



I-80/I-29 Dual, Divided Freeway, near 24th Street

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Council Bluffs Interstate System was originally constructed in the 1960s. Although routine maintenance projects were completed, significant changes had not been made since its original construction. Today, the Council Bluffs Interstate System typically carries 20,000–75,000 vehicles; 11–25% of those are trucks. By 2030, traffic on I-80 between the I-29 interchanges is expected to increase by more than 130,000 vehicles a day. This increase in traffic, coupled with an outdated design standard, is driving system improvements.

During evaluation of highway design alternatives, it was determined that a dual, divided freeway should be constructed along the overlapping section of I-80/I-29 between the West and East System Interchanges. This design physically separates through traffic on I-80 from local traffic on I-29 destined for Council Bluffs, creating I-80 Express lanes and I-29/I-80 Local lanes. This is accomplished by constructing four separate roadways (two roadways for traffic in each direction). Each roadway is separated by a concrete median barrier.

## PROJECT SCHEDULE

The opening of the westbound and eastbound express lanes in 2019 occurred approximately a full construction season, or more, ahead of the original construction schedule. This was accomplished, in part, due to optimized construction staging during multiple project phases and improved project delivery. Ultimately, these efforts have allowed the Iowa DOT to provide a better interstate system, ahead of schedule, with fewer impacts to the traveling public.

**Phase Ia Construction:** 07/2013 – 06/2015  
(I-29NB/I-80WB Local lanes from Indian Creek to the West System Interchange)

**Phase Ib Construction:** 11/2013 – 07/2015  
(I-29NB/I-80WB Local on-ramp at South Expressway and lanes to Indian Creek)

**Phase II Construction:** 01/2017 – 01/2019  
(I-80EB Express lanes from the Missouri River Bridge to Indian Creek; and I-29SB/I-80EB Local lanes from the West System Interchange to Indian Creek)

**Phase III Construction:** 08/2019 – 06/2021  
(I-29SB/I-80EB Local lanes from Indian Creek to the East System Interchange)

## BENEFITS



Offers redundancy and allows traffic to keep moving in both directions, even if lanes are blocked because of a crash or maintenance.

Improves roadway safety and will reduce the number of crashes caused by merging traffic between tightly spaced interchanges.



Eases congestion, especially during peak or rush hours by separating through traffic on I-80 (traffic not stopping in Council Bluffs) from local traffic destined for Council Bluffs.



Accommodates projected traffic growth and planned development in the area.

