US 101/SR 92 Interchange Direct Connector Project
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the US 101/SR 92 Interchange Direct Connector Project?

The US 101/SR 92 Interchange Direct Connector Project seeks to create a dedicated managed lane that would connect two corridors, SR 92 and the US 101 Express Lanes. The San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA) and the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG), in cooperation with Caltrans, are studying four alternatives, including one that would result in no changes, and analyzing the potential environmental impacts of this proposed project.

Why are we doing this project?

The 101/92 Interchange Direct Connector Project aims to:

- Improve travel time reliability for those traveling between 101 and 92, east of US 101;
- Encourage people to share rides by carpooling with friends and coworkers or riding shuttles and buses; and
- Provide drivers a way to avoid the stop-and-go merging.

What are the project benefits?

Keep our Promise to San Mateo County Voters: The project would deliver improvements to the 101/ 92 interchange as promised to voters with the passage of local sales tax Measures A and W. It would also maximize the use of toll bridge revenue that has been committed to improving the interchange as passed in Regional Measure 3 in 2018.

Encourage Economic Vitality: To remain competitive, businesses need reliable transportation options so people can get to their jobs and so goods and services can move to and from San Mateo County.

Improve Traffic Safety: By providing a more seamless connection to/from 101 express lanes, users would avoid having to cross multiple lanes which often cause delays and unsafe conditions. This would help to relieve cut-through traffic on local streets, protecting public safety, and reducing noise and air pollution.

Support Future Transit: The direct connector would provide better reliability and travel time for potential future bus riders and would make future express bus service along the corridor more viable.

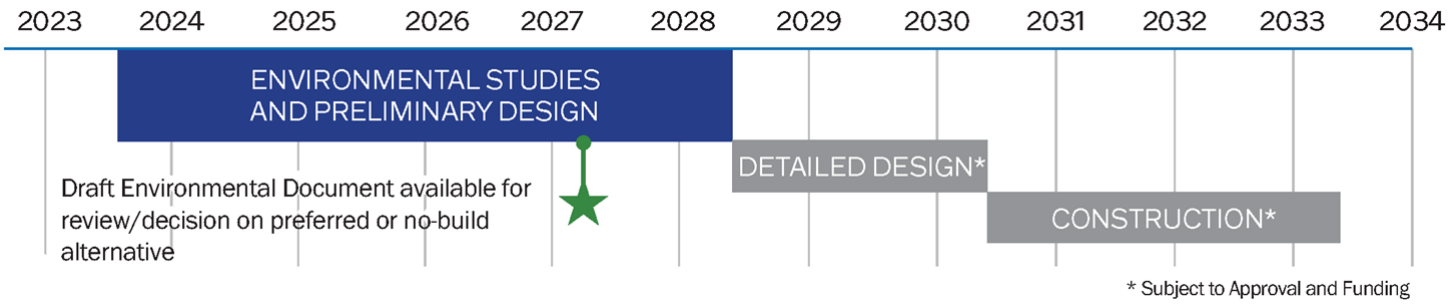
What phase is the project in?

The project is currently in the preliminary design and environmental phase.

A draft environmental document for the project is being prepared under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The document will evaluate the possible environmental impacts of the proposed project and identify measures to reduce or eliminate those impacts.

It is anticipated that the draft environmental document will be available for review and comment in spring 2027 and will be complete by mid-2028. The design and construction phases will follow, subject to approval and funding.

Anticipated Project Timeline



For more information, visit: smcta.com/projects/101-92DC

Caltrans SMCTA C/CAG City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County

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What is a direct connector?

A direct connector is a road connecting one freeway to another freeway providing increased convenience and reliability to travel through the freeway interchange. This project proposes adding a new direct connection from the existing center lanes on 101 that would tie into the center lanes on 92.

What is a managed lane?

Managed lanes are roadways that enhance traffic flow and efficiency by limiting access based on specific criteria. Common approaches are limiting who can use the lane, when they can use it, the cost to use it, and where the lane is accessed. Managed lanes provide a reliable option to travelers, encourage rideshare and transit use, and enable individuals to make travel choices that best serve their needs.

What will be studied in the environmental document?

The SMCTA and C/CAG, in cooperation with Caltrans, will assess the project for potential impacts on a variety of environmental topics including: Land Use and Community, Utilities and Emergency Services, Traffic and Transportation / Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, Visual / Aesthetics, Cultural Resources, Hydrology and Floodplains, Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff, Geology / Soils / Seismicity, Paleontology, Hazardous Waste and Materials, Air Quality, Noise and Vibration, Biological Resources, and Energy and Climate Change.

