, now known as North McAlester, Pittsburg County, State of Oklahoma.

Ms. Clifton presented the staff report. She noted that notifications were sent according to ordinance. Ms. Clifton explained the area has historically been residential and the applicant is trying to resale the property as a residence. Some discussion on how and when the commercial zoning was applied. Randy Roden, council member for Ward Four, stated he was called by the author of the opposition letter. He added she was concerned about the surrounding properties and how they would be affected by the rezoning to residential. Mr. Roden concluded that he was in support of the rezoning. The applicant, Chan Lee, briefly spoke about his need for the rezoning including the hurdles the prospective buyers were facing without a residential classification.

Public Hearing began at 6:39 pm and commenced at 6:44 pm. There was one opposition letter submitted with the application agenda packet.

Commissioner Giacomo made the motion to approve the rezoning application. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brenner. Roll was taken.

The vote was: 9 – 0

AYE: Emmons, Hampton, Brenner, Carey, Giacomo, Spiegel, Stobaugh, Taylor, Van Vekoven

NAY: None

The motion carried. The item moves to the City Council on February 10, 2026.

Item 3

Recommendation of a committee member for the Land Development Code Update Selection Committee.

Jayne Clifton explained the RFP was now available and published. She also briefly went over the staff report then stated how the expedited timeframes could drive up costs, but the timelines are very important. Ms. Clifton is looking for volunteers and will have the scoring matrix ready before the first meeting; specifically looking for at least volunteers from the Planning Commission. It was decided that Stephanie Giacomo and Merrie Brenner would volunteer for the committee. No action is required.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

STAFF REPORT

1. Annual Report to Planning Commission (2024-2025)

Jayne Clifton explained and went over the report. No discussion nor action required.

2. Annual Planning Commission Report to City Council

An additional handout was passed out. Ms. Clifton explained that is was still a draft and what section was left out. She added that it still needs to be revised before it goes before City Council. No action required.

3. Building Permit Activity Report

Ms. Clifton presented the report. No action required.

4. Comprehensive Planning Discussion

Patti Hobbs, Planning Tech explained the slides, briefly. Ms. Clifton stated she is really trying to get a training budget raised specifically for Planning Commission members. There is some free training available, Commissioners only need request it. No action required.

REMARKS & INQUIRIES BY THE COMMISSION

Commissioners had positive comments about the new owners of the previously owned OHP property. The new business seems to be appropriate for that area. Also they had questions about the status of the Sinclair stations. There were some comments surrounding the sale of the L'Ouverture School building and ideas of how to honor it. No action required.

Adjournment

Commissioner Carey made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Van Vekoven Meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m. Roll was taken.

The vote was: 9 – 0

AYE: Emmons, Hampton, Brenner, Carey, Giacomo, Spiegel, Stobaugh, Taylor, Van Vekoven

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Approved:

Planning Commission Chairman

Date



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT February 17, 2026

To: McAlester Planning Commission
From: Jayme Clifton, Community Development Director
Date: February 13, 2026

Subject: Electric Avenue Infrastructure Planning Project

Project Overview

The City of McAlester is seeking federal funding through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant program to conduct a comprehensive Infrastructure Planning Project for Electric Avenue. This 1.19-mile corridor, stretching from Main Street to Strong Boulevard, serves as the city's busiest artery and a critical link for regional commerce and emergency services.

The planning initiative follows a formal City Council resolution passed on February 10, 2026. It has also been supported by regional partners including Southeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SERTPO) and Kiamichi Economic Development District of Oklahoma (KEDDO).

Primary Purpose and Need

The project aims to modernize a corridor originally built in 1974 that no longer meets the city's safety, economic, or environmental needs. Key areas of focus include:

- **Safety Improvements:** The current crash rate of 574.65 per 100 million vehicle miles significantly exceeds county and state averages.
- **Infrastructure Resilience:** The study will address severe road deterioration, aging sewer/water lines, and a 35-foot open stormwater canal and pumps that cause frequent flooding at the railroad underpass.
- **Mobility & Equity:** Electric Avenue currently lacks sidewalks and ADA-compliant facilities, creating barriers for residents in neighborhoods identified as Historically Disadvantaged and areas of Persistent Poverty.
- **Economic Growth:** By improving freight efficiency and supporting major local employers (e.g., Big V Feeds, Pepsi Co.), the project seeks to spur redevelopment.

Proposed Planning Considerations

The 12-month planning process will evaluate several "Complete Streets" and innovative solutions, such as enclosing or capping the stormwater canal system; installing continuous ADA-compliant sidewalks and bicycle lanes; upgrading to street lighting; and implementing smart traffic signal detection with emergency vehicle pre-emption.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Grant Office
RE: Grant Office Findings – Electric Avenue BUILD Planning Grant Application
DATE: 27 January 2026

PURPOSE OF THIS MEMO

This memorandum summarizes the Grant Office’s findings following a review of the FY 2026 U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) BUILD Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and a comparison with the City’s prior BUILD submission materials, including both the Project Description and the Merit Criteria narrative. It is intended to provide Council with a clear, concise basis for considering authorization of the proposed application.

1. ALIGNMENT WITH THE FY 2026 BUILD NOFO

The Grant Office has reviewed the revised FY 2026 BUILD NOFO and determined that the Electric Avenue project continues to align well with the program’s goals and selection criteria. Specifically, the project directly addresses Safety; Mobility and Community Connectivity; Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity; and State of Good Repair.

2. PUBLIC INPUT AND PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

A recent city-wide planning survey identified Electric Avenue as one of the top three locations/projects for a BUILD grant application. While other potential projects ranked higher overall, Electric Avenue is the most grant-ready candidate at this time.

