

The word "Calgary" in white sans-serif font on a red rectangular background.

210 Avenue Functional Planning Study

What We Heard Report – Phase 1

April 2025



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Project overview

As our city continues to grow, we are planning infrastructure to accommodate Calgarians in future southwest communities as well as transit and recreational developments. This year we will be conducting a planning study to identify and compare two possible interchange design options to best serve the intersection of Macleod Trail and 210 Avenue S.

The functional planning study is anticipated to be complete by the end of 2025. The construction schedule for the interchange will be determined by future funding.

The proposed interchange at 210 Avenue S., is part of the West Macleod outline plan application for the development of 215 hectares of land located south of Stoney Trail S.W. and west of Macleod Trail S.W.

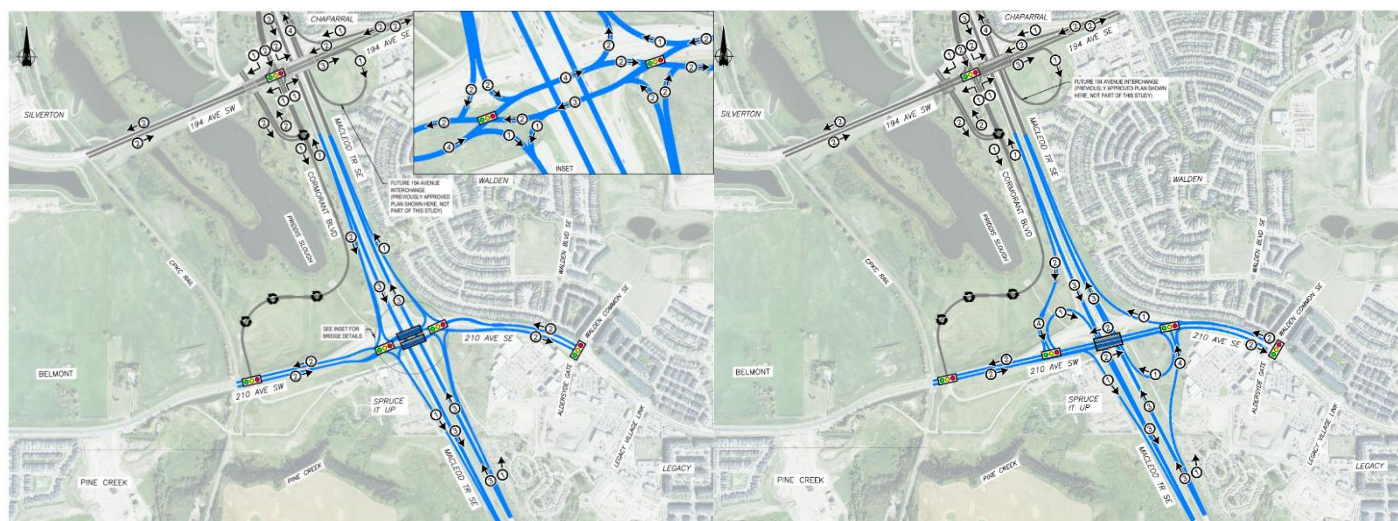
This Study

This study will compare two types of interchanges at 210 Avenue S., to find the best design to effectively use City-owned land and that allows traffic to flow smoothly. The study will focus on a Diverging Diamond

Interchange (DDI) design and a Partial Cloverleaf design (Parclo). The interchange design concepts will be technical infrastructure designs with architectural constraints.

Through this Functional Planning Study, we will:

- Draft an early-stage planning document that provides recommendations about the future design of infrastructure.
- Public feedback will be used to augment where possible the technical information required for this project.



Engagement overview

Engagement Process

The engagement process utilized active outreach and engagement to understand the community's values, concerns, and priorities for the Macleod Trail and 210 Avenue S. Interchange Functional Planning Study.

Engagement took place from February 5 to March 9, 2025, involving over 250 in-person participants and 3800 online visitors. Methods included in-person events and online feedback.

Engagement Strategy

Our strategy was to share the two interchange options with the public and collect their feedback to understand which option was preferred by community members. Due to the nature of the existing infrastructure in the area (Water main, CPKC rail line, etc.) there are limited interchange options that are feasible to develop.