# I-80/I-29 DUAL, DIVIDED FREEWAY

Council Bluffs, IA

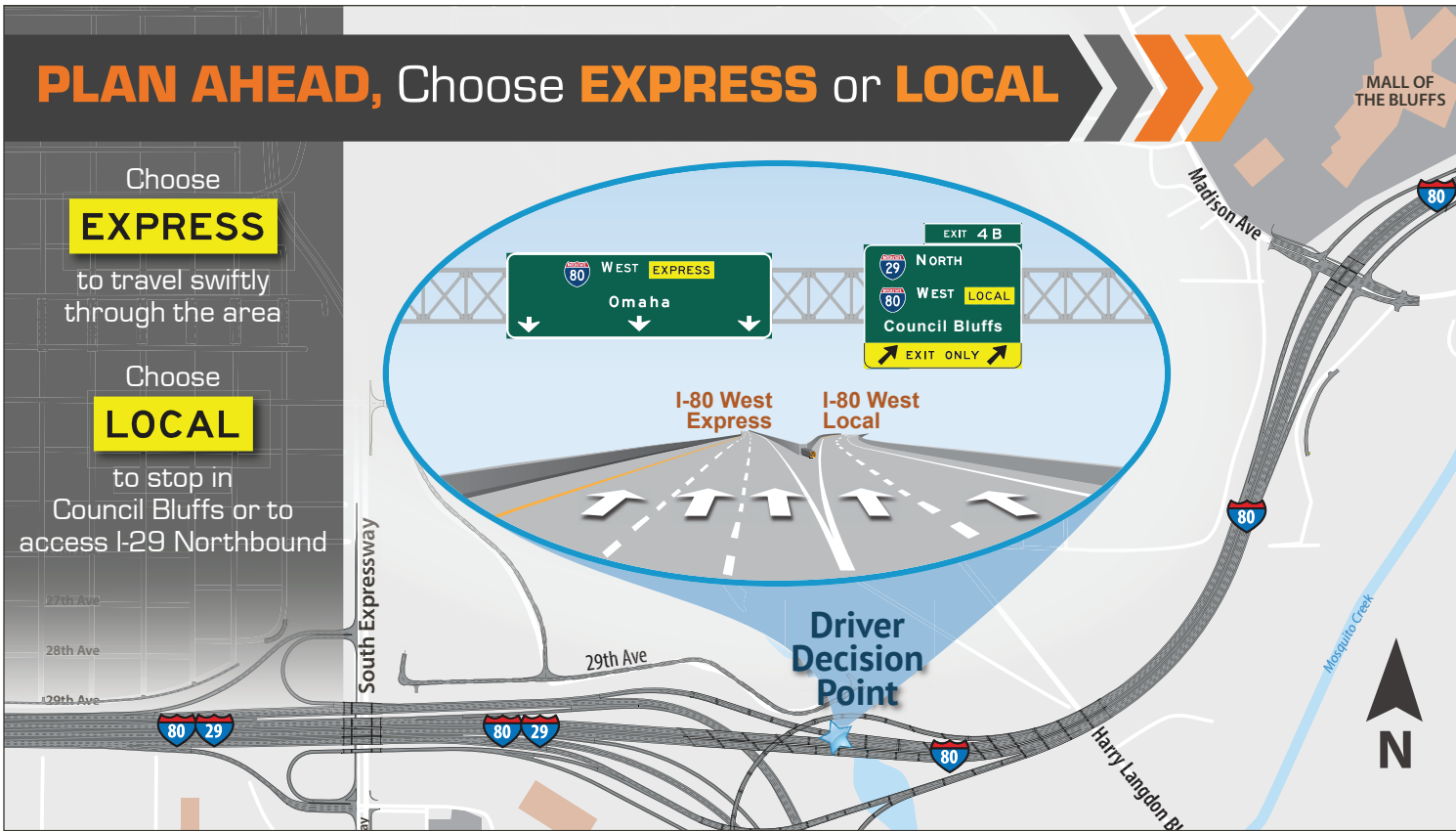