3. ELECTRIC AVENUE AS AN INDUSTRIAL AND FREIGHT CORRIDOR

Electric Avenue functions as a regional industrial and freight corridor, connecting U.S. Highway 69 with Main Street and providing access to regional markets and the Jefferson Highway/Main Street tourism corridor. Identifying Electric Avenue in this manner will improve competitiveness given the U.S. Department of Transportation’s focus on these important commercial attributes.

4. RATIONALE FOR A PLANNING GRANT

The Grant Office recommends pursuing a planning grant as a strategic step to improve competitiveness for a future BUILD implementation grant.

5. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AND EXHIBITS

Proposed exhibits include industrial/freight corridor maps, traffic and connectivity maps with volumes, crash location mapping, and business concentration information.

6. GRANT OFFICE RECOMMENDATION

The Grant Office recommends approval of the accompanying resolution authorizing submission of the BUILD planning grant application.



MERIT CRITERIA NARRATIVE

At first glance, the McAlester, OK Electric Infrastructure Planning Project may seem like a routine effort to update infrastructure and address long-standing issues stemming from a 1974 Urban Renewal project, which transformed Electric Avenue from a dirt road into a modern concrete highway. Yet, half a century later, this vital corridor requires a fresh assessment to align with the evolving needs of neighborhoods and businesses in today's dynamic social and economic landscape. However, a closer look reveals that Electric Avenue is more than just a road—it is the city's busiest artery and a critical link for local commerce, connectivity, and growth. As such, the project's scope extends far beyond surface-level renovations, with public input highlighting its significance and shaping the merit criteria. These criteria will outline key challenges and opportunities for improvement. While definitive solutions will be developed through the planning process, contingent upon funding allocation, they represent forward-thinking approaches to enhancing mobility and strengthening the community's infrastructure.

1. SAFETY

Ensuring the safety of motorists and pedestrians stands as the foremost concern for the City of McAlester, echoing the sentiments voiced by its residents. The planning project will endeavor to identify measures to mitigate the safety risks outlined below.

1.1 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *The crash rate for the project location exceeds the county and statewide averages.*

Per data provided by the City of McAlester Police Department, the 1.19-mile road from Main Street to Strong Boulevard has a crash rate of 574.65 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. (MVTM).

Table 1

Date Range	1 Jan 19 to 31 Dec 23	Total Days	1,825				
Length ¹ 1.19 miles	AADT ²	Accidents					
		Total	Rate	Injury	Injury Rate	Fatal	Fatal Rate
	6,250	78	574.65	31	228.39	0	0
	County Average		107.38	204	32.4	5	.79
	State Average		0.18	18,808	.06	602	1.41

The high crash rate affects all neighborhoods across the three wards and two census tracts within the project area. Notably, collisions are concentrated at intersections and T-junctions, with the most significant clusters occurring at Main and Electric, as well as Electric and 2nd. Refer to the map for crash locations and a depiction of a typical collision

¹ Length (Google Earth/Project KMZ File) See: [Crash Rate Calculations](#)

² [OK Department of Transportation](#).



Figure 1 shows the police report for a multi-car crash at 2nd and Electric that occurred in October 2023. Figure 2 is an aerial shot of the 2nd and Electric intersection with Figure 3 a ground level view of the intersection with the jersey barriers in place and poor quality of the road surface.

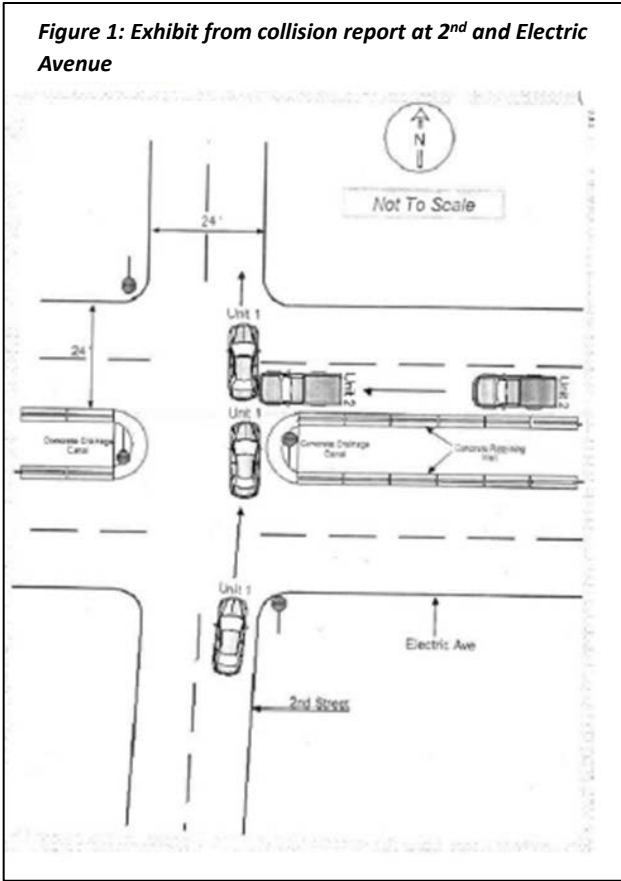


Figure 2



Figure 3

1.2 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Pedestrians do not have adequate facilities to safely navigate down Electric*