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While these technical infrastructure designs come with architectural constraints that limit design input, we are committed to sharing as much information as possible with Calgarians.

Timeline

Engagement took place between February 5 and March 9, 2025.

Engagement Opportunities

- Online feedback from February 13 – March 9, 2025
 - Contributions - 570
 - Contributors - 504
- In-person events:
 - Open house – February 5, 2025
 - Pop-up #1 – February 22, 2025 (131 participants)
 - Pop-up #2 – March 1, 2025 (112 participants)

Getting the word out:

Engagement opportunities were advertised for the Macleod Trail and 210 Avenue S. Interchange F.P.S. and promoted in the following ways:

- Social media campaign
- Bold signs (roadside signage)
- Canada Post mailout to residents on close proximity to 210 Avenue S.
- Informational handouts
- Online 3-1-1 post

What we asked

Through the online portal, participants were asked which type of interchange they preferred and why.

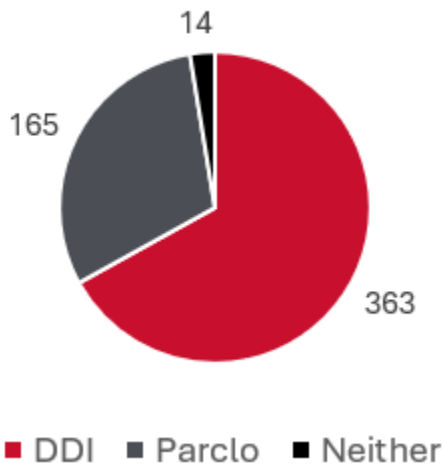
High-level themes:

- Efficiency: One of the most common themes expressed was that of valuing efficiency, with supporters of the DDI highlighting its traffic flow, while supporters of the Parclo highlighting its simpler design. Those with an efficiency preference supported **DDI** over Parclo at a ratio of 5:1.
- Experience levels: The other most common theme expressed was that of experiences at 162nd avenue's existing DDI. With those having a positive experience showing support for another DDI, and those who had a negative experience supporting the Parclo. Those who mentioned experience with 162nd Ave supported **DDI** over Parclo at a ratio of 3:1.
- Ease of use: The next most common theme was concern for ease of use. Those with a preference for ease of use supported **Parclo** over the DDI at a ratio of 4:1.

- Footprint: Another common theme was concern for the footprint size of the interchange. Those with a footprint preference supported **DDI** over the Parclo at a ratio of 20:1.
- Safety: The last major theme was safety. Supporters of the DDI highlighting its safety record, and reduced rate of accidents. Supporters of Parclo highlighted an increase in minor fender benders at DDIs, often citing driver confusion. Those with a safety preference supported **DDI** over Parclo at a ratio of 2:1.

What we heard

Which design do you prefer?



67% of participants favoured the DDI. 31% favoured the Parclo. 3% disliked both designs (The totals exceed 100% due to rounding). Below are the major and minor themes that respondents provided.

DDI – Most Prominent Theme #1: More efficient at moving traffic

Participants noted the DDI was more efficient, noting it's improved traffic flow, ability to alleviate congestion, fewer and better spaced traffic lights, and ease of getting in and out of the intersections.

Example Verbatim Comments:

"I like the advantages it offers on 162. It takes a bit to get used to but once you do, it works well."

"This design works really well at the interchange of Macleod Trail and 162 av S. at that location traffic improved significantly and I believe it would work well at the interchange of Macleod and 210 av"

"The Shawnessy blvd intersection works so well, it used to be such a busy intersection, and now traffic flows well."

"Best for traffic flow, never backs up. Works great for the bridge over macleod by Shawnee's"

DDI – Most Prominent Theme #2: Approval of the existing DDI at 162nd Ave

Participants expressed strong approval of the existing interchange at 162nd Ave stating that it works very well, takes up less space, has proven the effectiveness of the design, and has been safer.

Example Verbatim Comments:

"The example at Macleod and 162 took a short time to get used to and it is a better design for traffic once you can navigate it."