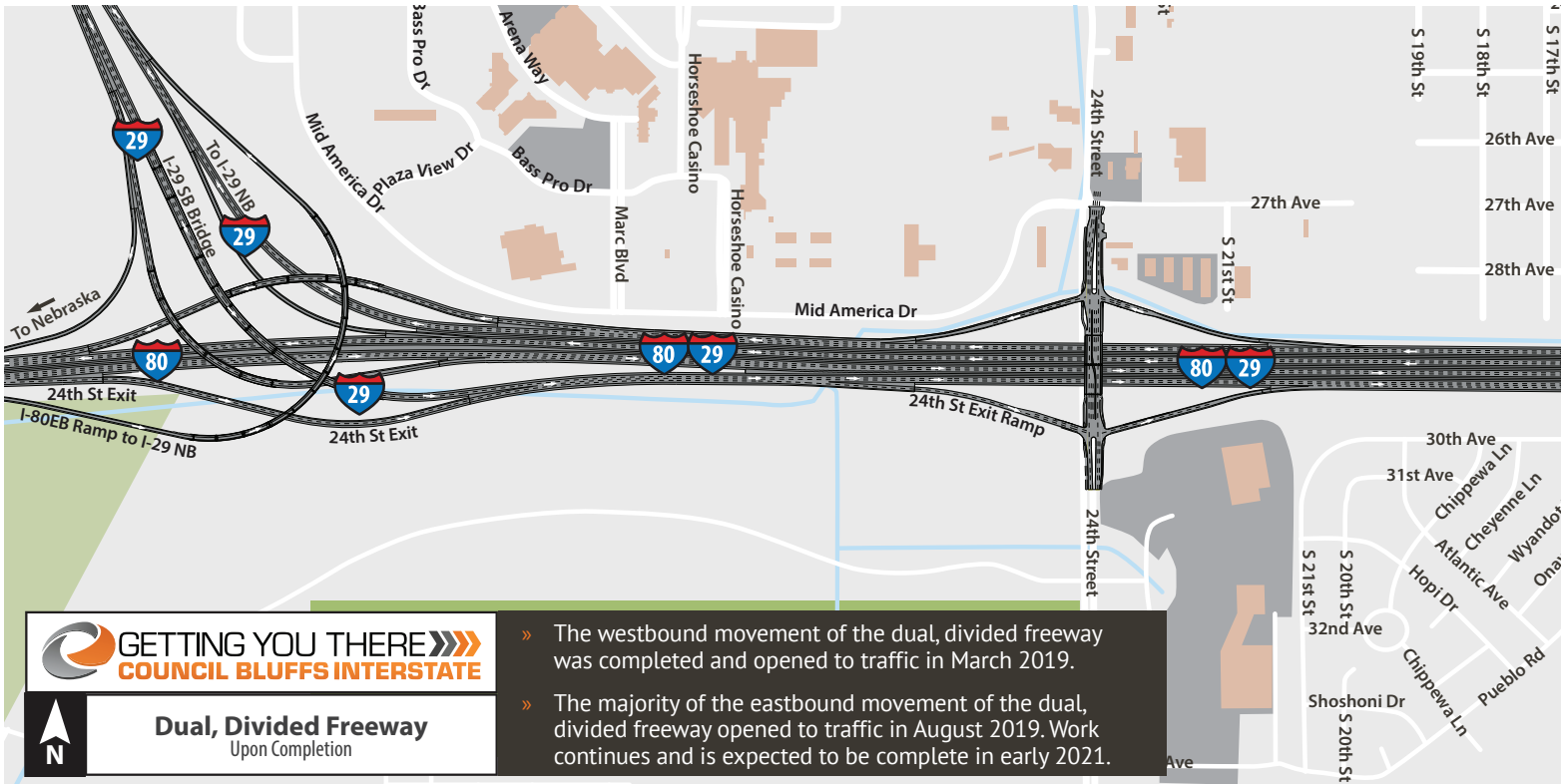
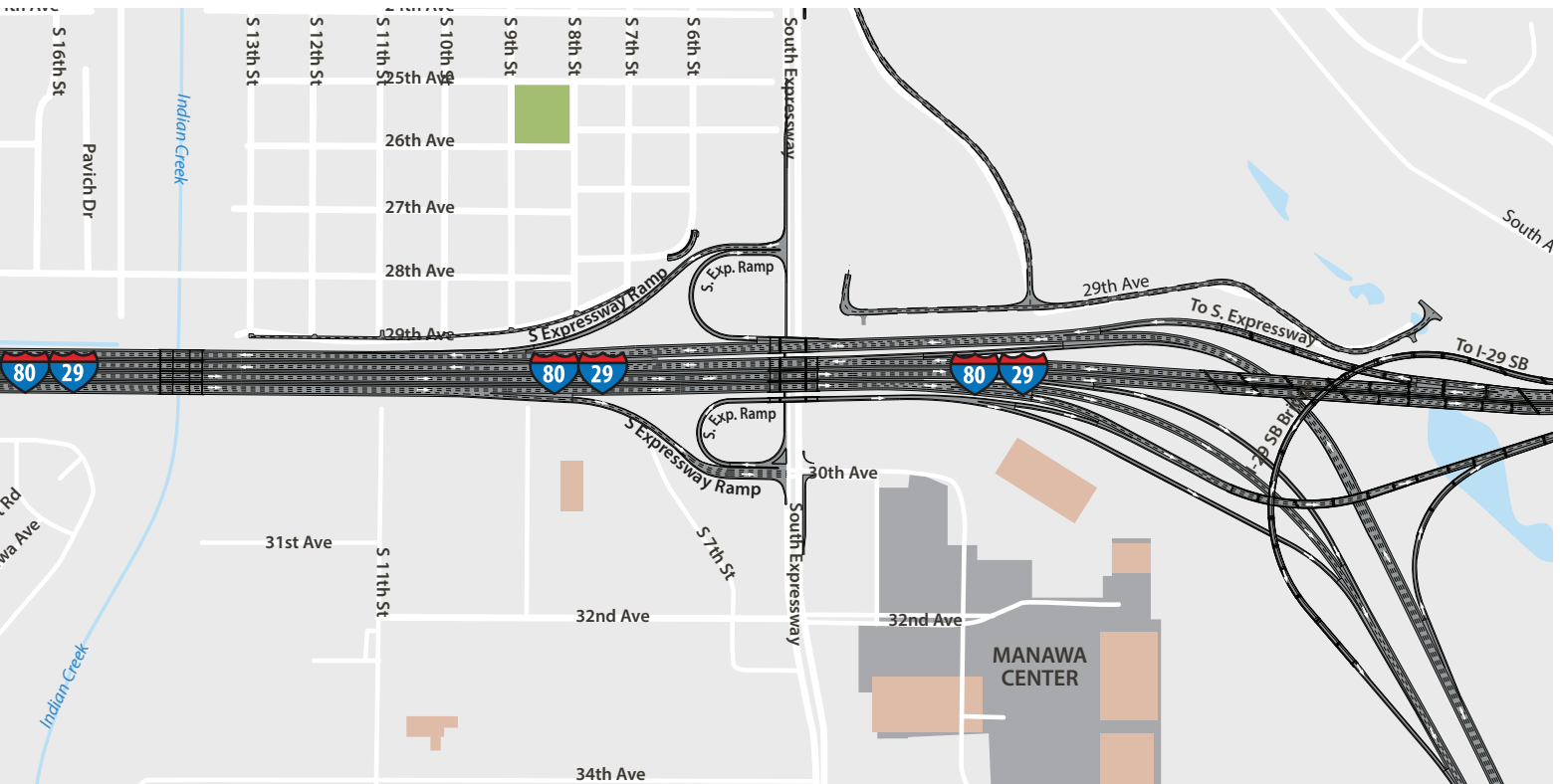


