



Project FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions

Why is this project needed?

The I-80 at Gilman Street interchange is a complex system of roadways at the boundary of Berkeley and Albany. It provides access to regional recreational facilities and popular businesses in both cities, including Gold Gate Fields and Target. The interchange has higher-than-average rates of vehicular injury and fatality collisions, including 38% above the State average on the westbound on-ramp, 115% above the average on the westbound off-ramp and 35% above the average on the eastbound on-ramp. The interchange is identified a "high stress" environment for cyclists by the City of Berkeley.

Why roundabouts?

Roundabouts are proven to reduce serious accidents while providing increased capacity and improved traffic operations, as compared to a traffic signal with the same number of lanes. According to the Federal Highway Administration, installing a roundabout typically results in a 90% reduction in fatality accidents.¹ Roundabouts also provide significant environmental benefits, as vehicles typically do not need to stop and idle. Roundabouts calm traffic and provide opportunities for landscaping and beautification within constrained space.

What does this project provide?

The project is designed to improve safety for all modes of transportation. In addition to the roundabouts, it includes a bike & pedestrian I-80 overcrossing that will tie into new Gilman Street sidewalks and the existing Bay Trail; an at-grade pedestrian and bike path through the interchange; and a two-way cycle track on Gilman Street that will flow from the bike & pedestrian I-80 overcrossing to a new signal at Fourth Street. Finally, the project includes a new crosswalk at 2nd Street across Gilman. The roundabouts and pedestrian elements would be fully landscaped.

Were traffic signals considered at the interchange?

Yes. The viability of traffic signals was studied over the course of 5 technical reports prepared from 1998 to 2014. All concluded that given the volume of traffic at the interchange and the number of intersecting roadways, an acceptable level of service could not be achieved with traffic signals.

Aren't traffic signals safer for pedestrians?

No. The pedestrian crossing at a roundabout is reduced to two simple crossings of one-way traffic moving at slow speeds. Pedestrians at a traffic signal crossing need to contend with vehicles turning right or left on green, vehicles turning right on red, and vehicles running the red light. The latter two often occur at high speeds, increasing the chance of injuries or fatalities to pedestrians. The design of the current roundabouts includes a new pedestrian/bicycle shared use path and dedicated pedestrian connections.

How do cyclists use roundabouts?

Cyclists have a legal right to ride on most roadways with motorized traffic. Roundabouts are like other intersections in that cyclists may either follow the rules of the road and maintain travel on the roadway, or use available paths and crosswalks to safely bypass the roundabout. Cyclists who choose to use the roundabout should always ride in the center of the lane. The current roundabout project includes a bike-only exit.

¹ Federal Highway Administration, *Safe Roads for a Safe Future*, 2015.



Will the project change existing vehicle access in the area?

Yes. The current design of the roundabouts will change access to and from Eastshore Highway.

The project would remove direct access to northbound Eastshore Highway from Gilman Street. Drivers on westbound Gilman and those exiting properties between Gilman and Harrison Streets (including Red-D-Arc and PS Public Storage) would take 2nd Street northbound one block to Harrison Street. A left turn on Harrison would then provide access to northbound Eastshore Hwy.

Access to southbound Eastshore Hwy from eastbound Gilman or I-80 would also change. Drivers would be routed via the eastern roundabout to Gilman and 2nd Streets, and would then turn right (south) onto 2nd Street. A right turn on Page Street would then lead to southbound Eastshore Hwy.

Will the project impact parking in the area?

Parking would be converted from perpendicular to parallel on Harrison Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets, and there would be some loss of parking at the western foot of Gilman, just east of the Bay, resulting from the Bay Trail gap closure. Some parking would also be lost in the northwest corner of the Golden Gate Fields area. There would be temporary parking impacts during construction. Otherwise, parking would remain as is in the rest of the project area.

Will the roundabouts accommodate trucks?

Yes. The Gilman interchange is designed to accommodate all categories of California legal tractor-semitrailers: "Black" CA legal 65 FT trucks, "Green" STAA-56 FT trucks, and WB-67D double-bottom combination trucks.

How have the public and affected landowners been involved?

From March, 2016 to August, 2017 the project team held 8 informational meetings, each targeting either public agencies, community organizations, area-wide or specific business owners, or the interested public. Feedback was solicited at each of these meetings and incorporated as feasible into the project. The team has led ongoing meetings and coordination with the Cities of Albany and Berkeley, as well as large and directly affected businesses such as Golden Gate Fields, Pacific Steel, Red-D-Arc, and Target. Individual property owners in the project area have been identified and contacted about project meetings. An ongoing public information plan will also be implemented, and the public will have further opportunity to comment on the project during the environmental review process. Project information and updates are available at <https://www.alamedactc.org/i80gilman>, and questions/comments can be sent to inquiry@i80Gilman.com.

When will the project be built?

The roundabouts are expected to be completed in late 2022/early 2023. Before that time, the current conceptual designs will be presented to the City Councils of Berkeley and Albany, to be refined based on further input from elected officials and the public. The project will then be subjected to State and federal environmental review. Environmental approvals (1-document or 2-document paths are currently being considered) and design are expected to be completed in early 2019, with construction beginning in late 2019 or early 2020.

Who is leading and funding the project?

Caltrans is the Federal and State environmental lead for environmental compliance. The Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) is the Implementing agency, and is working cooperatively with the cities of Berkeley and Albany to deliver the project. The primary funding sources of the project are State funds and Measure BB, the 2014 voter-approved extension of the transportation sales tax.

