

Interstate 80 Section B18 (High Speed Interchange)

Interstate 80 Section A18 (Local Access Interchange)

Background

- Project began as one project (Section B18) in 1999.
- During Preliminary Design, various improvement options were evaluated for both a high speed connection between I-80 and I-99 and a local access ramp to Route 26 (Jacksonville Road).
- One of the options included the high speed connection and the local access ramps at the existing location. Due to its size, this interchange had serious impacts to the neighboring quarry and to the Mountain Gap.
- By moving the local access ramps, the environmental features were minimized and talks began with the Township and the public as to its placement.
- Also, during this time, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) developed requirements that two points of access have to be separated by two miles of mainline (gore to gore).
- The separate access was required to safely accommodate slower moving local traffic movements entering and exiting the interstate system.
- The evaluation process considered design standards, existing and projected traffic conditions, potential impacts to community and environmental features, as well as public preferences stated in public meetings.
- All background regarding the decisions made is outlined in the Categorical Exclusion Evaluation (CEE) document which was completed in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- The CEE and the proposed interchange design for A18 were approved by FHWA on October 25, 2001.
- The Environmental Studies and Preliminary Engineering plans for B18 were documented in an Environmental Evaluation Report (EER) completed in compliance with NEPA and State regulations.
- Approval of the Preliminary Engineering designs and Environmental Studies allowed the projects to move forward into Final Design.
- The A18 interchange is nearly complete and PennDOT District 2-0 is coordinating with DEP for the final permit. The project would be ready for a September 2009 bid letting if construction funds become available.
- The B18 interchange is approximately 60% complete with a possible bid letting two years after the A18 bid letting.

Timeline

July 9, 1999 – Preliminary Engineering begins

September 22, 1999 - Public Meeting #1, Marion Township Building - 214 people attended. The Department presented maps, environmental constraints, preliminary alternatives for high-speed at the existing interchange and local access near Sand Ridge Road. A majority of respondents favored a local access interchange as far west as possible, preferably at the existing location.

October 4, 1999 - Spring Township Supervisors Resolution - Spring Township finds that PennDOT's proposed plans presented at the public meeting are not in line with the planning done by Marion Township and the 1992 regional comprehensive plan. Spring Township requests that the proposed location for local access not be accepted as was shown and request the local access interchange be moved as far west as feasible in Marion Township.

October 13, 1999 – Centre Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CRMPO) - The Coordinating Committee approves the following motion “ that the CRMPO recommend to PennDOT that alternative locations for the local access interchange (currently proposed for Sand Ridge/Snydertown Road) be evaluated and presented to the community prior to a final decision being made about the design of the new Exit 24 interchange.”

October 14, 1999 - Department Receives Letter from Marion Township transmitting a petition and a letter from local business owners that support the location of the local access interchange away from Sand Ridge/Snydertown Road to a location as far west in the township and approximately 2 miles east of the planned 1-80/I-99 interchange. Marion Township Supervisors as well as Marion Township Planning Commission members signed the letter.

October 21, 1999 – Department receives letter from Marion Township Supervisor and resident, Henry J. Kohnlein supporting the local access interchange in a location as far east in the township as possible and not at the Sand Ridge/Snydertown Road location.

November 22, 1999 - Department receives letter from Centre County Planning Commission stating that at the planning commission meeting on November 16, 1999, action took place to support the citizens and local officials of Marion Township. The local expressions of consensus believe that the future interchange site should be located within the PennDOT “Study Area” which is located between Exit 24 and Jacksonville. Due to heavy concentrations of future traffic movements, especially heavy trucks, a “midway” solution would seem to be a “best fit”. Copies were given to Marion Township, Spring Township and Walker Township.

Newsletter #1, November 1999 (mailing distribution approximately 360) – The newsletter included new information regarding the next public meeting to be held at the Marion Township building on November 22, 1999. Other discussions in the newsletter include a summary of the public meeting held on September 22 at the Marion Township Building, summary of current traffic studies, maps of the high speed interchange and the local access interchange, a design discussion of the newly-designed trumpet interchange for the local access interchange and reasons for the need of a high speed interchange, environmental studies and the anticipated project schedule.

Public Meeting #2, November 22, 1999, Marion Township Building - 152 people attended. The Department presented mapping, environmental constraints, traffic information, and the high speed alternative alignment and possible alignments for the local access interchange. Participants were asked whether a local access connection was needed (66% said yes) and 80% approved of having direct access just east of Walnut Ridge Road. There were concerns about possible higher volumes of traffic on Route 26.

Public Meeting #3, January 24, 2000, Marion Township Building - 73 people attended. The Department presented mapping, environmental constraints, traffic information, and improvement alternatives including the high-speed location at the existing interchange and a new interchange just east of Walnut Ridge Road. The participants were asked their opinion on the type of new interchange design for the local access interchange and the diamond configuration was the preferred option. Participants were also asked their opinion on issues concerning the project. There was concern from the respondents concerning the construction schedule and traffic patterns during and after construction.

April 2, 2001 – Copies of maps depicting the proposed improvements for the two projects, Section B18 and Section A18 were sent to Marion Township.

October 25, 2001 – The Categorical Exclusion document for the SR 0080, Section A18, Local Access Interchange was approved by FHWA.

February 27, 2002 – Copies of maps depicting the proposed improvements for the two projects, Section B18 and Section A18, were sent to Marion Township. The designs were updated at the B18 interchange to revise a ramp to minimize impacts to a hillside.

April 26, 2002 – The high-speed, Exit 161, interchange (B18) Environmental Evaluation Report is sent to a number of recipients to review, provide at their location for public viewing and the transmittal's invitation the opportunity for a public hearing. The Marion Township Planning Commission and the Marion Township Supervisors were among the recipients of the report and transmittal.

Newsletter #2, May 2002 – The discussions in the newsletter included an overall description of the interchange projects, a summary of all of the public meetings that were held on September 22, 1999, November 22, 1999 and January 24, 2000 at the Marion Township Building, completion and approval (October 25, 2001) of the environmental document for the local access interchange, the availability for review of the Environmental Evaluation Report for the High Speed Interchange, maps of the regional map showing interchange locations, the high speed interchange and the local access interchange, an explanation of how both interchange projects will be entering final design to create detailed construction plans and the anticipated project schedule.

May 3, 2002 - Newspaper Ad in the Centre Daily Times was published to show the availability of the Environmental Evaluation Report for review. Marion Township was listed among many locations to view the report.

July 22, 2002 – Approval is given for environmental clearance for the SR 0080, Section B18, High Speed Interchange project, by Michael Ryan, P.E., PennDOT Deputy Secretary for Highway Administration.

August 21, 2004 – Final design Phase Begins

Newsletter #3, March 2003 – discussions in the newsletter included an overall description of the interchange projects, a project history, completion and approval (July 22, 2002) of the Environmental Evaluation Report for the High Speed Interchange and its publication of the report in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, maps of the regional transportation system map showing the SR 220 and I-99 corridor, the high speed interchange and the local access interchange, an explanation of how both interchange projects will be entering final design to create detailed construction plans and the anticipated project schedule.