

## Wixom Road interchange project meetings slated

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Andrew Sawmiller

June 13, 2007 - The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is holding a public information meeting on the planned 2008 I-96 and Wixom Road Interchange reconstruction project, on Monday, June 18.

From 3 to 4:30 p.m. and 7 to 8:30 p.m., interested members of the public, as well as local business owners, can attend the open-house style meetings, which will be held at the Wixom Community Center in the city of Wixom, located at 49015 Pontiac Trail.

The information exchange will be geared toward the \$36 million in upgrades needed at the interchange site.

"I'll be at both meetings, and it's to lay out, probably, the preliminary engineering," Wixom Mayor Michael McDonald said. "I imagine it will end up looking a lot like the Beck Road/96 interchange."

The meetings are intended to seek public input and answer questions, much like a public hearing, according to McDonald.

It's expected traffic on Wixom Road will be restricted to a single lane each way in order to complete the project. There will also be additional improvements made to the Wixom Road/Grand River intersection in conjunction with the interchange project.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm announced last year that she had reinstated funding for nearly 140 road projects throughout the state of Michigan, including the reconstruction of the Wixom Road/I-96 interchange, which has been described by Wixom officials as dangerous and out-of-date.

"At some point in time, you gotta say 'guys, we're killing people left and right on these roads and we have to fix these roads,'" McDonald said.

The intersection reconstruction project has been an issue since 1993, according to McDonald.

The initial promotion of the project was spearheaded by a number of people in the community, including Wixom City Manager J. Michael Dornan, McDonald, former Providence Hospital representative and current Lathrup Village Mayor Frank Brock, U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-Waterford, West Bloomfield, Orchard Lake), state Sen. Nancy Cassis (R-Commerce, Milford, Highland, White Lake, West Bloomfield, Orchard Lake, Wixom, Walled Lake, Wolverine Lake), and others.

The project had been deferred and put off for years by both Republican and Democratic governors, and the most recent delay occurred when Granholm struck the project from MDOT's 2005-06 construction year budget because of what she referred to as "parochial earmarking" by local legislators.

Any questions on the meeting can be directed to Paul Ajegba at the MDOT Oakland Traffic Service Center by calling 248-451-0001.

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