Fern Valley Interchange *Transportation Project Update*

More work ahead for Fern Valley project

Decisions by project committees in February to forward two design alternatives into the Environmental Assessment for analysis was an important milestone, but more planning, more public comment and more decisions lay ahead.

The Environmental Assessment will be subject to public comment next fall, and designs can change as a result of the EA process. It's anticipated that a final decision on what to build, the *Preferred Alternative*, will be made by the end of the year. That decision will be the basis for a Revised EA, which will be reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration. Federal approval, called a "Finding of No Significant Impact," releases funds, allowing right-of-way negotiations and final design work to be completed.

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Projected schedule for Fern Valley Interchange

Task	2007				2008	2009	2010
	Feb	Apr	May -Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Feb		Jan-Feb
Select alternatives for EA	X						
Refine alternatives' design							
Produce Environmental Assessment							
Public Hearing/30-Day Comment Period							
Select Preferred Alternative				X			
Interchange Area Management Plan (IAMP)							
Prepare and publish Final Revised EA							
Final Design & Right-of-way (approx. 2 yrs.)							
Construction Start (est. to bid early 2010)							

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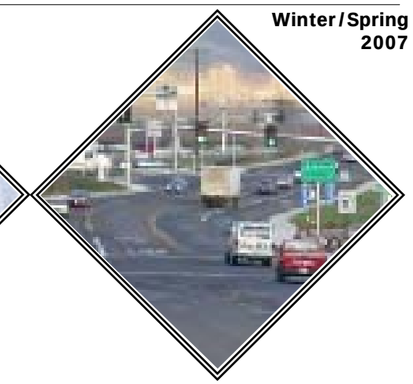
Fern Valley Interchange



Transportation Project Update

See project design options inside...

Teams narrow options for new interchange design

Fern Valley Interchange project teams voted, after nearly three years, the design alternatives to take into the federally-required Environmental Assessment (EA).

"We jumped a major hurdle with the Fern Valley teams by forwarding the PBA West, Crossing Diamond and two east side alternatives," said ODOT Environmental Project Manager Jerry Marmon. "The two east side designs are different in how North Phoenix Road and Fern Valley Road connect."

The alternatives were considered to be the best among many designs studied to solve safety and congestion problems at the interchange.

Since both teams – the Citizens Advisory Committee and the Project Development Team – have voted on the two alternatives, the project team will begin the environmental technical reports, which will form the basis of the EA. The EA will examine and weigh the project impacts to the natural and human environment (including biology, wetlands, Bear Creek Greenway, right of way acquisitions, socioeconomic impacts.)

Once the draft document is published, there will be a 30-day public comment

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ODOT photos

Committees in February debated design options, left. Above, community members discuss details with ODOT Operations Coordinator Brian Sheadel.

Phoenix supports new interchange style

A new design for interstate interchanges, called a *crossing diamond* or *diverging diamond*, has gained local approval for use in the Fern Valley project.

See *Page 3* for details about this innovative design for managing interchange traffic. Also on the project web site, see below.

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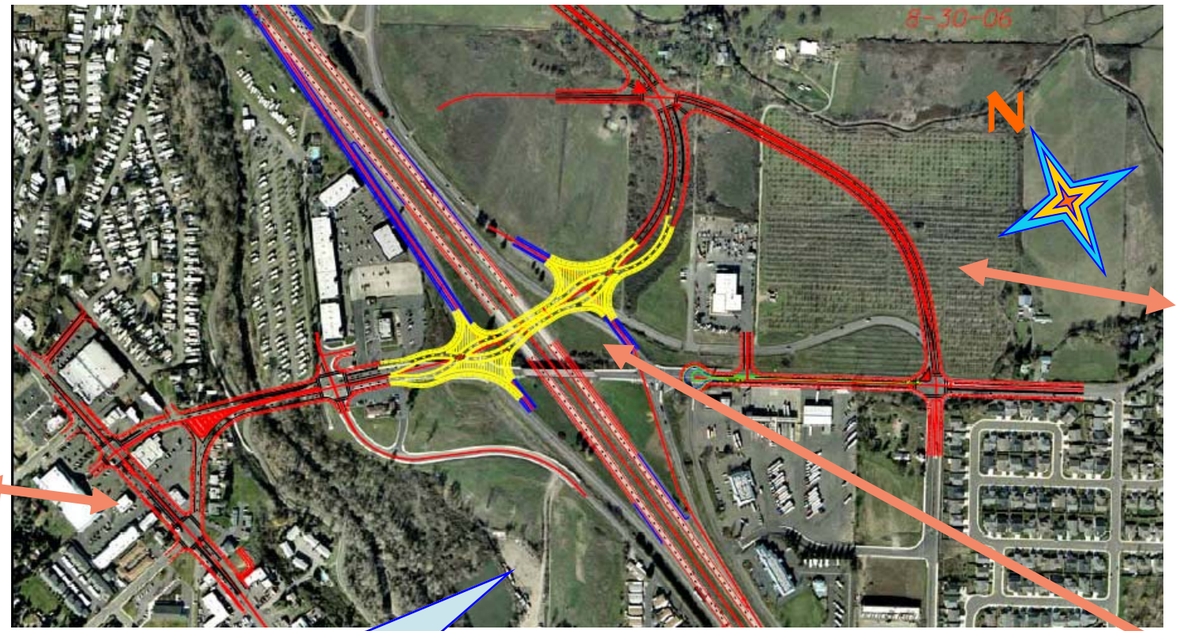
Environmental Assessment to examine two design options, project committees decide

