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It's time to dress the turkey

Traffic-flow design in Lexington is a model for project in Boone

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FLORENCE, Ky. — A new traffic-flow design planned for northern Kentucky aims to smooth the ride for travelers using a technique that's new to the region.

The Kentucky Enquirer (<http://bit.ly/U0JFdP>) reported that the double-crossover diamond interchange at Kentucky 536 and Interstate 71/75 in Boone County will be among the first of its kind in the area.

Carol Callan-Ramler, project manager for the Transportation Cabinet District 6 office, says meetings are being held with the public to describe the project.

"We wanted to start the public meetings now because this is a major project, and the double-crossover diamond interchange is something many people have probably never seen before," she said.

Utility work and right of way acquisitions are expected to start next year. Construction of the road project is expected to begin in 2015.

The double crossover, which is also called a diverging diamond interchange, is becoming more popular after being introduced in the U.S. in 2009 from Europe, where it was developed.

The city of Lexington installed a diverging diamond intersection in 2011 on Harrodsburg Road and a one-year review of the project found that accidents had decreased by 40 percent and 72 percent of people who responded to a Kentucky Transportation Cabinet survey said the design was a good solution and recommended its use elsewhere.

Boone County Judge-executive Gary Moore said the current and anticipated traffic flow in the area makes the double crossover diamond interchange the best option for both Kentucky 536, which is Mt. Zion Road, and for Richwood Road and I-71/75.

"When a majority of the traffic is flowing from one direction, in this case the north, this option works perfectly," Moore said. "The (DCD) interchanges at Mt. Zion and Richwood Road allow for the continuation of our rapid growth and expansion in the county, even in a down economy."

Callan-Ramler said DCDs usually cost less than traditional road-widening projects and provide a traffic flow that is less disruptive.

"The way we fund transportation is inadequate," Callan-Ramler said, "so we have to figure out how we can skin the cat with the resources that we have."

Developer Jack Berberich said current traffic flow has slowed growth.

"We've had inquiries from other businesses about some of the vacant land there, and the traffic issues are always a major concern," he said.

Information from: The Kentucky Enquirer, <http://www.nky.com>