Map 1: Census Tracts. Electric Ave in green

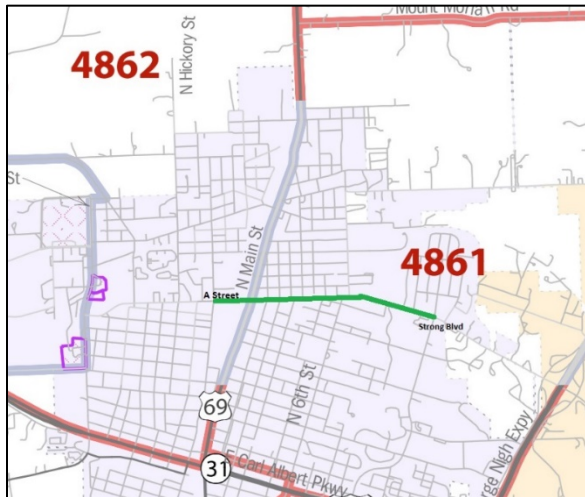


Table 2

Census Tract/Block Groups	B08301 to Work: Biked	B08301 to Work: Walked	No Vehicle Available
CT 40121-4861	0.82%	4.30%	6.37%
CT 40121-4862	0.00%	1.19%	1.11%
National Average	0.46%	2.43%	4.27%
OK State Average	0.21%	1.75%	2.17%
County Average	0.14%	2.08%	2.66%
McAlester Average	0.22%	3.32%	3.65%



In McAlester, many residents commute to work on foot due to limited access to reliable motorized transportation. However, Electric Avenue lacks sidewalks and a shoulder, leaving pedestrians with no designated space for safe travel. As a result, many choose to walk within the road’s right-of-way. Table 2 compares the two census tracts in the project area with city, county, state, and national averages for commuting methods and vehicle access. Census Tract 4861 exceeds all averages and includes most of the residential neighborhoods along Electric Avenue, while Tract 4862 falls well below all benchmarks, including those of the city.

1.3 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Overall road safety and conditions of road impede movement of vehicles, particularly first responders.*

Electric Avenue poses serious safety risks due to severe surface deterioration and inefficient space allocation. Though platted for 100 feet, the roadway spans only 80 feet curb to curb, with a 35-foot stormwater canal and 12-inch jersey barriers further restricting vehicle maneuverability. As a designated federal, state, and local hazardous truck route, it supports industries like waste recycling while also serving as a primary corridor for commercial tractor-trailers and emergency vehicles, with Fire/EMT services using it 1,350 times annually (2022-2024). Additionally, 24 school buses transporting 60 students each rely on Electric Avenue daily.

These constraints not only heighten safety concerns but also reduce the roadway’s capacity to meet the city's diverse transportation needs. Given its critical role in commercial, emergency, and educational transit, redesigning Electric Avenue is essential to improving safety and efficiency.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Transforming Electric Avenue into a modern thoroughfare using Complete Street principles will address high crash rates, poor road conditions, and inadequate pedestrian infrastructure. Key improvements include covering stormwater canals, widening the road, adding sidewalks on both sides from Main to Strong Boulevard, and installing at least four pedestrian crosswalks. Street lighting will be upgraded to solar-powered LED lights, and concrete jersey barriers obstructing traffic flow and visibility will be removed.

To enhance intersection safety and emergency response, traffic signal detection systems with pre-emption will be installed at Main & Electric and Strong & Electric. These sensors optimize traffic flow and prioritize emergency vehicles, momentarily adjusting signals to clear a safe path.

Pedestrian safety will be reinforced with sidewalks, high-visibility painted lanes, and improved signage to better define pedestrian and vehicle spaces. Ultimately, this project creates a safer, more efficient roadway that supports both daily commuters and emergency services.

These upgrades align with two National Roadway Safety Strategy goals: “. . .enhance the survivability of crashes through expedient access to emergency medical care” and “Design roadway environments . . .to facilitate safe travel by the most vulnerable users.”

2. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

2.1 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: The open canal system running through the center of Electric Avenue offers no protection against pollution entering the local water system, allowing debris, hazardous materials, and contaminants to flow downstream into Mud Creek and Lake Eufaula.

In February 2022, contractors carried out a comprehensive stormwater system clearance along Electric Avenue, removing nearly 400,000 pounds (200 tons) of accumulated debris—including trash, brush, and silt—much of which likely originated from the open canal. Among the extracted pollutants were large, discarded items such as a dishwasher, tires, an air conditioner and a baby



stroller, along with common litter like Styrofoam and plastic waste. These materials not only threaten to block drainage systems, potentially causing roadway and property flooding, but also degrade regional water quality due to the presence of metals, chemicals, and microplastics.

Electric Avenue is a critical transportation corridor, designated as a federal, state, and municipal hazardous truck route that serves key industries, including waste recycling corporations operating in the city. The road's condition, along with the efficiency of its stormwater drainage system, directly impacts the transport of chemicals, waste, and hazardous materials. Enhancing traffic lanes, improving visibility, and implementing roadway safety measures will help mitigate risks and reduce the severity of hazardous material spills affecting the community.

The environmental consequences of unchecked pollution extend beyond the immediate area, affecting ecosystems and residential populations that rely on natural water sources. The canal system discharges into Mud Creek, a 5,500-foot-long tributary of Lake Eufaula—Oklahoma's largest lake and the 15th largest reservoir in the United States. Lake Eufaula plays a crucial role in the state's water supply, accounting for two percent of Oklahoma's total water resources, while also supporting recreational activities such as swimming, boating, and fishing.

