

US 101/Peninsula Avenue Interchange Project

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Updated September 2015



Project Hotline: **TBD**

Project website: <http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/peninsula>



Frequently Asked Questions

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Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

1) Why is the project needed?

The US 101 southbound on and off ramps at Poplar Avenue were constructed in a “buttonhook” configuration in the late 1950’s before the Silicon Valley boom when traffic volumes were not nearly as high as they are today. As a result, this places a large traffic demand on Poplar Avenue, resulting in unsafe conditions and long delays on City streets that were not designed for the volume of traffic experienced today.



Aerial View of Buttonhook Ramps at Poplar Avenue

2) What are the overall project benefits?

The project provides the following benefits:

- a. Reduces traffic on Poplar Avenue. This will not only improve the safety on Poplar Avenue, but will improve the safety of the intersections with North Amphlett Boulevard, North Idaho Street and North Humboldt Street. In summary, the project removes traffic on a relatively narrow City street (Poplar Avenue) with many private driveways and places it on an arterial designed to handle larger traffic volumes (Peninsula Avenue).
- b. Provides more direct access to business districts in the cities of San Mateo and Burlingame, such as those on Peninsula Avenue, El Camino Real, California Drive and Burlingame Avenue.

- c. Improves the safety and operation of the on/off-ramps and the freeway itself. The Peninsula ramps will be designed to current geometric standards. The existing off-ramp has a sharp (nonstandard) exit radius.
- d. Consolidates the northbound and southbound ramps at a single location (Peninsula Avenue and Airport Boulevard). This is desirable from Caltrans standpoint as it reduces driver confusion on where to access the freeway.
- e. The project utilizes the recently configured Peninsula Avenue Interchange and taxpayer money previously spent. The relatively new overcrossing (completed in 2010) was designed to accommodate traffic to/from the freeway.

3) How is this project going to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists?

Buffered bike lanes on Peninsula Avenue are currently planned. Pedestrian access improvements at North Bayshore Boulevard are also included in this project. These improvements will make access across the freeway more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly.

4) When will this project be constructed and how long will it take?

This is dependent on a variety of factors and unknowns at this time, including potential funding. If all goes as planned and funding is secured for all upcoming phases of the project (Environmental, Final Design and Construction); then construction is expected to begin in the early to mid-2020's. The schedule is subject to change and the City will post updates, as needed, on the project's website.

The first item of work will likely be utility relocations, which will take 12-18 months. The main construction of the ramps will take approximately 24 months. The total construction time is expected to be about 42 months.

5) Will anything be done in the interim to improve traffic and safety in the project area?

Yes! The City has completed design on improvements to the Poplar Avenue/North Amphlett Boulevard intersection. This project (Poplar Corridor Traffic Safety Improvements) will restrict turning movements at the intersection and install a curbed median along Poplar Avenue, among other improvements in the area. Additional information for this project can be found [here](#).

6) How much will this project cost?

Estimates for two alternatives were developed during the planning phase. The estimates for construction, right-of-way acquisitions and utility relocations are in the range of \$47M (for Alternative 1) to \$61M (for Alternative 2). These are very preliminary numbers and are in today's (2015) dollars. These estimates are subject to change in the future due to many factors such as, revisions to the project's scope and/or features, fluctuations in property values and material and labor costs for construction.

7) Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 appear to be similar in nature... why is there such a large cost differential between the two?

The relatively large cost differential between the two alternatives (~\$14M) is mainly attributed to the fact that Alternative 1 does not include two features that are included in the Alternative 2 design:

- A 600-foot auxiliary (exit) lane prior to the southbound off-ramp to Peninsula Avenue.
- Widening of the Peninsula Avenue Overcrossing.

At this time, it is not certain if one or both of these features are required. This will be better determined in the next phase of the project. These features were omitted from the Alternative 1 design during the planning phase to indicate a wider range in costs due to the variety of unknowns.

