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## South Bend to fix risky intersection Ramps to replace turns under trestle.

By **JEFF PARROTT** *Tribune Staff Writer*

SOUTH BEND -- The city is seeking public comment on a plan to reduce crashes at its most dangerous intersection, more than four years after hiring a consultant to study the corner.

The city in May 2005 hired Mishawaka-based The Troyer Group to improve safety at the intersection of Western Avenue and Walnut Streets. For years the corner, on the city's near-southwest side, has seen the most collisions per vehicle miles traveled than any other intersection in South Bend.

Situated underneath a railroad trestle, visibility is poor.

Once the work is done, Western Avenue drivers would no longer be able to turn north or south onto Walnut Street underneath the trestle. Rather, they would veer right or left onto Walnut via new ramps, before the two streets meet.

The city would buy vacant land on the northeast and southwest corners for the ramps. The \$1.6 million project would be funded 80 percent by the federal government and 20 percent by the city.

City engineer Carl Littrell said he had not heard anyone complain about the plan, and he thinks it will make the corner much safer.

"People I tell about it keep wondering how soon, rather than why (the project is being done)," Littrell said.

He said the city plans to let bids in February, start work in the spring and finish by late August.

Littrell said federally funded street projects typically take about three years from commissioning the design work to letting construction bids. This project has taken more than a year longer than usual because of rule changes the Indiana Department of Natural Resources implemented to ensure that the West Washington Historic District would not be adversely affected, Littrell said.

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### On the Web

To see the proposed changes to the intersection of Western Avenue and Walnut Street, go to [www.southbendtribune.com/intersection](http://www.southbendtribune.com/intersection).

To comment, contact Christopher L. Waidner at The Troyer Group Inc., 550 Union St., Mishawaka, IN 46544; call him at (574) 259-9976; or e-mail him at [clw@troeyergroup.com](mailto:clw@troeyergroup.com).

The project plans are available for viewing at The Troyer Group offices or in the South Bend city engineer's office.