

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



QUESTION

ANSWER

WHAT IS THE OVERALL GOAL OF THIS PROJECT?

MnDOT's long-term Toward Zero Deaths program aims to implement solutions to prevent traffic fatalities and serious injuries on Minnesota roadways. High-speed rural intersections, such as this one, have a much higher risk for a serious injury or fatal crash.



QUESTION

ANSWER

WHY WAS AN RCI CHOSEN FOR THIS INTERSECTION?

MnDOT completed a safety study at this intersection due to a high number of crashes - it has a fatal and injury crash rate nine times higher than the statewide average. From 2013-2017, there were 25 total crashes documented at this intersection. Of those 25 crashes, 17 of them (68%) were right-angle crashes, which would be reduced with an RCI. Goodhue County independently came up with an RCI as the recommended improvement for the intersection while updating their county safety plan. The county fully supports the proposed project.



QUESTION

ANSWER

WHAT IS THE SAFETY DATA ON RCI CONSTRUCTION?

In Minnesota, RCIs have been constructed in more than 40 locations, with additional locations under construction or planned for the future. Crash data has been collected at these sites:

- 50% reduction in total crashes
- 85% reduction in right-angle crashes
- 100% reduction in fatal crashes
- 75% reduction in severe injury crashes



QUESTION

ANSWER

WHY NOT JUST INSTALL A TRAFFIC SIGNAL?

In most cases, traffic signals have been shown to increase the number of crashes at high-speed rural intersections due to inattentive driving, speeding to make a light or not stopping for the traffic signal. This intersection would also be especially challenging with a traffic signal, in particular for large trucks, since it would require traffic to stop then accelerate up a long hill on northbound Highway 61.



QUESTION

ANSWER

WAS AN OVERPASS CONSIDERED AT THIS INTERSECTION?

A preliminary analysis included a bridge overpass, a traffic signal and an RCI as part of the project development process. The concepts were thoroughly evaluated and the RCI was determined to be the alternative that would best address the safety issues at this location, while also being a feasible solution. An overpass was found to be not feasible due to the adjacent bluff, vertical elevation differences and cost implications.



QUESTION

ANSWER

WILL LARGE TRUCKS AND VEHICLES WITH TRAILERS BE ABLE TO NAVIGATE THE RCI?

The RCI has been designed to allow large trucks and RVs to safely navigate the intersection. Trucks on County Road 18 approaching Highway 61 can make a right turn directly into the median left turn lane without merging into traffic. The U-turn has been designed to allow large trucks to make the turn completely in the median without entering the Highway 61 lanes until they accelerate to highway speeds.

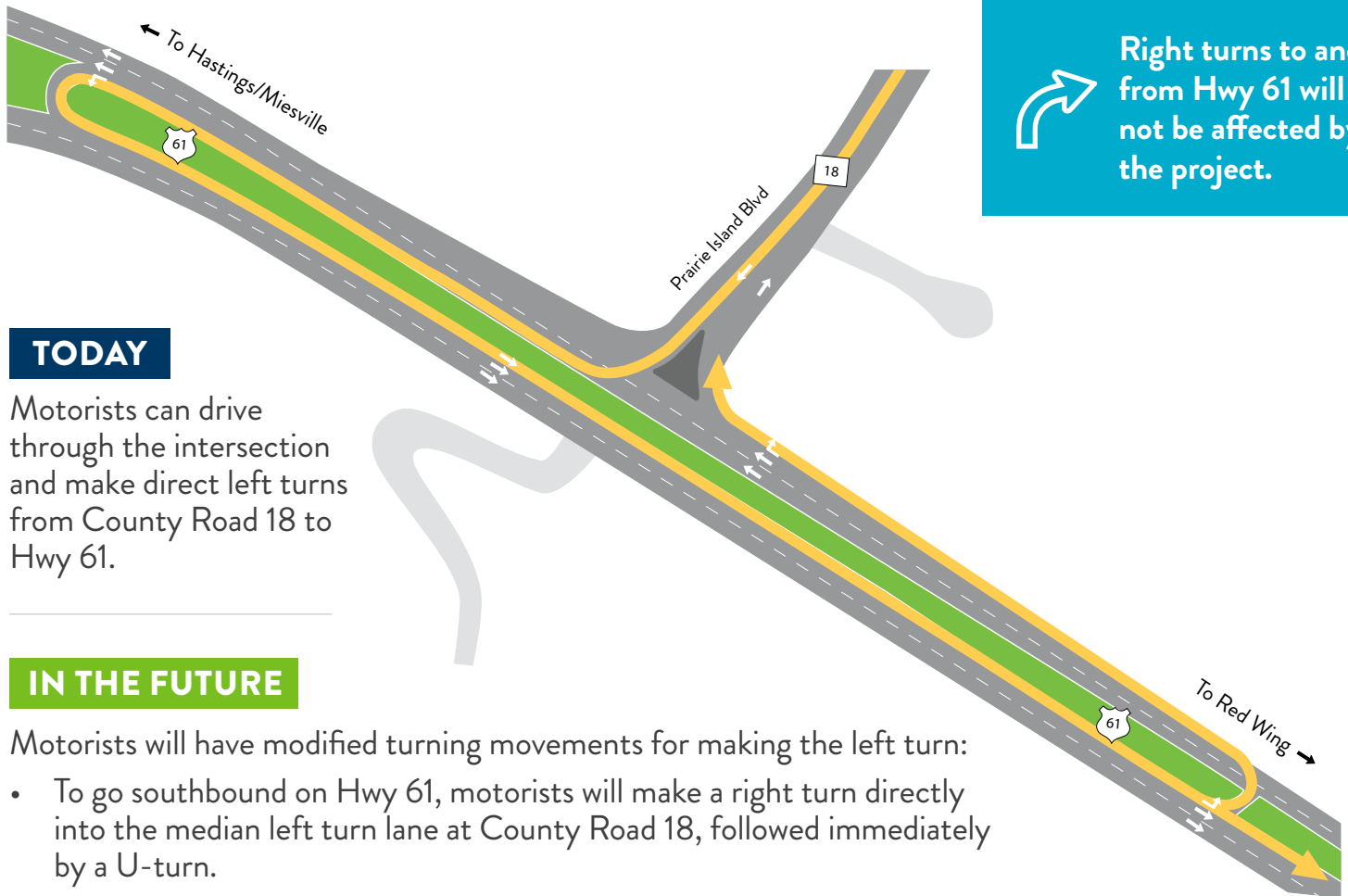
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mndot.gov/d6/projects/hwy61-hwy316

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Hwy 61/County Road 18

REDUCED CONFLICT INTERSECTION (RCI)



TODAY

Motorists can drive through the intersection and make direct left turns from County Road 18 to Hwy 61.

IN THE FUTURE

Motorists will have modified turning movements for making the left turn:

- To go southbound on Hwy 61, motorists will make a right turn directly into the median left turn lane at County Road 18, followed immediately by a U-turn.
- An acceleration lane will be provided in the median for drivers to safely increase speed before merging into southbound Hwy 61 traffic.
- The U-turn will be designed to accommodate trucks and large equipment turning completely in the median area without encroaching into the lanes of Hwy 61 or crossing high-speed traffic.

Access to Hwy 61 from Treasure Island Resort and Casino and the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant will change after project construction is complete in fall 2022.

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Contact Information

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