



## The Way I See It

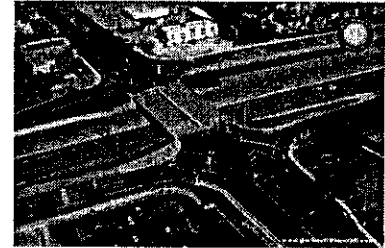
By Jimmy Orr 5:00am

OPINION

### Diamond Interchanges a Good Idea

Proposal will bring a quick solution to traffic congestion.

On the Tuesday, Feb. 22 PatchCast (<http://dacula.patch.com/articles/patchcast-the-force-returns-girl-missing-in-lilburn-and-new-interchange-proposed>), Kristi did a brief squib about we Gwinnett drivers, which includes those of us in Dacula and the Harbins Community, might soon find traffic relief by an interchange re-configuration called a Diverging Diamond Interchange (<http://duluth.patch.com/articles/diverging-diamonds-to-relieve-traffic-congestion>).



Although diamonds are supposedly a ladies best friend, Kristi wasn't talking about the kind of diamonds that sparkle. What she was talking about is two proposed interchange improvement projects which will offer traffic congestion relief via an innovative traffic design known as a Diverging Diamond Interchange or DDI for short. Both projects are on I-85. One is the interchange at Jimmy Carter Boulevard and the other is at Pleasant Hill Road.

The DDI concept at both interchanges will give us a quick fix solution. The advantages being a less costly solution and shorter construction interval as compared to a major interchange overhaul. As I said, a DDI is innovative and will probably require a short learning curve as we are not use to driving on the "wrong side" of the road like the Brits. Don't let the "wrong side" of the road scare you. As you learn more about traffic flow through a DDI, you will understand why driving on the opposite side of the road through the DDI configuration will be relatively easy and of a short duration. Will a DDI at both of these interchanges be a long term solution? I do not know, but they very well could be.

The optimum solution would probably be a complete overhaul of each interchange. Keep this in mind though, even if TSPLOST 2012 should pass and even if a major overhaul of each interchange made the final cut on our ten county regional transportation district TSPLOST project list, how long would it be from concept to reality? Five, ten or fifteen years? We cannot wait that long. Each interchange needs a solution now. DDI is the answer.

Both projects as I understand it are, for lack of a better description, "shovel ready." There is a good website you can log on to which will help you understand how a DDI works. The site is [www.divergingdiamond.com](http://www.divergingdiamond.com) (<http://www.divergingdiamond.com/>). Once on the site there will be several options you can explore which will provide you with solid descriptive and pictorial information. You should see a site entitled "I-44/Kansas Expressway DDI Springfield Missouri." Click on this site and sit back and watch the aerial photos of traffic through this DDI. You should also find a link that will show you a cost comparison of interchange improvements with a DDI as compared to same via a major overhaul of the interchange.

The way I see things is that the aforementioned Gwinnett DDI projects will bring about a quick solution at two major interchange locations with major traffic congestion problems.

Interested in a follow-up to this article?

**About this column:** Jimmy Orr is a Gwinnett resident and active in local politics. He enjoys writing and frequently submits letters to the editor and op-ed pieces to the local news media.

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