

# **Public Involvement Meeting**

## **I-39/Portage County B interchange**

**Plover**  
**Project ID: 1166-12-00**

**October 6, 2015**  
**5 to 7:30 p.m.**  
**Plover Village Hall**



**Presentation scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m.**

# Purpose of the meeting

Welcome to the second public involvement meeting regarding the I-39/Portage County B interchange, located in Plover.

The I-39/Portage County B interchange requires reconstruction to address various safety and operational concerns, including:

- bridge clearances
- traffic delays and backups during peak travel hours
- interchange ramp acceleration and deceleration
- lack of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to update you on the various alternatives for the proposed improvements to the interchange, and to receive your input on these alternatives.

A presentation is scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m. and the remainder of the meeting will follow an open house format.

## Project purpose and need

Our objective is to reconstruct the interchange so it will safely handle current and future traffic volumes. Specific needs identified include:

- Addressing geometric and structural deficiencies on the bridges and roadways within the interchange
  - The height between the bridge structures on I-39 and the travel lanes below on County B does not meet current design and safety standards. The current clearance is 14 feet 11 inches; the desirable clearance is 16 feet 9 inches. The I-39 southbound bridge has been struck by vehicles five times.
  - The concrete bridge support columns for the I-39 bridges are too close to the traffic lanes, which does not meet current design and safety standards. The current clearance is less than the minimum standard of 10 feet.
- Improving safety on northbound I-39 at the County B on-ramp merge point
  - The steep grade and short acceleration lane on the northbound entrance ramp from County B to I-39 do not provide adequate distance for motorists to accelerate to reach I-39 travel speeds before merging.

- Improving traffic operations at the I-39/County B ramp terminal intersections
  - Increasing traffic demand results in poor levels of service at the County B ramp terminal intersections. “Level Of Service” (LOS) is a term to describe the quality of traffic flow on a roadway system. Congestion and motorist-delay are two primary conditions that indicate whether a roadway has a good or poor level of service.
  - The I-39 southbound exit-ramp to County B currently experiences significant delays and backups from the signalized intersection at County B. Traffic on the ramps back up onto I-39 during peak travel hours. These backups on and near I-39 create a significant safety concern.
  - The southbound exit-ramp from I-39 to County B has a very short freeway deceleration length and substandard ramp sight distance. This condition requires drivers to decelerate quickly when using the ramp.

Other conditions contributing to the need for the project include:

- A lack of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations along County B.
- The Tomorrow River State Trail underneath I-39, north of the County B interchange, is too close to the railroad.

## Interchange alternatives for consideration

At a public meeting in 2014, we presented the Northbound Entrance Loop configuration as the Preferred Alternative for the County B interchange design. Since that meeting, we completed additional analysis of potential solutions to the issues with the interchange operations. We are seeking your input on some new, viable interchange configurations that will meet the purpose and need for the improvement project.

Four interchange alternatives are being considered as part of the project development and evaluation process for I-39 at County B.

All of the interchange configurations currently under consideration would require reconstruction of the I-39 bridges to provide adequate vertical clearance over County B and the railroad. Lowering County B through the interchange area was initially investigated but was not practical because of drainage considerations and the need for the northbound entrance-ramp to meet the vertical clearance elevation over the railroad.

Each alternative would:

1. Meet vertical clearance requirements over County B and the railroad with new or reconstructed bridges.
2. Address safety considerations by providing a longer northbound entrance-ramp that allows vehicles to reach safe merging speed prior to merging onto I-39.
3. Provide acceptable LOS and minimize traffic queues.
4. Include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations along County B.
5. Address the Tomorrow River State Trail proximity to the railroad by reconstructing the I-39 bridges over the railroad and realigning the trail.

# Diamond Interchange with Traffic Signals

This alternative proposes reconstruction of the interchange to a standard diamond interchange that meets design standards and adds turn lanes. The I-39 bridges over County B and the railroad would be reconstructed, and County B would be reconstructed to include additional turn lanes. Both ramp terminal intersections would be controlled with traffic signals.

Estimated cost including real estate:  
**\$26-28 million**

## Advantages

- Most familiar configuration to motorists.
- No modifications to current access.

## Disadvantages

- Dual eastbound to northbound left-turn lanes create entrance-ramp merge. This is considered less than desirable because it requires a merge on the ramp followed quickly by a merge onto the freeway.