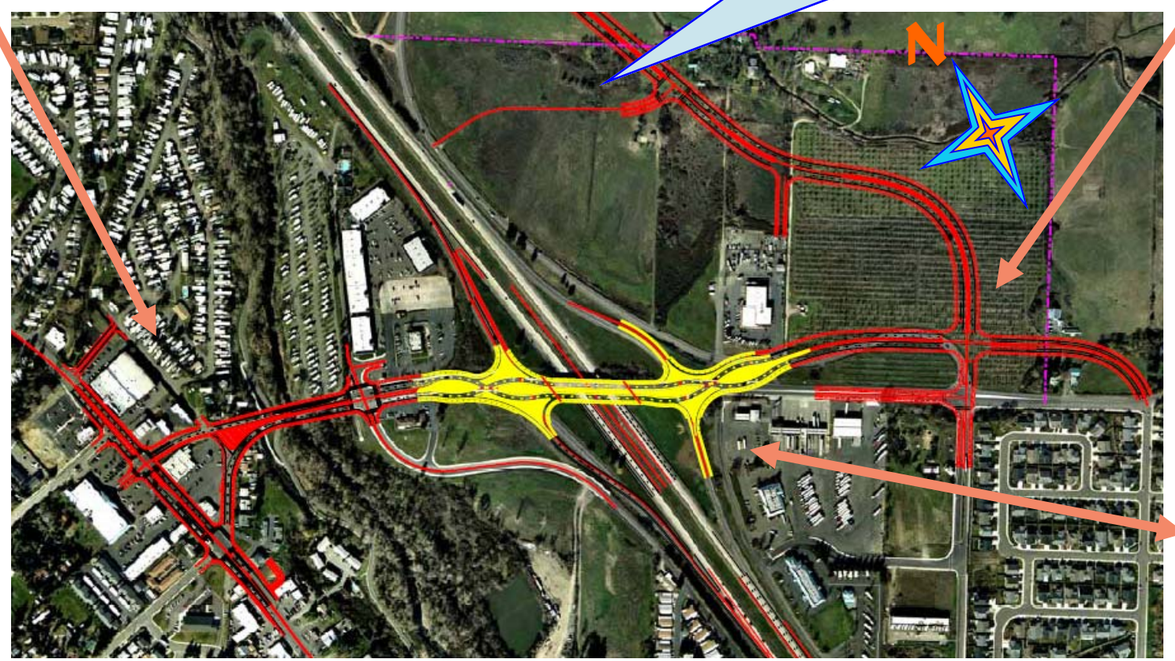
North Phoenix Through option and Fern Valley Road Through option for the new Fern Valley Interchange project will be examined in the Environmental Assessment, scheduled for completion in early fall.

The design for the west side is the same for both alternatives. It creates one-way connectors between Hwy. 99 and Fern Valley Road. Existing Fern Valley Road becomes one-way westbound to existing intersection at Ray's Market. Traffic moving east, from Hwy. 99 toward the Interstate, would turn at Bolz Road. Design includes a median on Hwy. 99 from just north of Cheryl Lane to Bolz Road, and a new access from Hwy. 99 for Coleman Creek Estates.



North Phoenix Through option

Fern Valley Road Through option



The drawings at left show the two designs that will be closely analyzed in an Environmental Assessment. Once the EA is completed, there will be public review with opportunity to fine tune the designs.
See Project Schedule, next page, for additional planning steps.

East Side Design alternatives to be examined in the Environmental Assessment have different road connections. ***North Phoenix Through*** option, top drawing at left, creates a new connection linking North Phoenix Road directly to the interchange. Fern Valley Road-bound traffic would turn right at a signal just past the interchange, and travel southeast on a new road to the existing North Phoenix Road/Fern Valley Road intersection. Fern Valley Road to the west would dead-end at the western edge of the truck stop. ***Fern Valley Road Through*** option, at bottom left, maintains Fern Valley Road's existing link to the interchange, so existing traffic circulation patterns are maintained.

Project options

Continued from Page 1

period and public hearing, which will also be an opportunity for the public to comment on the alternatives and to suggest modifications.

"It's important to remember that there is still time for the teams and the public to make comments and suggest changes," said ODOT Project Leader Debbie Timms.

After the comment period, staff will respond to all comments received. The teams will then come back together and vote on the preferred alternative. That will form the basis of the Revised (final) Environmental Assessment (REA) describing what should be built, which will be subject to final federal approval. (See schedule on Page 4.)

Many times there are design changes between the draft and final environmental documents.

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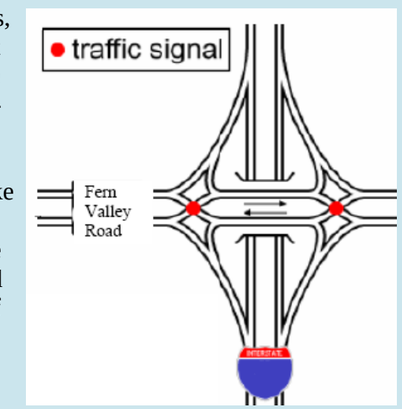
Crossing Diamond design interchange is common to both alternatives that will be examined in the Environmental Assessment. As the diagram at right shows, drivers are directed to the left side of the bridge to cross the interstate, enabling interstate-bound drivers to make "free" left turns (no stopping). The design is efficient and can take up less land than other interchange designs. It can be safer because there is no need for drivers to cross in front of opposing traffic. The first interchange of this type is being built in Missouri.



Details at: **www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION3/fvi_index.shtml**