Figure 1: I-80 Westbound/I-29 Northbound Driver Decision Point



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Why is the interstate being expanded?**

On a daily basis, the Council Bluffs Interstate System typically carries 20,000–75,000 vehicles; 11–25% of those are trucks. By 2030, traffic on I-80 between the I-29 interchanges is expected to increase to more than 130,000 vehicles a day. This increase in traffic, coupled with an outdated design standard from the 1950s and 60s is driving system improvements.

### **Why implement a dual, divided freeway (DDF)? Why not just widen the interstate?**

Iowa DOT chose a DDF design because it offers greater flexibility to travelers, reduces congestion and will improve safety and efficiency. For example, it allows traffic to keep moving in both directions, even if lanes are closed because of a crash. This design allows through traffic to utilize both Express and Local lanes, offering more lanes overall. The previous design caused through traffic to merge with local traffic at on and off ramps, creating congestion during peak traffic hours. The DDF separates through traffic from local traffic, eliminating delay and conflict. The DDF will also reduce the number of crashes caused by merging traffic between interchanges.

### **Are DDFs a proven solution? Where else are they used?**

This is the first of its kind in the region, but DDFs have been used for many years by DOTs in Illinois, Maryland and Texas.

### **Where will I have to make a choice between Express and Local Lanes on I-80 westbound?**

As shown in the graphic, the driver decision point is west of Madison Avenue, just before Exit 4B (see Figure 1).

### **When will the DDF open?**

Westbound I-80 Express and I-29 northbound/I-80 Local westbound opened in early spring 2019. The majority of the eastbound movement of the dual, divided freeway opened to traffic in August 2019. Work continues and is expected to be complete in early 2021.

### **How is the DDF configured?**

The DDF was constructed to include three lanes in each direction for I-80 Express and three lanes in each direction for I-29/I-80 Local (see Figure 2).

### **What if I choose Express lanes (for through traffic) when I meant to use Local lanes to exit at 24th Street or South Expressway?**

Drivers who choose Express lanes instead of Local lanes should stay in Express lanes until they can exit past the West System Interchange if traveling westbound, or the East System Interchange if traveling eastbound, and turn around to use Local lanes.