# Interchange with Northbound Entrance Loop

This alternative proposes reconstruction of the interchange as a diamond interchange with a northbound entrance loop in the southeast quadrant of the interchange. The I-39 bridges over County B and the railroad would be reconstructed, and both ramp terminal intersections would be controlled with traffic signals.

## Advantages

- Provides additional spacing between ramp terminal intersections, allowing signal timing flexibility.
- Reduced pedestrian conflict points.
- Favors the high-volume eastbound to northbound movement.

## Disadvantages

- Requires about 13 acres of an approximate 125 acre field that the Del Monte plant uses for irrigation of treatment water in the southeast quadrant of the interchange. The project would be responsible for costs associated with this irrigation impact.
- Requires the Del Monte access driveway along the north side of County B to be closed. (access point just east of the limits shown on the graphic on this page)
- Requires an additional bridge over County B for the loop ramp.
- May not meet driver expectation for those seeking to use the northbound entrance-ramp.
- Highest cost alternative.

Estimated cost including real estate:  
**\$29-31 million**



# Diamond Interchange with Roundabouts

This alternative proposes reconstruction of the existing diamond interchange as standard diamond interchange that meets design standards and adds turn lanes. The I-39 bridges over County B and the railroad would be reconstructed. Both ramp terminal intersections would be controlled with roundabouts.

Roundabouts at the ramp terminals were initially ruled out to avoid introducing a different type of intersection control because signalized intersections currently exist east and west of the interchange (at Village Park Drive and County R). Further analysis and traffic modeling indicate roundabouts could be a viable solution for the interchange ramp intersections and therefore this alternative is being reconsidered.

## Advantages

- Roundabouts reduce crash severity.
- No modifications to current access.
- Least number of vehicular conflict points.

## Disadvantages

- Travel time along County B through the interchange would be slightly increased due to slower operating speeds required to negotiate the roundabouts.
- Potential for higher real estate impact in the northwest quadrant.



## Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)

This alternative proposes reconstruction of the existing diamond interchange as a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI). With a DDI configuration, traffic “crosses over” from one side of County B to the other, while traveling through the interchange. This allows left-turning motorists to move in a “free-flow” manner, without conflicting with through traffic. The I-39 bridges over County B and the railroad would be reconstructed in similar fashion to other alternatives.

The DDI type of interchange was initially ruled out as an alternative because of adjacent intersection spacing. Further evaluation of DDI guidance and detailed traffic modeling indicate a properly designed DDI is a viable option to meet the needs at this location.

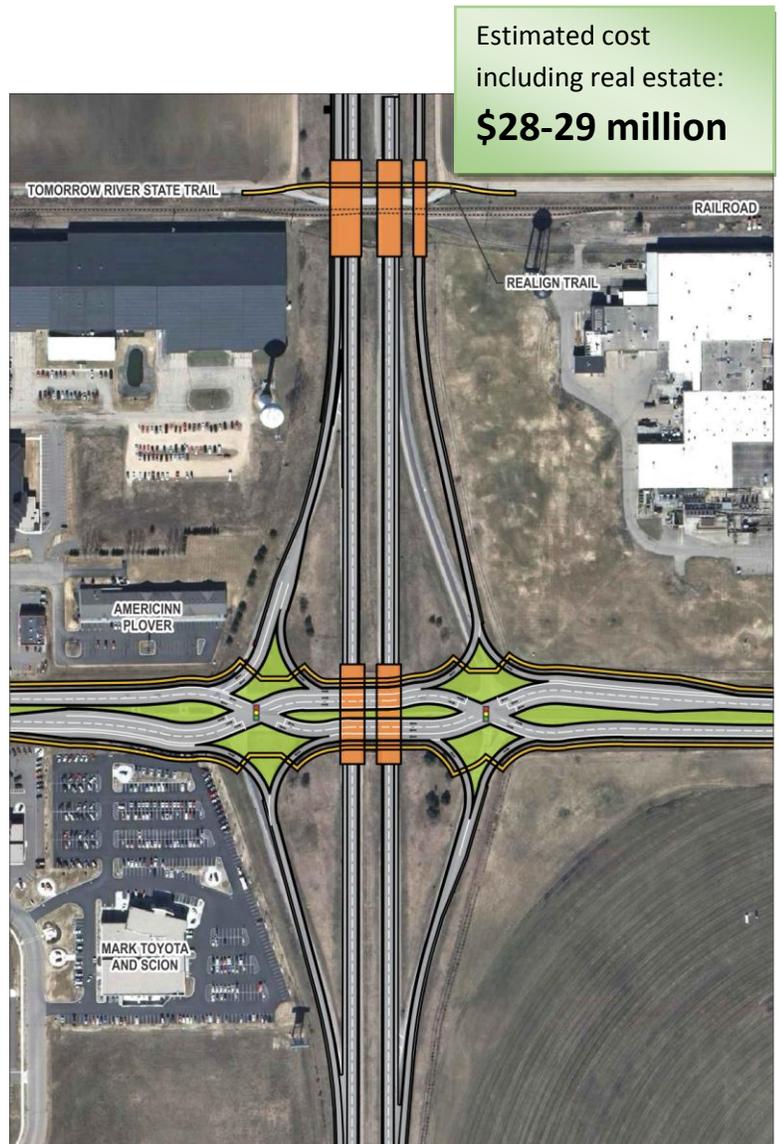
To view a video about how to drive a DDI, visit: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pMopeJp1Uk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pMopeJp1Uk)