"It works really well at a very busy 162nd ave McLeod trail interchange, it takes up less space, and hopefully can be completed faster."

"More space efficient, better traffic flow, and the 162nd interchange has proved (for the most part) that Calgarians can handle the challenges of a DDI."

"It takes less space and people in the area will be familiar with the DDI since the one on 162nd is very close."

DDI – Most Prominent Theme #3: Provides a smaller footprint

Participants noted the smaller footprint was identified as a positive due to the potential for lower construction and maintenance costs, having less impact on the surrounding environment, leaving more area for green space and leaving more room for residential and commercial development

Example Verbatim Comments:

"I think having this option is better because it takes up less space, which could free up land for other amenities like housing."

"It works well at 160ave and it also takes up less space vs the partial clover. The area not used for the clover could then be landscaped and more trees could be planted to reduce road noise."

"I like this option if it allows for more retail development on the east side of Macleod to enlarge township."

"I think it would take up less room and hopefully more space to plant clover for a sustainable drought tolerant pollinators that is great for our city. Less tending to and more functional"

DDI – Additional Recurring Theme: #1 Safer

Participants noted DDI was safer, noting no significant safety issues at the existing one. They specifically mentioned reduced conflict points, pedestrian and cyclist safety, better design for winter conditions, and reduced accidents.

Example Verbatim Comments:

"The diverging diamond is more efficient, safer for motorists and pedestrians/cyclists, and is very simple to understand. There has been one in Shawnessy for years and it has caused no problems. Use the better design, don't compromise safety because people might be uncomfortable with it the first time they use it."

"For reduced conflict points, crash reductions and reduce traffic delays, overall safety and efficiency"

"I feel this option is less dangerous for all users and would create a safer environment for pedestrians, plus it is a more compact design overall."

"Tight curves n loop ramps, winter people can't drive when it's slippery"

DDI – Additional Recurring Theme #2: Easier to use or access

Some participants noted the DDI was simple to understand, intuitive and easy to navigate, given proper signage. They highlighted the pre-existing DDI at 162nd as illustrating that people could and likely have used one in the area.

Example Verbatim Comments:

“As long as signing is adequate, this is a very intuitive and fluid design that limits dangerous cross traffic movements.”

“The one in Shawnessy Blvd/Macleod, Calgary is easy to use and improved traffic drastically. Many people who will use the 210 interchange will have used the one in shawnessy too.”

“I find it easier to navigate with less off-ramps”

“162nd ave as an example is a breeze to negotiate.”

DDI – Additional Recurring theme #3: Better for pedestrians/cyclists

Participants noted DDI as being better and safer for pedestrians and cyclists as well. Multiple participants noted it would provide a benefit for pedestrian movement, especially given future train routes.

Example Verbatim Comments:

“Way safer for pedestrians, overall better safety.”

“Less incident points for pedestrians and cyclists”

“The partial clover leaf would not be as safe in my opinion for pedestrian traffic.”

“enhance mobility, walking, and mobility for pedestrians and bikes are everything, communities like legacy and walden have a lot of families, going for walks, biking, skating, is one of the best activities for spring, summer and fall as well as it would be easier to access the future train stations”

DDI - Other Mentioned Themes:

• Less waiting at lights

DDI was favoured because they involve fewer traffic lights, which would reduce waiting times, improve traffic flow, and minimize land usage.

Example Verbatim Comments:

"Less lights to go through."

"Time spent at the traffic lights will be reduced, eliminating traffic jam."

• Cheaper or faster to build

DDI was favoured because they are cheaper to build, require less land and construction, have lower maintenance costs, and can be completed faster compared to other designs

Example Verbatim Comments:

"Better flow of traffic, cheaper to build."

"Not a huge amount of traffic going across so the reduced cost and size is a good trade off."

• Aesthetically appealing

DDI was favoured for being aesthetically pleasing, of interesting architectural design and generally "cool".

Example Verbatim Comments:

"It also seems more architecturally appealing visually."

"It is more compact and uses less ramps, therefore making the scenery better in my opinion."

"Smaller footprint... and it's 🤖 cool"

• More area for green space

Example Verbatim Comments:

"It works well at 160ave and it also takes up less space vs the partial clover. The area not used for the clover could then be landscaped and more trees could be planted to reduce road noise."

