

## Project History

Existing I-40 Exit 65 is a somewhat unconventional interchange configuration with three direct ramp connections. However, the existing interchange does not allow access to eastbound I-40. Exit 65A provides both eastbound and westbound on and off movements. Exits 65 and 65A are currently in close proximity with merge distances between the ramps that are shorter than desired. There are twin bridges over Red Wheat Drive and Neptune Drive as well as the adjacent railroads, all of which have insufficient vertical clearances. Existing Gary Boulevard provides access to Exit 65, and the existing layout creates driver confusion. The existing intersection with Lexington/Oliver Avenues is also unconventional, with very little spacing between Gary Boulevard and Red Wheat Drive.

There were 246 documented collisions within the project area between 2007 and 2017, including five fatalities. Almost one quarter of the collisions occurred at the Gary Blvd/Red Wheat Dr./I-40 Ramp intersection. The purpose of the project is to improve safety and mobility on I-40 and at Exit 65/65A.

The I-40 Exit 65/65A project began in 2015 with a Preliminary Engineering Study. At that time ODOT developed six alternatives (Alternatives 1-6, including the No Build alternative) to reconstruct the I-40/Exit 65 interchange:

1. Alternative 1: No Build
2. Alternative 2: Standard Diamond
3. Alternative 3: Diverging Diamond
4. Alternative 4: Single Point Urban Interchange
5. Alternative 5: Diamond with Roundabouts
6. Alternative 6: Rotary Oval

ODOT presented these alternatives to the public in May of 2016. Public feedback indicated concern with alternatives that did not accommodate ramp access to I-40 at both Exits 65 and 65A. Given that feedback, ODOT developed two new alternatives (Alternatives 7 & 8) that included a combined interchange design that kept full access to both interchanges utilizing frontage roads and roundabouts. These alternatives were documented in an addendum to the Preliminary Engineering Study completed in December 2018 and presented to the public in February 2019. Following the February 2019 meeting, ODOT received feedback from the City of Clinton and others with concerns about the out of direction travel required by these alternatives, and the potential for driver confusion with a relatively unfamiliar layout. The City asked ODOT to revisit some of the original six alternatives to determine if any would be viable and could leave access at both Exit 65 and 65A.

Since the 2019 public meeting, ODOT has revised Alternative 2 which proposes a standard diamond interchange at Exit 65, known as Alternative 2D. Alternative 2D maintains all direct ramp access at Exit 65 and maintains indirect access to Neptune Drive via a free-flow turnaround at Gary Blvd. In addition to Alternative 2D, ODOT developed Alternative 9B, a folded diamond interchange, which maintains all direct ramp connections at both Exit 65 and 65A. These two alternatives have been carried forward into the virtual public open house.