### Advantages

- Favors the high-volume eastbound to northbound movement.
- No modifications to current access.

### Disadvantages

- Configuration is not familiar to most motorists.
- Pedestrian movement generally more complex than other alternatives.
- Travel time along County B through the interchange would be slightly increased due to slower operating speeds required to negotiate the DDI intersections.
- Potential for higher real estate impact in the southwest quadrant.



## **Pedestrian/bicycle accommodations**

The absence of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations along County B present a significant safety concern. Improving the bicycle and pedestrian crossing at this interchange is identified as a priority in the Portage County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. All alternatives include a shared-use path for pedestrians and bicycles on the north and south sides of County B.

## **Potential construction impacts**

While it is still early in the design process, motorists can likely expect the following during construction:

- A minimum of one lane of traffic for northbound I-39.
- Two lanes of traffic for southbound I-39 traffic during peak travel times; some single lane closures during weekdays.
- Ramps may be closed and detoured.
- County B may be limited to one lane in each direction.

We will work closely with local officials, emergency services, law enforcement, and businesses to minimize traffic impacts during construction. We will also work to minimize impacts to the Tomorrow River State Trail during construction.

## **Potential property impacts**

Additional property will be needed north and south of County B between Village Park Drive and County R. The amount of property impact will be determined by which interchange alternative is selected.

## **Potential access modifications**

The only alternative that requires an access modification is the interchange with the Northbound Entrance Loop alternative. That alternative requires the removal of access from the north side of County B into the Del Monte property. No access removals or modifications are currently anticipated with any other alternative.

## Next steps in the project development process

- Select preferred alternative November 2015
- Public involvement meeting to present the preferred alternative and gather more information Early 2016
- Complete environmental document Spring 2016
- Real estate acquisition 2017 to 2018
- Complete design Early 2019

At this time the project is not currently in the department's six-year highway improvement program. The earliest that the interchange would be reconstructed is late 2021. After work begins, the reconstruction is expected to take approximately two years.

For more information about the I-39/County B interchange project, please visit the project website:

<http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/projects/by-region/nc/i39countyb/default.aspx>

## Public input/comments

We encourage you to talk to the project representatives and ask them questions. Attached to this handout is a sheet for your written comments and input regarding the proposed project. Please mail any written comments about the project before **October 20, 2015**, or leave them in the comment box tonight. You can also email your comments to the contacts listed below.

Your comments assist us in developing a project that will serve the needs of the traveling public as well as the needs of the local community. Your input is welcome and appreciated throughout the design process.

For more information, please contact:

Jeffrey Stewart, P.E., Project Manager  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
1681 Second Avenue South  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495  
(715) 421-8376  
jeffrey.stewart@dot.wi.gov

Jeff Knudson, P.E.  
SRF Consulting Group Inc.  
901 Deming Way, Suite 101  
Madison, WI 53717  
(608) 298-5407  
jknudson@srfconsulting.com



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Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Attn: Jeffrey Stewart, P.E., Project Manager  
1681 Second Avenue South  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495

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