



PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE

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NORTHWESTERN CONNECTOR PROJECT RECEIVES APPROVAL FROM PANEL OF EXPERTS

Beverly Hills, Mich. — An independent review of the south-central Oakland County transportation improvement project known as the Northwestern Connector supports the planned improvements, which include the widening of Orchard Lake Road and the construction of eight modern roundabouts.

The project, led by the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC), in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Township of West Bloomfield and the City of Farmington Hills, is intended to improve the flow of traffic between M-10 (Northwestern Highway) and M-5, and increase motorist and pedestrian safety.

MDOT retained a team of experts, including a national transportation engineering firm and a roundabout design specialist, to conduct an independent analysis of the effectiveness and cost of the proposed project. This analysis is known as a Value Engineering (VE) study. VE studies are required for federally funded projects over \$25 million on the National Highway System before the start of construction.

The VE review team examined the proposed project and provided a detailed report that agreed with the choice of the major design elements of the project, including the use of roundabouts to decrease traffic congestion and increase safety.

In addition to the eight roundabouts, the project will involve widening Orchard Lake Road to a six-lane boulevard between 14 Mile and Maple roads.

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“We’re pleased that this independent review team validated the major elements of the project, including the use of roundabouts and the method to maintain traffic during the reconstruction of Orchard Lake Road,” said RCOC Managing Director Brent Bair. “Studies show that modern roundabouts, because of the small size and limited vehicle speeds, substantially reduce serious accidents, while improving traffic mobility.”

Construction of the project will take place in phases. The first phase is expected to include the construction of modern roundabouts at the Maple/Farmington, 14 Mile/Farmington and Maple/Drake intersections, beginning in late 2006, provided all the necessary land can be purchased. The transformation of Orchard Lake Road into a six-lane boulevard, and the construction of the remaining roundabouts will start in 2007 or 2008.

Total cost for the first phase of the project will be more than \$40 million. Project funding comes from a variety of sources including MDOT, federal road funds, special federal “earmark” funding obtained by US Congressman Joe Knollenberg, Oakland County general government, RCOC, West Bloomfield Township and the City of Farmington Hills.

In the future, as additional funding is identified, Maple will be widened to a four-lane boulevard between Orchard Lake and M-5, and 14 Mile will be widened to three lanes between the same points.

The eight roundabouts included in the project will be installed at the following intersections:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Maple/Farmington | 5. 14 Mile/Farmington |
| 2. Maple/Drake | 6. 14 Mile/Drake |
| 3. Maple/Haggerty | 7. 14 Mile/Haggerty |
| 4. Maple/Orchard Lake | 8. 14 Mile/Orchard Lake |

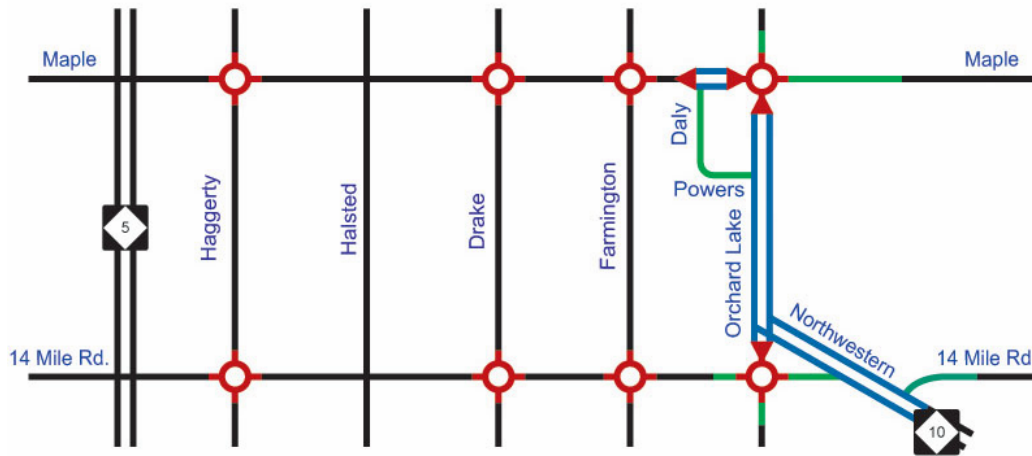
The project is being coordinated by RCOC with assistance from the engineering firm Orchard, Hiltz & McCliment (OHM). A Web site has been established to provide information to motorists and affected communities about the project (www.nwconnector.com). Anyone seeking additional information can also call the RCOC Department of Citizen Services toll free at (877) 858-4804.

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A graphic showing the locations of the Northwestern Connector roundabouts and other improvements is below.

Northwestern Highway Connector Project Project Elements



Legend	
	Prop. Roundabout
	Prop. Boulevard
	Prop. Roadwork
	Exist. Boulevard
	Exist. Road



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