



## Two US-69 intersections targeted for improvements in McAlester

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Due to changing traffic demands in McAlester, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation is taking proactive steps to alleviate congestion issues at two growing interchanges along US-69.

The intersection of US-69 at Comanche Ave. has been in the sights for improvements due to congestion and high accident rates. Since the plan was first developed around 10 years ago, traffic at the nearby Peaceable Road intersection has become as problematic as at Comanche Ave. The department has decided to design a new project that includes both intersections which will improve traffic through the corridor, according to Anthony Echelle, Division 2 Engineer. "We are being responsive to the changing needs of the McAlester community. This is a major project and we want to ensure we're making a prudent investment that is practical and functional for all travelers driving through the corridor," Echelle said.

The safety aspect of this project is ODOT's priority, all while taking cost into account. It has a budget of \$19 million, but current market prices have increased it to an estimated \$26 million. The department wants to implement not only a safer but also a more cost-effective design for the citizens of McAlester and Pittsburg County. The city of McAlester invested in this project by moving utilities in 2012 and the work the city has done will still be applicable.

Construction was scheduled to start on the intersection in 2015, but a shift to 2016 will allow the department to allow time for the redesign. Echelle said a new design will also allow for better traffic flow for the area while under construction.

Once an updated design is developed, ODOT will hold a public meeting to review the results before moving forward with the project. The department is hopeful the public meeting will be scheduled in the next few months.

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INFORMATION RELEASE

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