Who will decide what the preferred alternative is?

Caltrans is the lead agency for the environmental phase and will approve the final environmental document that will identify the preferred alternative. Selection of the preferred alternative will be based on both the technical analyses and public comments.

As the project sponsors, the SMCTA and C/CAG would be responsible for authorizing funding to move the project forward into the final design and construction phases.

What is a reversible lane?

A reversible lane changes the direction of traffic to match when demand is highest. It is controlled by highly visible gates and signs to indicate whether it is open to each direction of traffic.

Reversible lanes have been operating in states such as Washington, Florida and Texas. The project team will evaluate best practices and lessons learned from these managed lanes.

What is an express lane?

Express lanes are designated highway lanes that offer a more reliable option for users through dynamic pricing. Dynamic pricing changes the toll as congestion levels change – it costs the most to use when it is busiest. This manages the number of vehicles in the lane to maintain free flow conditions.



In the Bay Area, all vehicles need FasTrak® or FasTrak Flex® toll tags to use the express lanes. FasTrak Flex® toll tags can be set to 1, 2, or 3 to reflect the number of people in the vehicle. Express lanes are free or discounted to carpools, motorcycles, transit buses and other eligible vehicles during the designated hours of operation. Solo drivers can choose to pay the full toll to use express lanes.

The San Mateo 101 Express Lanes offers a Go Card Program to qualifying San Mateo County residents. Those eligible may receive a $200 prepaid card to help cover some of their transportation costs. Visit https://101expresslanes.org/program/equity-program for more info.

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How much will the project cost? How is it being funded?

The current phase of the project is funded by regional bridge toll revenue from Regional Measure 3 and the SMCTA Measure A Sales Tax Program, a half-cent sales tax dedicated to transportation facilities, services, and programs. The preliminary total project cost estimate is $193 million. Funding for future design and construction phases has not yet been pursued. Future funding could include federal and state sources.

Is this project expected to improve transit travel times, schedule reliability, or increase total number of riders?

One of the goals of this project is to encourage carpooling and the use of transit or shuttles through the corridor.

Providing a direct connection between 92 and 101 for high-occupancy vehicles, including future transit buses and shuttles, will reduce travel times and increase travel time reliability for those vehicles. This would facilitate future high quality transit service, such as express buses.

What properties will be impacted? Will houses and buildings be affected?

The project team has determined that no parks or houses will need to be purchased as part of the project based on design refinements of the project alternatives. Two of the four alternatives being evaluated will remain within the existing freeway footprint. The other two alternatives may require space mostly within an existing utilities easement that is located between the freeway soundwall and residential backyard fences.

This assessment will continue to be refined based on updated property information and project designs. The project team continues to assess design details, in coordination with the city of San Mateo and Caltrans, to further reduce or avoid potential property impacts.

Will this project result in more driving?

Driving levels can be measured by the number of miles vehicles travel, otherwise knowns as “vehicle miles traveled” (VMT). As part of the environmental document, a VMT analysis will be done to determine how the project could change existing VMT or induce new VMT.

What will the project look like?

The project proposes a new above ground structure that will begin and end in the center median of 101 and 92 freeways. The environmental document will include simulations of the proposed structure, lighting, and signage from various viewpoints to assess the potential visual impacts.

Are there multiple projects underway at the 101/92 interchange?

There are three separate projects currently in various stages of planning and construction. While they all focus on improving the same general area, they have distinct goals:

- The Direct Connector project focuses on long-term highway connections;
- The Short-term Area Improvements project focuses on less complex safety and traffic flow benefits;
- The 19th Ave/Fashion Island Blvd project focuses on relieving gridlock on local city streets and safer connections for transit, biking, and walking.

Visit the following webpages to learn more about these other projects:

Area Improvements

www.cityofsanmateo.org/19thFIB

How do I get involved?

Environmental scoping meetings were held in spring 2024. Comments received during scoping will be considered as the technical studies advance to ensure concerns raised are properly analyzed and considered. Direct outreach will be conducted to inform the development of the draft environmental document. The draft environmental document will be circulated for public review and comment in spring 2027.

Sign up for the project newsletter for updates and to be notified about other opportunities to get involved at www.smcta.com/projects/101-92DC.