



## Project FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions

### Why is this project needed?

The Gilman Street interchange on I-80 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 Golden Gate Fields and Target. The interchange has higher-than-average rates of vehicular injury and fatality collisions, including above average accident rates on several ramps. The interchange is identified as 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.<sup>1</sup> Roundabouts also provide environmental benefits, as vehicles typically do not need to stop and idle. Roundabouts improve operations and traffic flow 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 pedestrian and bicycle overcrossing over I-80 that will tie into new Gilman Street sidewalks and the existing Bay Trail; an at-grade pedestrian and bicycle path through the interchange; and a two-way cycle track on Gilman Street that will flow from the pedestrian and bicycle overcrossing to a new signal at 4th Street. Finally, the project will include new bicycle "sharrows" connecting Gilman Street to Cordonices Creek, across Gilman Street. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Street would then provide access to northbound Eastshore Highway.

Access to southbound Eastshore Highway from eastbound Gilman Street 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 Highway.

## 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 end of Gilman Street, resulting from the extension of the Bay Trail. There would be temporary parking impacts during construction at Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex. Otherwise, parking would remain unchanged 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 February, 2018 the project team held a series of informational meetings, each targeting either public agencies, community organizations, area-wide or specific business owners, or the interested public. Feedback was solicited at each 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. The January 15, 2019 Open Forum Hearing will be followed by future public information events. Project updates are available at <https://www.alamedactc.org/i80gilman>, and questions/comments can be sent to [inquiry@i80Gilman.com](mailto:inquiry@i80Gilman.com).

## When will the project be built?

The roundabouts are expected to be completed in late 2022/early 2023. Public release of the draft environmental document is a milestone in project development. Environmental certification is expected to occur in Summer 2019. Following certification, project designs will be refined into construction documents based on further input from elected officials and the public. Construction is expected to begin in late 2019 or early 2020.

## Who is leading and funding the project?

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the Federal and State lead agency for environmental compliance. The Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) 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.

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