What’s the latest information on the West Laurel Interchange project?

Traffic on I-90 through the West Laurel Interchange project is now two lanes, two-way in the eastbound lanes. This traffic pattern will be in place through the remainder of the construction season. A 16-foot width restriction for all westbound travel and a 22-foot width restriction for all eastbound travel will also be in effect during this period. Loads exceeding the width restrictions will be escorted Monday-Thursday between 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. for eastbound and from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. for westbound traffic. Staging areas are available on each end of the project.

West Railroad Street in Laurel is closed from west of South 8th Avenue to the intersection of Frank Road. There is local access only on Shay Road to residences west of the interstate bridge.

What is the project scope at West Laurel Interchange?

Phase 1 - MDT contracted with Riverside Contracting to replace the two bridges over the railroad tracks and upgrade the West Laurel Interchange. The goal is to bring the bridges and the road to current design standards, to improve road safety for local and area travelers, and to improve the connections from the interchange to local roads.

The project includes:

- Replacing two bridges over Montana Rail Link railroad tracks and Railroad Street.
- Improving a section of the road that has resulted in a high number of crashes. The new road will have a gentler curve and wider shoulders.
- Building the roadbeds for the future interchange to allow easier access to 19th Avenue.

Phase 2 - MDT contracted with Riverside Contracting to build four ramps and rebuild 19th Avenue West over the interstate where it will dead-end at the interstate ramps on the south side of I-90. The new road will have two lanes, wide shoulders and a center turn lane. The intersection of 19th Avenue West/Golf Course Road and Old U.S. 10 will also be rebuilt and shifted west to better align with Golf Course Road and avoid irrigation ditches and utilities.

Will this project provide any direct access to the interstate from the south side of the railroad tracks?

No. Drivers on the south side of the tracks will need to travel east along Railroad Street to access the interstate.

How long will this construction project be active? When will the work be complete?

Phase 1 will continue through the spring of 2020 when the final chip seal and striping will be placed. MDT strives to have the smallest impact possible on drivers using the interstate, so the extended schedule will have fewer delays and detours and is the safest way to complete the work. Phase 2 is scheduled to begin in late June 2019 and finish in the summer of 2020.
Won’t the new design, and specifically the gentler curve on the eastbound lanes, lead to faster speeds and actually increase crashes?

Numerous, serious crashes have occurred near and on the old bridges, in part due to the sharp curves with high banks, a lack of shoulders, and the angle (skew) of the bridges. Keeping the current road clear of snow and ice can be a challenge during Montana winters. The new road alignment will integrate gentler curves and standard width shoulders. The eastbound bridge will be wider with a speed limit of 65 mph. While these changes may result in some drivers feeling they can travel faster, the designed improvements will provide a safer driving environment through increased visibility and better driving geometry.

What is the cost of this project?
Total cost of the project is estimated at $30 million.

How can I ask comments, concerns, or questions?
- Toll-free phone number (800) 956-3394 to ask questions. If we can’t answer, we’ll get your message and try to respond within one business day but may need a couple of days.
- Questions can be submitted online at https://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml. Please include “Westlaurel” in subject line.
- Text updates can be provided by texting “Westlaurel” to 555888.
- For questions and updates by email, use WestLaurelInterchange@kljeng.com

Where can I get more information?
The MDT website has the updated information on this project: https://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/westlaurel. There is also a live feed of the project at https://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/westlaurel/camera.shtml.

When will West Laurel Interchange be open?
All construction is scheduled to be completed by the summer of 2020.

For the latest traffic updates

800.956.3394  Text ‘WestLaurel’ to 555888  www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/westlaurel