



# PLANK ROAD INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

## NEWSLETTER

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### How to Contact Us:

**David S. Wolfhove, P.E.**  
Project Manager  
PENNDOT  
1620 North Juniata Street  
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648-1080  
(814) 696-7196  
dwolfhove@state.pa.us

**Daniel W. Piatt, P.E.**  
Consulting Project Manager  
Mackin Engineering Company  
R.I.D.C. Park West  
117 Industry Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1015  
(412) 788-0472  
dp@mackinengineering.com

### Visit our web site:

[www.plankroadinterchange.com](http://www.plankroadinterchange.com)

You will find up-to-date information about the project.

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## Project Status and Next Steps

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PENNDOT) is continuing traffic and engineering studies for the Interstate 99 (I-99) interchange with Plank Road (Exit #31), as well as:

- Plank Road from the Sheraton Drive/Parkview Drive intersection to the Park Hills Plaza/K-mart intersection
- Goods Lane between Plank Road and the Kaufmann's entrance to the Logan Valley Mall
- Orchard Avenue between Plank Road and the entrance to Park Hills Plaza/Orchard Plaza

The purpose of the Plank Road Interchange Project is to provide an improved roadway system.

Improvements are needed to alleviate traffic congestion and the high volume of left turn movements.

The project team has conducted traffic studies, projected future traffic demands and developed two preliminary alternates. These alternates were developed to improve safety, alleviate congestion and address traffic issues identified. Public input on these alternates was solicited at the Community Advisory Committee, public officials and public meetings held in Fall 2003. The project team is in the process of refining the alternates based on comments received. The next public meeting on the Plank Road Interchange Improvement Project is planned for this Fall.

## What is Level of Service?

How long does it take you to cross the intersection of Plank Road and Goods Lane? It often depends on the time of day. The capacity of an intersection reflects its ability to accommodate a maximum number of vehicles safely within a peak hour of time. The ability to accommodate vehicles is affected by trucks, bus stops, number of lanes to move traffic, width of the lanes, and the grades of the roadway approaching the intersection.

Depending on the operating conditions at an intersection, drivers experience different levels of frustration, fuel consumption, and increased travel time. The traffic engineering analysis of these factors is termed "Level of Service" and is expressed in "control delay".

Level of Service (LOS) defines a range of control delays and is expressed in seconds per vehicle. Six (6) Levels of Service define these ranges and are given letter designations, with A representing the best operating conditions (less than a 10 second delay) and F the worst (over an 80 second delay).



PENNDOT has adopted a policy of trying to obtain a LOS C for operating conditions for the projected design year traffic (20 years after opening day). Under certain conditions, LOS D may be considered acceptable. Two preliminary alternates have been developed for the Plank Road Interchange Improvement Project, one at LOS C and one at LOS D. Please refer to the discussion on the various alternatives and visit the project website at [www.plankroadinterchange.com](http://www.plankroadinterchange.com) for additional details.



# Preliminary Alternates

The alternates' analysis for the Plank Road Interchange Project includes the development of two alternative configurations, one each for Level of Service (LOS) C and D, to evaluate right-of-way impacts, traffic flow improvements, and anticipated construction costs. Ideal conditions would allow LOS C operation twenty (20) years after the completion of the project. Although this is ideal, a LOS D can be considered acceptable to minimize significant impacts.

Both alternates include widening of the existing pavement from five (5) to eight (8) lanes on Plank Road and five (5) to six (6) lanes on Goods Lane, replacement of the I-99 bridges, improvements to the Plank Road/I-99 interchange, and replacement of the existing drainage system. In order to obtain the LOS C for design year conditions, additional pavement widening at the northern, southern, and western limits of the project are necessary to provide additional turning lanes. The intersection of Plank Road and Goods Lane/ Orchard Avenue is currently being studied in greater detail. The design team will identify options which will increase the level of service for design year traffic volumes.

In addition to the intersection improvements, the Plank Road interchange is also being studied to improve traffic flow through the interchange area. The first alternate for the interchange is an upgrade of the existing ramps to provide additional turning lanes and room for vehicles waiting to turn onto Plank Road. The second interchange alternate is a Single Point Urban Interchange configuration (see the illustration to the right). This alternate consolidates all left turn movements to a single signal located under the overhead structures. Both interchange alternates are compatible with either the LOS C or D alternates for Plank Road.

In addition to Level of Service, anticipated construction costs, right-of-way impacts, and public feedback will be considered when the project team chooses a preferred alignment, for further design and future construction. To view these alternates in greater detail, please visit the project website at [www.plankroadinterchange.com](http://www.plankroadinterchange.com).



**Drawing of Single Point Urban Interchange alternate for the Plank Road Interchange. (For additional drawings and mapping please visit the project website at [www.plankroadinterchange.com](http://www.plankroadinterchange.com).)**

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The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation  
Engineering District 9-0  
1620 North Juniata Street  
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648-1080