According to Oklahoma Water Quality Standards, Lake Eufaula's designated beneficial uses include: public and private water supply; aquatic habitats; agricultural irrigation; hydropower generation; industrial and municipal processes; recreational activities; and navigation and aesthetic enjoyment. Additionally, the Pittsburg County Water Authority, which draws water from the studied portion of the Gaines Creek Arm of Lake Eufaula, provides drinking water to approximately 9,000 households.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Design and engineer a fully enclosed canal system with strategically placed catch basins at entry points to significantly reduce solid waste contamination and eliminate bulk trash accumulation. Capping the canals and incorporating catch basins will prevent debris from entering the stormwater system, enhancing overall water quality and drainage efficiency.

The design should prioritize an environmentally responsible approach by reconstructing the existing roadway without expanding into undeveloped areas. This ensures minimal environmental disruption while modernizing infrastructure to meet contemporary safety and sustainability standards.

Although no hazardous spills have been recorded along Electric Avenue, mitigation measures should be integrated into the project. Potential technologies include a pollution capture system to filter contaminants before they enter the waterway and a grass swale over the existing open canal, complemented by overflow pipes to manage excess runoff efficiently. These measures will enhance stormwater management while contributing to a more resilient and environmentally sustainable roadway system.

2.2 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Electric Avenue lacks sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to walk along the road's edge where foot traffic has carved informal paths into the grass.*

Sidewalks from connecting streets often end abruptly at Electric Avenue further discouraging safe and accessible pedestrian movement. The absence of dedicated walking infrastructure and alternative transportation options limits non-motorized mobility and reinforces automobile dependence, leading to increased greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.



DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

To reduce transportation-related emissions and promote environmentally friendly mobility, the project will integrate Complete Streets principles, prioritizing pedestrian accessibility and safe, non-motorized travel options. Strategies under consideration include:

Constructing continuous sidewalks and pedestrian pathways to support walking as a viable transportation alternative, reducing vehicle trips and improving safety.

Enhancing pedestrian crossings with high-visibility markings and safety measures to encourage walkability and promote safer interaction with vehicular traffic.

Exploring additional transportation-efficient design elements that align with the State Carbon Reduction Strategy, such as integrating green infrastructure along sidewalks to improve air quality and mitigate stormwater runoff.

2.3 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Existing streetlights along the Project location are not energy efficient.*

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Replacing existing high-pressure sodium (HPS) streetlights with energy-efficient LED streetlights will significantly reduce energy consumption while maintaining the same level of illumination. LED technology consumes up to 70 percent less energy than traditional HPS systems, translating into substantial long-term cost savings.

The city has firsthand experience in energy-efficient upgrades, having received three awards from the Oklahoma Department of Commerce’s State Energy Program to retrofit lighting fixtures in three of its older buildings. These past projects have demonstrated not only notable reductions in energy use but also considerable utility cost savings—an essential factor for a small rural municipality with a limited budget. Additionally, LED streetlights require significantly less maintenance than HPS systems, reducing operational costs and freeing up resources for other critical infrastructure needs.

By implementing this proven lighting solution, the city will enhance visibility, lower carbon emissions, and achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

2.4 CURRENT LIMITATIONS : *Residents in neighborhoods along Electric Avenue exposed to excess noise.*

Apart from safety worries, residents in and around Electric Avenue endure elevated levels of noise pollution originating from heavy traffic, particularly the clamor generated by semi-trucks. Excessive noise pollution can diminish quality of life and adversely affect health, leading to elevated blood pressure, irregular heartbeats, impaired digestion, and disrupted sleep patterns. Sounds registering at 70dBA or above are deemed hazardous to hearing after eight hours of exposure. It's noteworthy that a diesel truck traveling at 50 mph and positioned 50 feet away produces approximately 80dBA.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Initially, conduct a study to assess the current noise levels, enabling the design of suitable interventions. Not having a noise level study yet, one potentially advantageous solution involves covering the open-air canal and narrowing the driving lanes, thereby establishing aesthetic barriers between the single-family residences and the roadway. Furthermore, the increased distance will contribute to noise reduction from traffic. Even if the extended distance only marginally



decreases noise levels by a few decibels, the project will still provide noise relief for area residents and can be seamlessly incorporated into the redesign of the street.

2.5 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *The inadequate stormwater system along Electric Avenue struggles to manage increasing rainfall and runoff, causing frequent flooding, erosion, and roadway deterioration.*

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

To address these challenges, a modernized stormwater management approach is essential. Key strategies under consideration include: a) redesigning and expanding drainage infrastructure to improve water flow and prevent roadway flooding; b) integrating green infrastructure solutions such as permeable surfaces and vegetated swales to naturally filter and absorb excess runoff; and c) reengineering the existing stormwater canal to occupy less space, allowing for safe road widening while simultaneously increasing its ability to accommodate larger volumes of stormwater.

These improvements will ensure greater stormwater efficiency, reduce long-term maintenance costs, and enhance roadway durability, ultimately supporting a more reliable and resilient transportation corridor for the community.

3. QUALITY OF LIFE

3.1 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Outdated transportation infrastructure creates disparities in access to community amenities for the Electric Avenue neighborhoods.*

The census tracts encircling Electric Avenue and its neighboring communities have been designated as: a) areas afflicted by Persistent Poverty; b) Historically Disadvantaged; and c) lacking sidewalks compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to accommodate non-motorized residents. While pedestrians have forged pathways through the grass along the road, proper sidewalks are absent. Often, sidewalks from adjacent streets abruptly terminate at Electric Avenue, mirroring the situation at 7th Street (see photos below). Existing lighting, situated within the drainage structure from Main Street to 5th Street, primarily serves vehicular traffic, neglecting pedestrians, bicyclists, and road crossings.

