

I-405 Sepulveda Pass Improvements Project

Wilshire Loops Fact Sheet



Metro



Freeway improvements are in the works.

To reduce congestion, improve mobility and increase safety, the I-405 Sepulveda Pass Improvements Project will add a high-occupancy vehicle lane, standardize traffic lanes and improve on- and off-ramps along a 10-mile-long stretch of the freeway between the I-10 (Santa Monica Freeway) and US 101 (Ventura Freeway).

Widening this crucial but congested highway requires rebuilding three overpasses (Sunset Bl, Skirball Center Dr, and Mulholland Dr) and widening several undercrossings. For example, in the Wilshire Segment (National Bl to Waterford Av), the following undercrossings will be widened:

- > Exposition Bl
- > Ohio Av
- > Olympic Bl
- > Santa Monica Bl
- > Wilshire Bl
- > Westbound I-10 to northbound I-405
- > Eastbound I-10 to southbound I-405

The reconstruction of the Wilshire Bl ramps and their connections with the I-405 freeway require a complex construction schedule to minimize the traffic effects at these heavily traveled interchanges. Although the reconstructed interchanges will produce some of the I-405 project's greatest traffic improvements, the multiple ramp closures will affect traffic flow for miles.

Overview

While adding a northbound high-occupancy lane to the I-405, the project team has an opportunity to address problems afflicting several of California's busiest interchanges. Wilshire Bl's intersection with the I-405 freeway is one such interchange. In addition, reconstruction of the Wilshire Bl ramps will upgrade them to the latest seismic standards.

The current off-ramp/on-ramp configuration presents a dangerous weave situation happening at two of these regionally important intersections:

- > Westbound Wilshire Bl on-ramp to the southbound I-405
- > Southbound I-405 off-ramp to eastbound Wilshire Bl

At both these locations, a mass of drivers struggle to reach a through-freeway lane or change lanes to reach the off-ramp exit. These maneuvers must occur within a short distance. The same challenge awaits drivers as they shift from the northbound I-405 off-ramp to westbound Wilshire Bl. The northbound on-ramp from eastbound Wilshire Bl features the same chaos: the on-ramp traffic tries to merge on while off-ramp traffic merges off.



Completed Wilshire Loops (Looking North-West)

Questions

Here, Kasey Shuda, Wilshire Segment Community Relations Officer, answers questions concerning the Wilshire ramps that we have received from community members the last several months.

Can you solve these traffic problems without rebuilding these crucial intersections?

No. Our studies concluded that there is no other solution other than reconfiguring the ramps.

Are you adding additional lanes to the Wilshire BI ramps?

No, we are not adding additional lanes, but we are adding additional ramp capacity.

How do you plan on reducing these conflicts between drivers using Wilshire BI and drivers merging on and off the I-405?

We are going to segregate the Wilshire BI traffic from the I-405 traffic.

How do you do that?

We'll build two fly-over ramps which curve above the freeway. One will carry traffic exiting the southbound I-405 over the freeway to eastbound Wilshire BI. The other fly-over will carry westbound Wilshire BI traffic to the southbound I-405. The fly-over ramps will be taller than the common on- and off-ramps, so the Wilshire BI/I-405 interchange will have a new profile.

What is the height of these fly-over ramps?

Approximately 30 feet above the street level of Wilshire BI.

Aren't you going to affect the commuters who use the I-405 and Wilshire BI?

We will. There is no way around that. Our schedule does stagger the closures, however, so we are trying to minimize our effects on commuters.

How are you going to reduce those affects?

Advanced notification and education seems the best way to reduce the effects. We'll be conducting extensive outreach throughout the greater Los Angeles area to alert commuters and residents of the extended ramp closures. To do that, we will purchase print and online advertising, as well as video-display ads in local businesses.

We will brief media outlets and host an online chat about ramp reconstruction and its impacts. Our webmasters will also develop a dedicated page on the I-405 website to hold detour maps, construction notices and a rendering of the completed Wilshire BI ramps. We have also been briefing local communities, homeowners associations and neighborhood councils. A community meeting devoted only to the Wilshire BI ramps will be held prior to the first extended ramp closure.

But are you doing anything once reconstruction begins?