However, both features provide inherent safety and operational benefits and thus, may be implemented into the Alternative 1 design if that alternative is chosen as the preferred alternative during the next phase. In summary, the actual cost differential between Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 is on the order of \$5M if we were to compare the two alternatives more fairly, i.e., with the same features. Alternative 1 is less costly mainly because property acquisition of the apartment complex just south of Peninsula Avenue is not required.

8) How is the project being funded?

San Mateo County Transportation Authority ([SMCTA](#)) funded the planning phase of the project, completed in May 2015, with San Mateo County's [Measure A funds](#). An application for funding the next (Environmental) phase of the project was submitted in June. The status of this application will become known in October or November of 2015. It is expected that Federal, State and local City funds will also be used on future phases of the project.

9) What are the next steps?

Pending funding approval, the City, in cooperation with Caltrans, will take the project into the environmental phase in 2016. During the environmental phase, the two alternatives that were presented during the planning phase will be studied in more detail. At the end of the environmental phase, a preferred alternative will be selected and taken into final design.

About Public Outreach

10) What was done to date to inform the public about the project?

A community meeting was held at the Martin Luther King Jr Community Center in San Mateo on June 25, 2015. Additional community meetings will be held during the environmental phase of the project, sometime in 2016. Dates are subject to change and dependent on funding approval.

11) How can I get updates on the project progress?

Project information will be updated periodically on the project website at:
<http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/peninsula>.

12) Who should I contact if I have a question or comment about the project?

The Project Manager for the City of San Mateo is Tracy Scramaglia. She can be contacted via email at tscramaglia@cityofsanmateo.org or by phone at (650) 522-7316.

About Right-of-Way

13) What are the right-of-way impacts of the project? What is the process to acquire the land?

Several residential and business properties will need to be acquired to accommodate the location of new southbound on/off-ramps from/to Peninsula Avenue. The extent of the acquisitions is unknown at this time and will depend on the preferred alternative chosen during the upcoming environmental phase.

Answers to specific questions regarding the acquisition process can be found [here](#) from Caltrans' website:

14) How were right-of-way acquisition costs determined in the PSR-PDS document?

An estimate of just under \$4M per acre was used in the PSR-PDS that was developed during the planning phase. This was based on a review of recent (early 2015) property values in the project vicinity.

It is not based on any formal appraisals, and is not meant to reflect the actual value of any particular parcel. Instead, it is simply an approximate, average value of the parcels which need to be acquired for the project. Making this estimation was necessary to determine the overall project cost, which is needed for planning purposes.

About Traffic

15) The project will improve traffic and safety on Poplar Avenue, but how will it affect Peninsula Avenue and local street parking?

This will best be answered during the environmental phase when a Traffic Operations and Analysis Report will be completed. At the very least, intersections along Peninsula Avenue will be studied, including North Humboldt Street, the new freeway ramps, North Bayshore Boulevard and Airport Boulevard.

Local street parking will also be evaluated to ensure that the preferred alternative provides adequate parking for local businesses and residents.

16) Will other traffic-related improvements be made?

The narrow alley one block east of North Idaho Street will be widened to accommodate sidewalks and street parking. This improvement will also provide local street access to the north and south sides of Peninsula Avenue, without motorists having to access North Humboldt Street.

17) Is the City going to remove the eastbound slip ramp from Peninsula Avenue just east of North Humboldt Street?

This slip ramp is not a part of the Peninsula Avenue Project, but the City is aware of the safety concerns associated with this slip ramp and are currently evaluating options.



Peninsula Avenue Looking East, just West of Slip Ramp

One item to note: The City's Poplar Corridor Traffic Safety Improvements Project will require removal of the "To US 101 South" sign at this slip ramp because access to southbound US 101 will not be allowed from southbound North Amphlett Boulevard after that project is complete. This will ultimately result in fewer vehicles using this slip ramp. The City will provide more information about this slip ramp when it becomes available.