Table 3

CENSUS TRACT	USDOT AREA OF PERSISTENT POVERTY	USDOT HISTORICAL DISADVANTAGED	JUSTICE 40 HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED	USDOT EQUITABLE TRANSPORTATION COMMUNITY EXPLORER DIS-ADVANTAGED	CDC SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX (SVI)
CT 40121-4861	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	0.9863
CT 40121-4862	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	0.9429
Pittsburg County	No				0.8631

Communities with SVI values ranging from 0.6 to 1 are classified as experiencing very high social vulnerability. These areas contend with a complex variety of socioeconomic obstacles, such as poverty, unemployment, substandard housing, limited healthcare access and systemic issues that heighten their susceptibility to environmental threats.

City leaders, following public meetings and the endorsement of comprehensive plans, have recognized the necessity of well-designed transportation options that prioritize safety for long-neglected residents, irrespective of distance. Given the community's relatively compact size, individuals of average abilities can readily access essential services.



The [2019 City Comprehensive Plan](#) assessed the demands, needs, and preferences of community members. Fifty-four percent of survey respondents expressed a desire for additional trails and opportunities for safe walking; 42 percent advocated for development conducive to active lifestyles; 35 percent emphasized the importance of wheelchair-accessible sidewalks; and 32 percent sought expanded bicycle paths.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Design the proposed sidewalks to connect to regional trails in keeping with McAlester’s Masters Trail Plan.

The Waterways Trail, serving as a vital off-road pathway, will establish a crucial link from Electric Avenue to key destinations such as the McAlester Regional Health Center, Buffalo Run Disc Golf Course, Thunderbird Park, and the J.I. Stipe Recreation Center, which caters to senior nutrition and activities.

The completion of the Parker Trail will forge another off-road multi-use pathway, connecting Waterways Trail and Thunderbird Park to Parker Intermediate School. This comprehensive network seamlessly integrates low-income housing, educational institutions, recreational venues, senior adult programs, healthcare facilities and various employment centers across a significant portion of the city.

Furthermore, upcoming enhancements will extend bicycle lanes along A Street, accessible from both Monroe Avenue and Electric Avenue. However, the effectiveness of this interconnected system of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and off-road trails hinges on ensuring safe and convenient access for residents commuting to and from their workplaces and residences within the neighborhoods.

3.2 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Inadequate pedestrian infrastructure discourages activities that improve public health.*

According to health statistics from the CDC's PLACES program, the general health status within the project area is consistently poorer. Across all health metrics tracked by the CDC, the census tracts in the area surpass national averages, underscoring and substantiating its characterization as a region marked by persistent poverty and historical disadvantage.

Table 4

McAlester, OK Pittsburg County	CDC PLACES												
	Arthritis	Asthma	High Blood Pressure	Cancer	High Cholesterol	Kidney Disease	COPD	Heart Disease	Diabetes	Depression	Obesity	Stroke	All Teeth Loss
Census Tract/Block Groups													
CT 40121-4861	31.7%	12.0%	41.6%	7.9%	38.5%	3.9%	10.0%	8.6%	14.2%	25.7%	41.0%	4.4%	22.9%
CT 40121-4862	30.7%	12.6%	40.6%	7.2%	37.7%	3.8%	10.7%	8.5%	14.2%	27.3%	42.2%	4.4%	26.1%
National Average	27.8%	10.4%	34.5%	7.3%	36.0%	3.3%	7.9%	6.7%	11.4%	22.4%	36.3%	3.4%	15.5%

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Construct sidewalks, crosswalks and crossing signals, and improve lighting with new LED lights. Widening the road will also accommodate a bicycle lane.

Design the proposed sidewalks and bicycle lanes to connect to regional trails in keeping with McAlester’s Masters Trail Plan.

The Waterways Trail, serving as a vital off-road pathway, will establish a crucial link from Electric Avenue to key destinations such as the McAlester Regional Health Center, Buffalo Run Disc



Golf Course, Thunderbird Park and the J.I. Stipe Recreation Center, which caters to senior nutrition and activities.

The recent completion of the Parker Trail will forge another off-road multi-use pathway, connecting the Waterways Trail and Thunderbird Park to Parker Intermediate School. This comprehensive network seamlessly integrates low-income housing, educational institutions, recreational venues, senior adult programs, healthcare facilities, and various employment centers across a significant portion of the city.

3.3 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Residents exposed to excess noise*

Excessive noise pollution along Electric Avenue is a persistent issue that impacts both environmental conditions (see paragraph 2.4 supra) and quality of life for residents. Heavy traffic, including commercial and industrial vehicles, generates continuous noise, which disrupts daily life, reduces livability, and negatively affects public health. The problem is particularly pronounced in residential areas, where prolonged exposure to elevated noise levels has been linked to increased stress, sleep disturbances, and reduced cognitive function—issues that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations such as seniors, shift workers, and children.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

From a quality-of-life perspective, mitigating noise pollution is essential to fostering a healthier, more livable community. The consistent presence of traffic-related noise, particularly from commercial and industrial vehicles, disrupts daily life and has been linked to stress, sleep disturbances, and reduced overall well-being.

To fully understand the extent of noise-related issues along Electric Avenue and identify targeted mitigation strategies, a comprehensive noise impact study should be conducted. This study will assess current noise levels, pinpoint high-impact areas, and inform design solutions that effectively reduce noise pollution.

Potential noise-reducing infrastructure improvements include:

- Pedestrian-friendly buffers that help absorb sound and create a quieter environment for residents;
- Street design enhancements that optimize traffic flow, reducing unnecessary vehicle idling and acceleration—two primary contributors to noise pollution; and
- Upgraded lighting and pedestrian infrastructure that encourage alternative travel options, leading to decreased vehicle congestion and associated noise impacts.