"Leaves more green space near east side buildings along with separate bridges for safer travel."

• Parclo would require land that is used as a winter recreational hub by the community

A concerned citizen also mentioned concern for the preservation of a toboggan hill. This may align with Calgary's ongoing Winter City Strategy (2022) Goal 7, Action 19: Increase investment to offer more ice trails, snowshoe and cross-country tracks, rinks and hills in City parks and greenspaces and Goal 11, Action 34: Has community members who embrace the outdoors to stay healthy and connected to nature and each other.

Verbatim Comment:

"Will not want to lose the toboggan hill on the plaza side. Great spot for kids and families. Could even be developed properly!"

- **Calgary DDIs need better traffic light timings**

Example Verbatim Comments:

"But at 162 ave, all the cars go through the intersection and the light stays green for 20 seconds with no cars going through because

they already went through. Then it switches the other way, and the same thing happens. But In utah their DDI traffic lights "took turns" twice as fast as regular traffic lights, and moved traffic really well. In addition, they had better sightlines than 162, and allowed cars to turn left onto the DDI with a yield instead of traffic light."

Parclo – Most Prominent Theme #1: Easier to use or Access

Participants noted Parclos being easier to use due to several reasons, including both the familiar design of the Parclo and unconventional design of the DDI, the complexity of DDI design, the increased penchant for errors on a DDI, self-witnessed driver confusion, and the ability to navigate a Parclo in winter without markings or lines, to name a few.

Example Verbatim Comments:

"It is easier to navigate since the layout is similar to most other interchange."

"This more conventional option works more efficiently in my opinion and is more intuitive for drivers. I have used the diverging diamond interchange at 162 Ave since it's construction and find it impedes traffic flow more than a clover leaf option and is confusing to most drivers. I feel it is also more difficult for pedestrians with multiple roads to cross."

"The partial clover leaf interchange provides simple traffic directions while still being an effective interchange."

"Diverging diamonds is a bit confusing as it needs more training for the people who use it. I was rear ended on Shawnessy diverging diamonds."

"I have attempted to drive the Diverging Diamond interchange at Shawnessy since it was installed. It is counter-intuitive, difficult to navigate, dangerous and needlessly complex."

Parclo – Most Prominent Theme #2: Disapproval of the 162nd Ave DDI

Participants noted frustrations using the existing DDI at 162nd Ave, including driver confusion and unpredictable driver behaviour, road markings being unclear, and too many lights if crossing over.

Example Verbatim Comments:

“The diverging diamond at Shawnessy is a disaster, especially in winter. Too many people do not know where to stop for the red light and stop in the middle of the intersection, at times blocking traffic. The road markings can be completely invisible at times due to either snow or rain leading to people driving unsafely. People cut across multiple lanes in a short distance to make the turn lanes they need. In my experience it has not made traffic flow better or navigating the intersection easier.”

“The diverging diamond at the shawnessy/ Sundance and Macleod interchange is a mess...takes more time needed to control necessary traffic. That was an experiment project and I didnt like the outcome personally.”

“The DD intersection at 162 Ave is incredibly confusing. Residents avoid it, diverting traffic to other roads. Visitors to Calgary don’t understand how to navigate it.”

“The DDI at 162nd Ave seems to confuse a lot of drivers causing traffic issues.”

Parclo – Most Prominent Theme #3: Feel Parclos are more efficient

Participants noted the Parclo was more efficient, noting its ability to handle more traffic, improve traffic flow, difficulty and frequency of lane changes required, and navigation issues. They also noted a difference in what they saw as DDI's theoretical versus actual efficacy. DDI efficiency was further eroded by winter conditions, according to some participants.

Example Verbatim Comments:

"The diverging diamond over by Shaughnessy has made the traffic patterns significantly worse"

"The diverging diamond interchange at 162nd is a nightmare everytime it snows, the lanes and where to stop is not clear and I've seen several near accidents. And it doesn't flow well, we hit every light when we cross. The partial clover would be a better choice."