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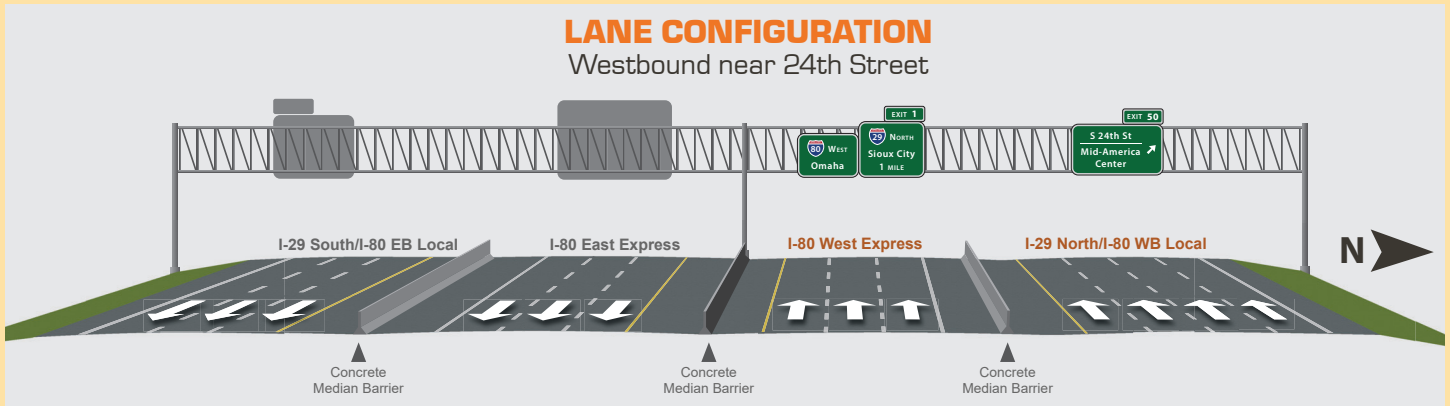


Figure 2

### ***What if I miss my exit to get onto I-29 North and end up in Nebraska?***

Continue on to Omaha, Nebraska, exit at 13th Street (Exit 454) and turn around.

### ***I want to get to the shopping centers near South Expressway, how do I get there?***

If you are on I-29 northbound or I-80 westbound, you will need to use I-29 northbound/I-80 Local westbound instead of I-80 Express. Continue until you get to South Expressway (Exit 49). If you are driving on I-29 southbound or I-80 eastbound, your route is not changing at this time.

### ***I want to get to the MidAmerica Center, recreation fields or one of the shopping centers near 24th Street, how do I get there?***

If you are on I-29 northbound or I-80 westbound, you will need to use I-29 northbound/I-80 Local westbound instead of I-80 Express westbound. Continue until you get to 24th Street (Exit 50). If you are driving on I-29 southbound or I-80 eastbound, your route is not changing at this time.

### ***I'm traveling I-80, but I need to stop at a truck stop or gas station in Council Bluffs. What route do I need to take?***

If you are on I-29 northbound or I-80 westbound, you will need to use I-29 northbound/I-80 Local westbound instead of I-80 Express westbound. Continue until you get to South Expressway (Exit 49), or 24th Street (Exit 50). If you are driving on I-29 southbound or I-80 eastbound, your route is not changing at this time.

### ***How will I get to the casinos near I-29 or Tom Hanafan Park?***

If you are on I-29 northbound or I-80 westbound, you will want to use I-29 northbound/I-80 Local westbound until you reach your exit. If you are driving on I-29 southbound or I-80 eastbound, your route is not changing at this time.

### ***How do I get to Kansas City with the new configuration?***

If you are traveling to Kansas City from the west, your route is not changing at this time. If you are traveling to Kansas City and coming from the east, you will continue to use the exit for I-29 southbound (Exit 4A).

### ***How will traffic continue to flow if there is a crash?***

Breaks and gates in the barrier will provide access for emergency response vehicles and will allow traffic to shift if lanes need to be closed for a crash.

### ***What types of vehicles are allowed to use Express lanes?***

I-80 Express lanes can be used by all types of cars and trucks. It is not limited to carpool or high occupancy vehicle traffic.

### ***Will Google Maps, Waze or other navigation apps know what lane and exit number to direct me to use?***

Program staff and Iowa DOT actively coordinate with navigation apps, but do not control information on third party applications. We provide updated information ahead of or in real time when changes occur, but cannot guarantee when changes will be reflected. Always pay attention to signing and know your route before you head out.



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