Addressing noise pollution at the intersection of environmental sustainability and livability ensures that this project delivers broad, meaningful benefits, improving community well-being and public health while guiding future infrastructure investments.

4. MOBILITY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

Electric Avenue is one of only four primary routes for street clearing during inclement weather and is used in the protection of critical infrastructure. It is an emergency evacuation route. This route is one of only four railroad crossings in the town never blocked by trains, making it critically important for emergency response.

4.1 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Lack of a non-motorized traveler network within the immediate community.*



Sidewalks are not present, though pedestrians have beaten paths in the grass along the road. Often, sidewalks from connecting streets abruptly end at Electric Avenue. This lack of a consistent non-motorized traveler network is reflected in the extremely low ADA EPA National Walkability Index Score of 5.5. In fact the neighborhoods on both sides of Electric fall into either the least walkable (1 – 5.75) or below average walkable. (5.76 – 10.50).

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

During the planning process apply Complete Streets principles to fill in gaps in the pedestrian and bicyclist network within an underserved community.

Aligned with McAlester’s Complete Streets Policy, dedicated pathways will be established to accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, and individuals with disabilities, addressing existing hazards that diminish residents' trust in utilizing active modes of transportation. This holistic system is strategically designed to interconnect low-income housing, educational establishments, recreational amenities, senior adult programs, three healthcare facilities, and a multitude of employers spanning a significant area within the city.

5. ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS AND OPPORTUNITY

The project drives immediate and long-term job creation, mobilizing hundreds of local and regional workers while boosting the economy through commuter spending on accommodations and dining. Expanding retail and employment zones will further increase traffic, reinforcing Electric Avenue’s importance.

Electric Avenue transitions from a highway commercial district at Main Street to a single-family residential district to the east, with limited duplex zoning. At Strong Boulevard, it intersects with neighborhood convenience and health facility districts.

As a key east-west arterial, Electric Avenue links West Street to US Highway 69, providing access to major employment hubs. The corridor experiences high truck traffic, and adding bike lanes could increase property values and tax revenue, especially in underinvested neighborhoods. The City of McAlester expects the Electric Avenue redesign to spur redevelopment, improve housing, and attract new construction in economically distressed areas.

5.1 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Deteriorated roadway limits economic growth and business expansion*

Electric Avenue serves as a critical commercial and industrial corridor in McAlester, linking major employers, retail hubs, and tourism destinations. However, the deteriorated condition of the roadway presents a barrier to economic expansion, increasing transportation costs for businesses and reducing accessibility for workers, customers, and freight carriers.

The economic impact of Electric Avenue extends far beyond local businesses. The road functions as a vital east-west arterial, connecting West Street to the west and US Highway 69 to the east, where a new QuikTrip (QT) truck stop has been constructed. The addition of this major truck stop is expected to increase both commercial and consumer traffic, amplifying the economic significance of Electric Avenue as a freight and retail corridor.

Additionally, Electric Avenue leads directly into the McAlester Historic District, part of the Jefferson Highway, which attracts tourist dollars and supports small business growth. Improved roadway conditions will facilitate easier and safer access, encouraging both new retail establishments and increased visitor spending.



Electric Avenue is home to several major businesses that contribute significantly to the local economy through employment, tax revenue, and commercial activity. These include:

Bemac Supply – 35 employees, \$11 million in annual revenue	Pepsi Co. – 81 employees, \$9.3 million in annual revenue
Big V Feeds – 127 employees, \$7.5 million in annual revenue	Hiland Dairy – 9 employees, \$2.5 million in annual revenue

Combined, these four businesses alone support over 250 jobs and generate nearly \$30 million in annual revenue, demonstrating Electric Avenue’s critical role as an economic driver for McAlester. The deteriorated roadway raises transportation costs for these companies by increasing vehicle wear and tear, fuel inefficiencies, and delivery delays.

Poor road conditions extend beyond inconvenience—they impose direct financial **costs** on residents, businesses, and the local economy:

- **Increased vehicle maintenance expenses** – Oklahoma drivers pay an average of **\$394 per year** in extra vehicle repair costs due to road deterioration. Businesses with fleet vehicles and freight carriers experience even **higher operational costs**.
- **Reduced efficiency for freight and supply chains** – Delivery delays and vehicle downtime disrupt operations for companies dependent on reliable transportation.
- **Negative impact on workforce accessibility** – Poor road conditions discourage commuter travel, affecting workforce retention and employment stability.

5.2 DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

Redesigning and reconstructing Electric Avenue will modernize the roadway to support long-term economic growth by:

- **Enhancing freight mobility** – Improving road conditions will facilitate smoother and more efficient commercial transport, reducing delivery times and operational costs for local industries.
- **Encouraging retail expansion** – With the addition of QT at US 69 and Electric Avenue, improved access will attract new small businesses and retail development, increasing job creation and local investment.
- **Supporting tourism and historic preservation** – Electric Avenue’s direct connection to the McAlester Historic District and Jefferson Highway will enhance visitor accessibility, increasing tourism-driven economic activity.
- **Stimulating real estate development** – Infrastructure improvements will increase property values and create opportunities for redevelopment and new construction, particularly in economically distressed areas.

As an economic investment, the planning project will lay the foundation for:

- Support existing businesses by reducing transportation inefficiencies and operating costs.
- Attract new retail, commercial, and tourism-based development, leveraging the QT truck stop and historic district access as economic catalysts.
- Improve workforce accessibility by ensuring a safe, efficient transportation corridor for commuters.



- Facilitate long-term economic growth by modernizing infrastructure to support freight, tourism, and local commerce.

6. STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

The primary concerns of the planning project will be to examine:

- Modernizing existing core infrastructure to lower long-term maintenance costs;
- Analyzing current and projected vulnerabilities that, if left unaddressed, will threaten further transportation network efficiency, mobility of goods and people, economic growth and environmental concerns; and
- Ensuring the good condition of rural transportation infrastructure to support commerce, economic growth and basic municipal services



Electric where canal terminates. Inset showing extent of road damage typical of the entire street.

6.1 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Deteriorated road and rising costs*

A 2013 pavement index report projected that maintaining Electric Avenue in its then-current state would cost more than \$93,000 annually. However, this estimate could not account for rising labor costs, construction material price increases, deferred maintenance or further road degradation over the past decade. The city has struggled to fund ongoing maintenance, leading to:

- Pavement failures, including potholes, uplift, and structural base damage;
- Frequent road disruptions and emergency patching, which strain municipal resources; and
- Increased vehicle maintenance costs for businesses and residents due to poor road conditions.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The only viable long-term solution is to fully reconstruct Electric Avenue within the project area, ensuring that the roadway:

- Uses durable materials and modern construction techniques to extend pavement lifespan and reduce maintenance needs.



- Incorporates stormwater drainage improvements to prevent base erosion and structural failures.
- Addresses underlying infrastructure issues, preventing further costly emergency repairs.

By investing in reconstruction rather than temporary fixes, the City of McAlester will significantly reduce annual maintenance expenses and long-term financial burdens.

6.2 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Aging utility infrastructure jeopardizes road stability*

Electric Avenue’s underlying water and sewer infrastructure is outdated, leading to frequent failures that undermine the roadway’s structural integrity. While funding has been secured for some municipal infrastructure upgrades through sources like the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB), ARPA, and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Electric Avenue has not yet received dedicated funding for water and sewer replacements.

The consequences of failing infrastructure are already evident:

- In 2023, a major sewer line rupture at Main Street and Electric Avenue required an unbudgeted \$138,000 repair, forcing the city to hire outside contractors;
- Frequent leaks and failures cause roadway erosion, sinkholes, and traffic disruptions; and
- Repeated utility failures increase long-term repair costs, compounding financial strain on the city.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

To ensure long-term roadway stability, this project will:

- Replace failing water mains with new PVC piping and valves to prevent future leaks.
- Upgrade sanitary sewer lines, installing modernized infrastructure that reduces failure risks.
- Add 22 new manholes, improving sewer access and maintenance efficiency.

These upgrades will prevent future infrastructure collapses, eliminate costly emergency repairs, and ensure a stable foundation for roadway improvements.

6.3 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Stormwater drainage fails to prevent flooding and roadway damage*

The current stormwater system is inadequate, leading to frequent flooding on Electric Avenue. During heavy rainfall, water accumulates in outside lanes, temporarily reducing the roadway to a two-lane street and increasing hydroplaning risks. Without drainage upgrades, continued flooding will accelerate pavement deterioration and increase maintenance costs.

Additionally, ongoing stormwater system operations, such as pump station management and debris removal, incur recurring operational costs that strain the city's limited resources.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed improvements include:

- Enclosing open stormwater canals with catch basins to improve drainage and reduce debris buildup.
- Expanding stormwater capacity to handle increased runoff, preventing flooding on travel lanes.
- Enhancing the railroad overpass pump station, installing a third backup pump to ensure functionality during severe weather.



- Installing flood-warning signals, linked to pump activation, to alert drivers when conditions make the road unsafe.

These stormwater infrastructure investments will reduce flooding-related damage, improve traffic flow during heavy rains, and significantly lower both operational and long-term maintenance costs.

6.4 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Roadway lacks ADA-compliant infrastructure for pedestrians*

Electric Avenue currently lacks ADA-compliant sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to walk along grass shoulders or in the roadway. Sidewalks from adjacent streets frequently terminate at Electric Avenue, limiting pedestrian connectivity and creating safety hazards..

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The project will:

- Construct ADA-compliant sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, ensuring accessibility for all users.
- Install at least four innovative pedestrian crosswalks, improving visibility and safety.
- Incorporate traffic-calming measures at high-crash intersections, reducing pedestrian risk.

By integrating these upgrades, Electric Avenue will become a safer, more accessible corridor, supporting pedestrian mobility, workforce access, and economic growth.

Taken together, the four issues noted and proposed solutions recognize that the planning project will lay the foundation for a long-term investment accomplishing the following goals:

- Restore Electric Avenue to a state of good repair, preventing further structural failure.
- Reduce annual maintenance costs, ensuring financial sustainability.
- Improve stormwater management, protecting against costly flood-related damage.
- Upgrade utility infrastructure, preventing repeated failures that jeopardize the roadway.
- Enhance pedestrian safety, ensuring ADA accessibility for all users.

By distinguishing between operational and maintenance costs in the approach to infrastructure resilience, this project will ensure Electric Avenue remains a functional, cost-efficient and safe transportation corridor for decades to come.

7. PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

The City of McAlester collaborates with local organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, Keep McAlester Beautiful, and Oklahomans for Independent Living, as well as state agencies such as the Department of Commerce’s State Energy Program and CDBG Small Cities Program, which supports low-income neighborhoods. The city is currently working with the Oklahoma Recreational Trails Program to develop a project connecting to Electric Avenue as part of the Master Trail Plan.

Regionally, McAlester has been a long-standing member of the Kiamichi Economic Development District of Oklahoma and is actively involved in the South Eastern Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SERTPO) under the Southern Oklahoma Development Association. City leadership plays a key role, with the mayor and community development director serving on the SERTPO Policy Board and the planning technician on the SERTPO Technical Committee.