"The Diverging Diamond (similar to Sun Valley interchange) becomes clogged during rush hour"

"Design Flaw: These practical challenges point to inherent design flaws in the DDI at this location, indicating that while the design might be cost-effective in theory, it does not perform effectively in practice."

"if there is more through-traffic than turning traffic, then a parclo makes more sense."

Parclo – Additional Recurring Theme #1: Safer, DDI's have more fender benders

Participants mentioned Parclo is safer due to the following factors: DDI causes confusion, including last minute lane changes or wrong-way driving, inexperienced or unfamiliar drivers might cause accidents, DDI encourages risky driving behaviours, increased danger to pedestrians. Participants also recounted stories of accidents they've witnessed at the existing DDI.

Example Verbatim Comments:

"Safety Risks: The potential for errors is particularly concerning for new or less experienced drivers, leading to a higher likelihood of accidents that could result in injuries or fatalities."

"The diverging diamond interchange at 162nd is a nightmare everytime it snows, the lanes and where to stop is not clear and I've seen several near accidents"

"there is not enough time for unfamiliar drivers to be in the correct lanes and in on frequent near misses on thy current diverging diamond."

Parclo – Additional Recurring Theme #2: Less waiting at lights

Participants noted they preferred the traffic light layout of Parclo, based on number and frequency of lights, as well as the timing of lights at the existing DDI.

Example Verbatim Comments:

“Compared to the DDI, it seems that there's less chance of stopping at a traffic light. I noticed that the current DDI at 162nd going from west to east and vice versa, I often have to stop at 2 sets of lights. Whereas at the Shawnessy interchange, only one set of lights.”

“There is a LOT of traffic already in Legacy and with many more CMF units being built, I think the traffic lights on the diamond bridge would still cause major back ups, unless another exit out of Legacy to Macleod or Deerfoot is planned.”

“I live near the diverging diamond and hate it takes forever to get through with ill timed lights and backed up traffic.”

Parclo – Additional Recurring Theme #3: DDI's are frustrating and/or stressful

Participants noted having an emotional response to the existing DDI, be it frustration, stress, confusion, annoyance, or simply strong negative sentiments.

Example Verbatim Comments:

“We regularly see drivers frantically trying to change lanes at the last minute to get in a different lane when they're not familiar with this type of interchange and it is very stressful driving on this type of interchange.”

“I hate the interchange at 162 and MacLeod”

“[Parclo] Less annoying”

Parclo – Additional Recurring Theme #4: DDI's encourage last minute lane changes

Participants noted that through their experience at the existing DDI at 162nd Ave, they had seen countless example of people making last minute lane changes, noting these appeared to sometimes be accidental due to confusion as well as sometimes intentional due to the driver wanting to do something the design didn't allow for. This concern noted the repercussions of such movements as slowing traffic flow, causing abrupt stops and sometimes even causing accidents.

Example Verbatim Comments:

"Intentional Errors: The complexity of the interchange design causes some drivers to make intentional errors, such as running red lights or making sudden lane changes, increasing the risk of accidents."

"We regularly see drivers frantically trying to change lanes at the last minute to get in a different lane when they're not familiar with this type of interchange and it is very stressful driving on this type of interchange."

Parclo – Additional Recurring Theme #5: DDI's don't work / aren't maintained sufficiently in winter

Participants noted that the lack of lines significantly increases confusion in winter as drivers do not have sufficient instructions to navigate a novel interchange.

Example Verbatim Comments:

"The diverging diamond interchange at 162nd is a nightmare everytime it snows, the lanes and where to stop is not clear and I've seen several near accidents."

"Too many people do not know where to stop for the red light and stop in the middle of the intersection, at times blocking traffic. The road markings can be completely invisible at times due to either snow or rain leading to people driving unsafely. People cut across multiple lanes in a short distance to make the turn lanes they need."

Parclo - Other Mentioned Themes:

- **Dislike DDI lane swaps, can cause wrong way drivers.**

Example Verbatim Comments:

“Not conducive to wrong-way movements. I am very concerned about wrong ways. I have seen a significant amount of confusion re roundabouts”

“Not a fan of the diamond interchange in shawnessy lots of accidents and people driving down the wrong road”

- **Existing DDI don't have sufficient markings/signage**

Participants noted issues with insufficient markings and signage at the existing DDI including: Being unsure where to stop at lights, inability to recognize and therefore parking on the crosswalk, lines not visible, insufficient signage to deter drivers from simply intentionally breaking the rules, as multiple participants state is quite common.

