

West Loop 289

1. Safety

The design of this project has been driven by the users of West Loop 289 away from the existing cloverleaf interchange design toward a diamond interchange design because of the inability of users to enter and exit freeway on the top of the 19th Street Bridge at an efficient rate of speed. In meetings with individuals and groups, the public consensus has without reservation favored a redesign of the interchange, and this absence of reservation has been driven solely by public safety concerns. The cloverleaf entrance and exit ramps substantially slow traffic increasing the potential for rear-end collisions and side-to-side impacts as vehicles move into the left travel lane to avoid the congestion in the right travel lane.

This change in design does not eliminate the use of grade-separating bridges at the 19th Street traffic interchange. The ability to accommodate high volumes of traffic traveling safely and efficiently through intersections depends largely on the arrangements for handling intersecting traffic. The highest levels of safety, efficiency, and capacity are attained when the intersecting traveled ways are grade separated. An interchange is a system of interconnecting roadways functioning together with one or more grade separations that provides for the movement of traffic between two or more roadways or highways in different directions.

2. Connectivity

Loop 289 and S.H. 114 are vital components in the distribution of motor vehicle traffic throughout the Lubbock metropolitan area. Loop 289 in Lubbock connects to every principal east / west and north / south arterial street in the city and its importance in the city's transportation connectivity scheme cannot be understated. A purpose of this project is to provide design continuity with recently upgraded segments of West Loop 289 south of 34th Street and with portions of Loop 289 located north of the project and currently under re-construction. The West Loop 289 project builds a design-consistent, connecting-link roadway between a project completed in 2005 and freeway re-construction project that is just getting underway.

3. Pavement Condition

The West Loop 289 freeway has been in-place for nearly forty-years without major repairs or a major re-construction of its pavement. Over this forty-year period, the West Loop 289 has also been in the hurricane eye of Lubbock's population and transportation growth to the west. The pavement of the existing entrance and exit ramps of the cloverleaf interchange is being shifted outward by the centrifugal force of moderate to heavy traffic using the circular ramps. This same traffic has also created a wash-board pavement effect on the top of the 19th Street bridges as traffic slows and accelerates to accommodate traffic entering and leaving the freeway.

4. Economic Development

Continuing growth in commercial and residential zones of western and northwestern Lubbock has resulted in the need to improve and upgrade highway designs to improve local access in the area. The proposed project is needed to support the metropolitan area's long-term land use and transportation plans to help support the community's economic expectations.