Public engagement remains a challenge, particularly for in-person meetings. To maximize participation, quarterly active transportation meetings are held at the Community Center on Mondays at 18:00, attracting a diverse group of residents, small business owners, advocates, and professionals



from various fields. City staff from Planning, Engineering, Grant Administration, and Community Services regularly attend to present ideas and gather community input.

For this planning grant, McAlester expanded outreach beyond meetings by launching an online survey focused on Electric Avenue, promoted through social media, utility bill notices, and a city council announcement. The survey received 1,251 responses, reflecting citywide interest across all wards, reinforcing Electric Avenue’s significance beyond its immediate neighborhoods. These findings will guide the planning process, with continued community engagement shaping future implementation efforts.

8. INNOVATION

Innovation in transportation infrastructure is not solely about adopting cutting-edge global technologies—it is about integrating solutions that are ideally suited to McAlester’s challenges and opportunities. This project will leverage innovative technologies and processes tailored to the local environment, improving safety, efficiency and resilience while reducing long-term costs. The modernization of Electric Avenue will incorporate smart, sustainable and adaptive infrastructure that enhances mobility and environmental sustainability.

8.1 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Outdated infrastructure and lack of applied innovative solutions*

Electric Avenue has stagnated while other communities benefit from modern infrastructure, sustainability and safety advancements. Limited stormwater management leads to frequent flooding and maintenance issues, outdated traffic control systems reduce efficiency and increase congestion, and the lack of green infrastructure misses opportunities to mitigate pollution and enhance sustainability.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The 12-month planning initiative will explore and compare the efficacy of various innovative features aimed at improving Electric Avenue's infrastructure and its utility to the community to include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swale integration with the refurbished stormwater canal, incorporating natural filtration to reduce pollutants and improve stormwater efficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced traffic signal detection and preemption systems, allowing emergency vehicles and transit to move through intersections more efficiently while improving traffic flow.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution control technology, potentially combined with the swale system, to enhance environmental protections and reduce contaminants entering waterways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interceptive drainage systems at the railroad bridge to mitigate recurring flooding and improve roadway usability during severe weather events.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real-time monitoring sensors to track pavement conditions, drainage effectiveness, and pedestrian activity, enabling data-driven infrastructure management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptive grade crossing detection, which will improve traffic management and enhance public safety at railroad intersections.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of LED solar street lighting, improving nighttime visibility while reducing long-term energy costs and maintenance demands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) at crosswalks, increasing pedestrian safety through high-visibility, solar-powered flashing signals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood control gates at the railroad overpass, automatically triggered by stormwater sensors to prevent vehicles from entering flood-prone areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of durable, high-performance pavement materials, extending roadway lifespan while minimizing maintenance needs



8.2 CURRENT LIMITATIONS: *Maintaining city streets is a significant financial burden, especially for a small rural municipality*

Ongoing costs for repairs, resurfacing and infrastructure upkeep consume a large portion of McAlester’s infrastructure budget. To reduce long-term expenses and improve roadway durability, the City of McAlester will explore high-performance pavement options and modern construction techniques. Investing in durable materials and advanced engineering solutions will extend pavement life, minimize frequent maintenance and enhance overall roadway safety and efficiency.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiber-Reinforced Asphalt Concrete (FRAC) – Enhances strength and flexibility by incorporating synthetic or natural fibers, reducing cracking and extending pavement life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ultra-High-Performance Concrete (UHPC) – Offers superior durability, resistance to heavy loads, and extended service life compared to traditional concrete.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warm Mix Asphalt (WMA) – Reduces production temperatures, improves compaction, and extends pavement longevity while lowering energy costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permeable Pavements (Porous Asphalt or Pervious Concrete) – Helps with stormwater drainage by allowing water to pass through, reducing runoff and minimizing erosion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geosynthetic-Reinforced Pavement – Uses geogrids or geotextiles beneath the pavement to improve structural integrity, reduce cracking, and enhance load distribution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-Performance Polymer-Modified Asphalt (PMA) – Improves resistance to rutting and thermal cracking, making it ideal for high-traffic areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roller-Compacted Concrete (RCC) – A cost-effective alternative to traditional asphalt, offering high strength and durability with lower maintenance requirements. 	

CONCLUSION

The City of McAlester is embracing innovative, cost-effective solutions to modernize Electric Avenue, enhancing safety, efficiency and resilience while reducing long-term maintenance costs.

Currently, outdated infrastructure, inadequate stormwater management and limited green technology contribute to flooding, congestion and environmental concerns. This planning initiative will evaluate adaptive infrastructure solutions, including smart traffic control, pollution control systems and high-performance pavement materials, tailored to McAlester’s specific challenges.

Key innovations under consideration include swale-integrated stormwater filtration, LED solar street lighting, real-time monitoring sensors and flood control gates at the railroad overpass, all designed to improve sustainability and public safety. Additionally, advanced pavement technologies such as fiber-reinforced asphalt, ultra-high-performance concrete, and permeable pavements will be assessed to enhance durability, minimize maintenance and extend roadway lifespan. By integrating modern engineering and smart technology, McAlester aims to transform Electric Avenue into a safer, more sustainable corridor while ensuring long-term cost savings and infrastructure resilience.

To determine the most viable solutions, the Cost-Benefit Analysis—included in the project budget—will provide a comprehensive assessment of which options best align with the city’s long-term needs and financial resources.

Planning Commission & Board of Adjustment Workshop

March 26, 2026
9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Rose State College
Midwest City, OK



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