“Another issue is the location where drivers stop at the intersection. The intersections are angled but the stop lines are generally at right angles to the road. As a result, drivers often stop well past the stop lines, sometimes even encroaching into lanes designated for cross traffic, making it necessary for them to reverse – something that can be difficult if the drivers behind them are too close. “

“Initially, when [162 Ave DDI] was first opened, there were no lines painted for several months - only dots indicating where lines would eventually be, which made navigation tricky for many drivers trying to familiarize themselves with the new layout.”

- **Feel Parclo has smaller footprint or footprint is irrelevant**

“The diamond interchange at 162nd and McLeod has more traffic then ever and the design of it takes up more space then the clover design”

“Same amount of area used.”

- **Better for pedestrians and cyclists**

“I feel [DDI] is also more difficult for pedestrians with multiple roads to cross.”

“For biking in this area it would be a safer option for getting to the west side of McLeod from Legacy/Township”

- **Cheaper or faster to build**

“Looks like this design only requires a 4 lane bridge where the diamond needs a 7 lane? I assume that will be cheaper, and the cheaper option is better.”

“It is also the width of 2 bridges, how is it hat cost effective”

General - Other Mentioned Themes:

- **Concerns about 194th av**

Participants voiced concerns regarding 194th Ave, given the interconnectedness of the two interchanges. These concerns included: The status of 194th Ave, the lack of south Macleod access from 194th, and a preference for 194th to be the interchange with greater accessibility.

“Prefer the interchange for 194th be completed before 210”

“Why can't we have a diamond design at 194th to provide full access. The access road along McLeod looks inefficient looping through community before connecting to 210. Please do better”

“Please don't lock Silverado in with no southbound access from 194th. It's already bad enough that we can't access west bound Stoney from Sheriff King. We will be limited to two intersections - 210 and Spruce Meadows.”

- **Dislike both designs**

Some participants wrote in their disagreement with both designs. Some of the reasons given included: Preference for a full cloverleaf, preference for traffic circles or traffic circle interchanges like at Deerfoot and 210 Ave, or no changes at all to the intersection.

“Do a full clover leaf. Diverging diamond is terrible. The one at shawnessy has been there for YEARS and people still can't seem to figure it out. Don't assume drivers know how to drive, or will actually figure out how things work. They won't. Take a look at traffic circles in Walden

and Legacy for your proof of the above statement.”

“Why would you create a plan that has the majority of traffic exiting Macleod trail to a red light. This is the problem we have now. Both designs do not flow traffic in the most optimal way.”

“Neither. This city is ridiculous. One entrance into Legacy, Wolf Willow, Walden and Chaparral when you're planning thousands of more units is careless and irresponsible. Be better.”

“Neither option is my preference. It seems the planners have a strong preference for traffic lights. Could you clarify why a full cloverleaf design isn't being considered instead of a partial one? If reducing congestion and improving safety are the priorities, a full cloverleaf would be the most effective solution. Alternatively, a well-designed traffic circle could also be a viable option.”

- **Increased Traffic Lights**

“I would rather just wait longer at 1 light than go through 4 lights for one intersection.”

“Far too many lights, normally stopped 4 times to cross McLeod Tr is simply not practical.”

- **Other Mentioned Themes**

Included concern about construction costs, disapproval of the 194 Ave - 210 Ave access road, requests that NB Macleod from WB Legacy be two lanes, and for a separate pedestrian bridge.



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Next steps

A phase 2 will take place in Summer or Fall 2025 to reveal how engagement has been integrated alongside other inputs to create a functional planning study.

The functional planning study is anticipated to be complete by the end of 2025. The construction schedule for the interchange will be determined by future funding.

Verbatim Comments: See 210 Interchange Verbatim (separate document link provided at end of this report)



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Appendix: Demographics

6% of participants chose to leave their demographic data, which is broken down as follows:

