

# New traffic flow design coming to Boone County

## Traffic to swap lanes for interstate access

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Work will begin soon on two road reconstruction projects in Boone County that will include an innovative traffic flow design. Developed in Europe, the design has only recently been used in this country.

The region's first double crossover diamond interchange will be included as part of the reconstruction of Mt. Zion Road (Ky. 536) at Interstate 71/75. A separate but related road-widening project will extend construction west to Hathaway Road in Union.





Traffic backs up on the ramp from southbound I-75 to Mt. Zion Road in Boone County. The Kentucky Transportation Department will have public hearings on upgrades to Mt. Zion and Richwood roads. / The Enquirer/Patrick Reddy



A graphic representation of a diamond crossover interchange from westbound Mt. Zion Road (KY 536), with Interstate 71/75 crossing overhead. / Provided/Kentucky Department of Transportation

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet District 6 office has scheduled its first public meeting for the projects for today at Florence Baptist Church at Mt. Zion.

Right-of-way acquisition and utility work for the 1.1-mile interchange project is expected to begin next year. Construction is slated to start in 2015.

“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

## If you go

- **What:** Ky. 536/Mt. Zion Road widening project; right-of

seen before,” said Carol Callan-Ramler, project manager for the Transportation Cabinet District 6 office.

- **Video: [How the new interchange design works](#)**

Double crossovers – also called diverging diamond interchanges (DCDs) – are a relatively new design concept in the United States but are coming into wider use. The first DCD in the United States was installed in Missouri in 2009, and there are now more than a dozen in the country, including one on Harrodsburg Road in Lexington that was completed in August 2011.

A one-year review of the Harrodsburg Road interchange showed accidents have been reduced by 40 percent, and 72 percent of respondents to a KTC survey said the interchange was a good solution and should be considered elsewhere.

The state also plans to build a similar interchange as part of a road-widening project on Richwood Road at Interstate 71/75 in Boone County. Construction on that project is also slated to begin in 2015.

Boone County Judge-executive Gary Moore said the traffic flow on Mt. Zion Road and the interstate makes the diamond crossover the best option – for both current traffic flow and anticipated growth in the area. “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.”

As vehicles approach the interstate on a road that includes this type of interchange, traffic briefly crosses to the opposite side of the road in both directions. This allows vehicles merging onto the interstate ramp to turn left from the inside lane without crossing traffic. Once past the intersection, vehicle traffic returns to the traditional side of the road.

In the case of Mt. Zion Road, motorists headed west would turn left onto Interstate 71/75 south from what is now the eastbound lane. Conversely, motorists headed east would turn left onto Interstate 71/75 north from what is now the westbound lane.

Callan-Ramler said motorists should become familiar with the interchange design, because it could become commonplace. DCDs are generally less expensive than traditional road widening projects, eliminate the need for left turns across oncoming traffic and provide a less-disruptive traffic flow.

“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.”

Total cost for the project is estimated at \$37.2 million, including right of way and utilities. Because the new interchange can be built keeping the existing bridge structure intact, the cost is expected to be \$7 million less than a traditional widening.

The current average daily traffic along Mt. Zion Road at the exchange site is 25,000 vehicles. That is expected to increase to more than 58,000 per day by 2030.

Jack Berberich, who is developing the Friendly Market of Northern Kentucky near the Mt. Zion interchange, said the current traffic configuration is a roadblock to development. “We’ve had inquiries from other businesses about some of the vacant land there, and the traffic issues are always a major concern.”

Berberich also developed the retail center that includes the Kroger on Mt. Zion Road.

“When we started developing down there, you could roll a bowling ball down the road and not hit anything,” Berberich said. “The growth out there has been amazing, and this project should help that development continue.”

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Mt. Zion Road currently includes four lanes at its widest point. With the new configuration, the road will expand to nine lanes in some places.

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