



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why aren't you installing traffic signals on U.S. 20 at Granger Avenue and Independence Highway?**

We carefully assess and analyze all aspects of intersections to determine the best way to safely manage traffic. The intersections of U.S. 20 at Independence Highway and Granger Avenue have been thoroughly evaluated, and it has been determined that traffic signals are not appropriate at these locations. One way to control intersections is by changing how the roads come together or when and how traffic turns. Median acceleration lanes are one of the changes proposed for this project based on our evaluation of these intersections.

A properly placed traffic signal can improve traffic flow and reduce crashes. However, an improperly placed traffic signal can be dangerous. National best practice, and our experience reviewing crash data in Oregon, show that traffic signals in locations such as these often do not stop crashes. Drivers do not expect traffic signals located in higher speed, rural environments. As a result, high-speed rear-ends, running red lights (both on purpose and by accident), and other unpredictable driver behaviors may occur. Injuries in high-speed turning and angle crashes (when a red light is run) and head, neck or back injuries from rear end collisions can be significant.

[Learn more about how we make traffic signal decisions.](#)

### **Have you considered reducing speeds in the corridor?**

Given the roadside development and the existing speed data, the criteria for lowering the posted speeds has not been met. Posting a lower speed does not slow drivers: it is more of a police enforcement issue. We continue to monitor the highway and periodically check speeds.

[Learn more about how we set speed zones.](#)

### **Will my property's access be affected as a result of this project?**

At this stage of the project, we don't know the full impacts to neighboring properties. As we move forward, we will notify all property owners whose private access to the highway may be changed by this project.

The process for modifying or closing private accesses includes multiple opportunities for property owners to work with the project team:

1. We will establish the project's access management methodology. This sets the guiding principles for all future actions that will occur between ODOT and property owners. We



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use our guiding principles to balance the needs of the impacted property owners with the need to maintain a safe and efficient highway.

2. Then we will work with property owners to determine and evaluate what to do with their specific highway access.

## **What is an access management methodology letter? How does it affect me?**

The access management methodology letter is an invitation for property owners with potential impacts to review and comment on the guiding principles that will be used to evaluate all accesses within each phase of the project. Please contact the access management staff member listed in your letter if you have questions or want to provide comments. If you have not received a draft access management methodology letter then the first phase of the project is not expected to change your private access to your property. Second phase letters should be expected by Spring 2020.

## **Why do you need to enter my property?**

If your property is next to our project limits along U.S. 20, you should have received a “right of entry” packet from our right of way consultant Epic Land Solutions. Signing a “Right of Entry” means, you are allowing technical specialists and their equipment onto your property to aid in the design of the project. Your cooperation to allow our team of environmental scientists and engineers to do field work and assess the existing conditions (visually and/or by taking soil samples) within the potential project footprint. This area may be larger than what is actually needed for the project. Information gathered about your property allows us to assess potential impacts, and how we can avoid, minimize or mitigate those impacts depending on the circumstances. This is a project requirement under the [National Environmental Protection Act \(NEPA\)](#) for all projects.

## **I’m concerned about bicycling near rumble strips.**

Rumble strips are grooved patterns that make a rumbling sound and physical vibration that immediately warn inattentive drivers that they are leaving their driving lane. We place a 12-foot gap in our shoulder rumble strips every 60 feet to help bicyclists enter and exit the roadway shoulders. We ensure that there is at least four feet between the edge of the rumble strip and the edge of the pavement for bicycles and pedestrians. If there is a guardrail or concrete barrier next to the shoulder, at least five feet is provided.

[Learn more about rumble strips.](#)

## **What about Benton County’s Corvallis-Albany Bikeway plans along U.S. 20?**

We are coordinating with Benton County to make sure our designs are compatible with a future, yet unfunded, bikeway/shared-use path in Phase 1. In Phase 2, we are working with the county,



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who will be starting design soon, on the section of the bikeway between Conifer Boulevard and Merloy Avenue to minimize the combined impacts.

[Learn more about Benton County's project.](#)

## **What will these traffic separators look like and will they impact emergency responders?**

The proposed traffic separators are only 4 inches tall by 4 feet wide to direct traffic into the correct lanes to either turn left onto a local road or turn left onto the highway and accelerate in the new median lane. Given they are very low separators, emergency response vehicles can drive across them if needed.

## **How can wide farm vehicles navigate the traffic separators?**

We have been looking at the most common farming vehicles we are aware of to check their ability to turn into and/or overhang the 4 inch tall traffic separators. If you have concerns about a specific farm vehicle, please contact us at: [US20safetyupgrades@odot.state.or.us](mailto:US20safetyupgrades@odot.state.or.us) and let us know the type of vehicle and its dimensions so we can follow up with you.

## **How are the Phase 1 safety improvements proposed at Granger different from the 2007 turn lane project, which contributed to an increase in crashes?**

Median acceleration lanes like those proposed at NE Granger Avenue and Independence Highway reduce the frequency and severity of crashes by up to 45% (based on national data). We have also seen significant safety benefits where they've been used in Oregon, such as the OR 6 at Wilson River Loop Project near Tillamook. The project was completed in 2013, resulting in a crash reduction of 50% after a similar median acceleration lane was installed.

Wide striped buffered right turn lanes are part of the proposed intersection improvements at Independence Highway and Granger Avenue to improve sight distance for vehicles waiting on local roads.

The 2007 project included a right turn lane on U.S. 20. The standard right turn lane design blocked visibility of on-coming through traffic for drivers turning from NE Granger Avenue and more turning crashes occurred. Seeing challenges with these type of right turn lanes in various locations, ODOT updated the Highway Design Manual (HDM) guidance for right turn lanes on high speed roads.



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### **Have you considered installing roundabouts or traffic circles for Granger Avenue and/or Independence Highway?**

Yes, our 2012 U.S. 20 Road Safety Audit of these intersections looked at a wide variety of methods of improving safety, including roundabouts. Our current project team also looked at a roundabout at Granger Avenue, with a frontage road to Independence Highway via Hyslop Road. Basically, there isn't enough room for a roundabout given the proximity of the highway to the railroad track.

### **Will the median acceleration lanes provide any additional breaks or gaps in traffic?**

The median acceleration lane itself will not introduce additional gaps in traffic, however it will make it easier and safer for drivers to turn left onto U.S. 20 from Independence Highway and Granger Avenue. Drivers wanting to turn left will only need to find a gap in westbound traffic before crossing into the median acceleration lane. Once in the median lane there will be room to accelerate and then merge into the eastbound through lane. This two stage merge with the median acceleration lanes will reduce the time vehicles wait at Granger Avenue or Independence Highway to turn left onto U.S. 20.

### **Are you still evaluating alternatives for the proposed safety upgrades on this project?**

We are refining the identified, funded safety upgrades. Your input helps us do that, and we're reaching out to interested people and holding public engagement opportunities. We are not evaluating new alternatives. The safety upgrades were selected based on the 2016 U.S. 20 Highway Safety Study which included a public involvement process, and then was further defined in our scoping process. Project funding came from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and House Bill 2017 funds. We are now refining those concepts into actual designs that can be built with the funding available.

### **Did ODOT remove the walnut trees in front of the Children's Farm Home?**

Trillium Family Services, who operates the Children's Farm Home, removed the walnut trees in front of the property themselves. They made this decision due to concerns with the health of the trees and the safety of people on their property encountering more falling branches.