

# EXIT 153 IMPROVEMENTS PUBLIC MEETING

OCTOBER 24, 2018

## INTRODUCTION

The I-79 corridor from Star City (Exit 155) to Westover (Exit 152) is in the process of being studied to identify current and future traffic operational deficiencies. Regional growth is expected due to the West Virginia University system, particularly in the healthcare sector, continued expansion of Mylan Park, and planned development along the west side of I-79.

As a first step in this overall study, alternative improvements were developed to enhance traffic flow and improve safety at the University Town Centre interchange (Exit 153). These improvements will enhance traffic flow and improve traffic safety to accompany projected growth in and near Morgantown.

## PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this project is to provide a sustainable transportation system that accommodates the anticipated growth along the I-79 corridor and region. This includes increasing the capacity and safety of the interchange while maintaining pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.



Enhance  
Traffic Flow



Improve  
Traffic Safety



Prepare for  
Area Growth



## ALTERNATIVE 1 (ELIMINATED)

### Improvements to Existing Interchange



**Alternative 1 would include minor improvements to the existing interchange to enhance capacity.**

- The roundabout at the I-79 off-ramp would be converted to a signalized intersection.
- The intersection would be shifted eastward to increase the distance to the next intersection to the west.
- The sidewalk and bike lane would remain as is.
- This alternative was eliminated from further consideration since it does not meet the project's Purpose and Need.
- Cost Estimate: \$5.3 million.

## ALTERNATIVE 2 (ELIMINATED)

### Improvements to Existing Interchange plus Flyover



**Alternative 2 would include Build Alternative 1 plus an I-79 northbound off-ramp flyover.**

- The roundabout at the I-79 off-ramp would be converted to a signalized intersection. The intersection would be shifted eastward to increase the distance to the next intersection to the west.
- A new ramp for I-79 northbound traffic to the WestRidge development would be constructed.
- The sidewalk and bike lane would remain as is.
- Cost Estimate: \$14.2 million.

# ALTERNATIVE 3 (RECOMMENDED)

## Diverging Diamond Interchange



**Alternative 3 converts the existing interchange to a diverging diamond interchange (DDI). This is the recommended alternative. More information is provided on the DDI board and in the video.**

- A DDI is a relatively new concept that shifts traffic to the opposing lanes within the interchange ramps, thus creating a pair of one-way, signalized, intersections.
- The sidewalk will remain as is. The bike lane will be removed.
- Cost Estimate: \$7 million.



**30%  
DECREASE**

**THIS DESIGN IS EXPECTED TO  
HAVE 30% FEWER CRASHES  
THAN A TRADITIONAL DIAMOND  
INTERCHANGE.**

**EASY TO NAVIGATE**

**ELIMINATES LAST-  
MINUTE LANE CHANGES**

**PROVIDES BETTER SIGHT  
DISTANCE AT TURNS**

## WHAT IS A DDI?

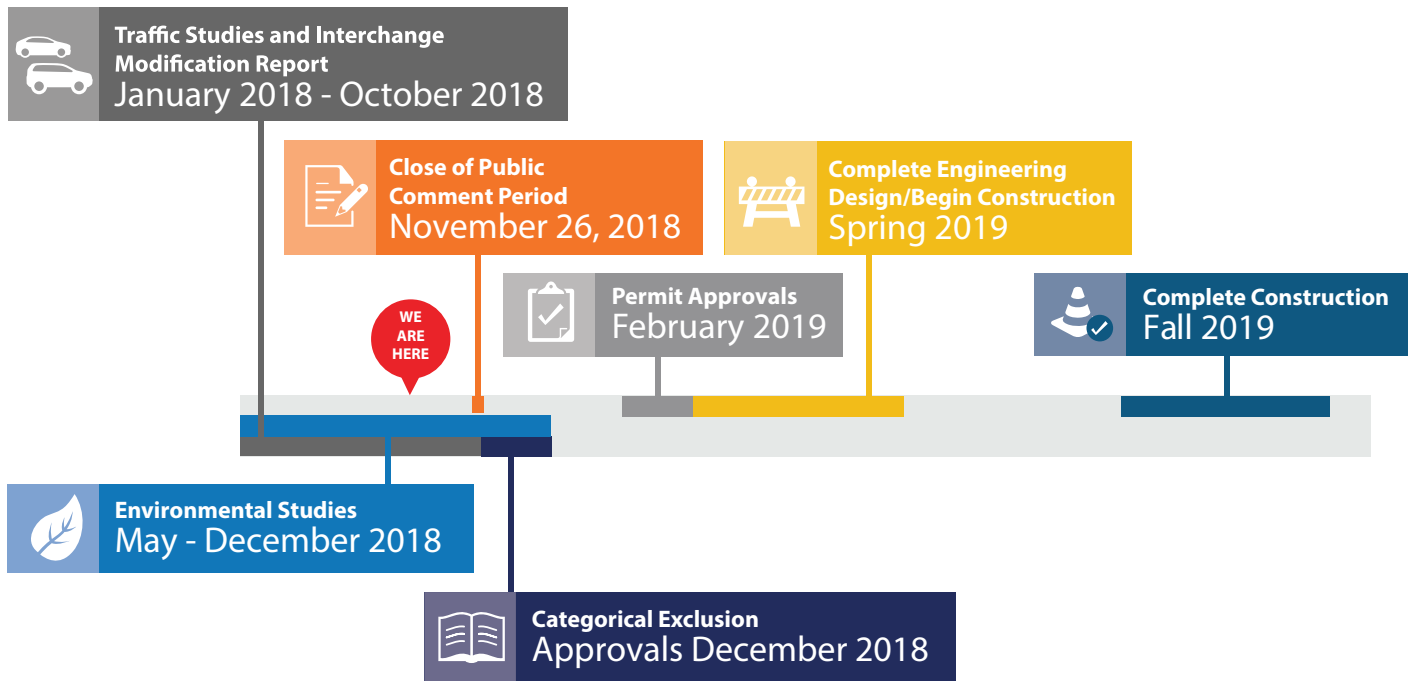
A Diverging Diamond Interchange is an innovative approach to traffic engineering. It is an unusual interchange in that it requires motorists to briefly drive on the opposite side of the road. The interchange has pavement markings and traffic signals like a typical intersection to help drivers navigate it.

When driving a DDI, motorists proceed through a traffic signal and follow their lane to the opposite side of the roadway. Then drivers turning left can turn without having to cross a lane of oncoming traffic. This design allows free-flowing turns when entering and exiting an interstate, eliminating the left turn against oncoming traffic and limiting the number of traffic signal phases.

WVDOT has recommended Alternative 3: Diverging Diamond as the preferred alternative as part of the I-79 improvements. Alternative 3 met the FHWA Policy Criteria for traffic operations and safety.



# NEXT STEPS



## WHY SHOULD YOU BE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT?

Comments on this project and its potential impacts are requested from the public to assist in the study and development of the recommendations.

Comments are due by November 26, 2018 and should be sent to the following:



Mr. R.J. Scites, P.E.  
Director, Engineering Division  
West Virginia Division of Highways  
1334 Smith Street  
Charleston, West Virginia 25301



Visit the WVDOH Website at <http://go.wv.gov/dotcomment> for project information and the opportunity to comment electronically.



**Each comment and suggestion provided will help the involved agencies hear directly from the people who live and work in Monongalia County. Your input is important and will be used to guide the study team as the project moves forward.**