We'll be using multiple mitigations, such as changeable message signs up to one mile before each ramp closure. Additional signs will be posted where drivers approach the closure, offering them the opportunity to choose an alternate route. Each detour route starts at the closed ramp and then takes major streets to the next on- or off-ramp.

We'll also hire traffic control officers (TCOs) to be on hand during the first few days of each ramp closure and the resulting change in traffic patterns.

Can you close more than one ramp at a time?

Yes. Some ramps lie in close proximity of one another, so it is best to do the work on both ramps at one time.

Are you doing anything to make life easier for pedestrians and bicycle riders?

We are adding "zebra striping" to the bottom of the rebuilt ramps for easier pedestrian/bicycle crossing. There will also be flashing caution lights.

When is the work on the Wilshire Bl/ I-405 connectors supposed to begin?

The first ramps—Wilshire Bl westbound on-ramp to northbound I-405 and northbound I-405 off-ramp to westbound Wilshire Bl—are anticipated to begin reconstruction in late 2011. Other ramps will follow as pre-construction work allows. Closure dates are affected by Caltrans rules governing how long a ramp can be closed.

When all this work is done, will it be easier to navigate on Wilshire Bl between Bonsall and Veteran?

Yes, the traffic engineers believe so. By building the new ramps, we will reduce the conflict between Wilshire Bl and the I-405 as it crosses Wilshire Bl. In turn, this should reduce backup at other north/south streets, such as Westwood Bl and Veteran Bl. Our studies also show that Wilshire Bl would interfere less with on- and off-traffic from the I-405, one of the nation's major arteries.

Once you start work, how long will it take to finish all the work on the Wilshire Bl/I-405 connectors?

Approximately 21 months will be required from the start date to complete the Wilshire Bl ramps.

Why does it take that long?

There's a lot of work to do. Most of the ramps must be demolished and completely rebuilt, and we'll build new pillars and new supports. For example we have to construct steel reinforcements for the new fly-overs. Then the concrete must be placed. After that, curing of the concrete takes approximately 28 days. Then the ramp formwork must be taken down.

Our improvements also include the adjoining surface streets. For surface streets, we are widening Sepulveda Bl at the I-405. The Sepulveda Bl and Wilshire Bl intersection will also benefit from widening. There will be two dedicated left-turn lanes from northbound and southbound Sepulveda to Wilshire Bl. There will also be two eastbound Wilshire Bl left-turn lanes to southbound Sepulveda Bl. One reason we need to rebuild those ramps is because of our widening of the Sepulveda/Wilshire intersection, particularly a new right-turn lane from southbound Sepulveda Bl to westbound Wilshire Bl.

Basically, we're building features that will take us to 2031 ramp capacity demands. Three of the ramps will have more capacity, off-ramps too.

What is the longest that one ramp will be closed?

The longest maximum closure will be 90 days.

Will you be working on the Wilshire Bl connectors only at night?

Because of their importance, we'll be working nighttime and daytime, typically 24/7. Not working at night could double the length of the traffic impacts.

How many people use the Wilshire Bl connectors to the I-405?

The numbers differ for each connector, but according to a Caltrans 2005 survey of the connectors, the northbound off-ramp to eastbound Wilshire Bl is the busiest. During the morning peak it carried 2,470 cars. In the evening peak it carried 1,890 cars.

I drive the I-405 but I don't use the Wilshire Bl connectors. Will all this work benefit me?

It should. We expect there would be less backup from the Wilshire Bl off-ramps for one thing.

Will you need to take additional land to accomplish all this?

Yes. We will take additional right-of-way on both sides off the freeway's greenway, but I doubt most drivers will notice. By the way, the property we will be taking belongs to Caltrans, the General Services Administration and the Veterans Administration.

Will you close consecutive intersections at the same time, for example, Wilshire Bl and the I-405 and Sunset Bl and the I-405?

No, we are not allowed to do that.

Will detours be available while the connectors are being worked on?

Yes. Those maps are available on the project website at metro.net/405.

Ramp Closure Schedule

Ramp	Maximum Closure Duration (Days)
Southbound-405 on-ramp from westbound Wilshire	14
Southbound-405 on-ramp from eastbound Wilshire	14
Southbound-405 off-ramp to westbound Wilshire	14
Southbound-405 off-ramp to eastbound Wilshire	90
Northbound-405 off-ramp to westbound Wilshire	90
Northbound-405 on-ramp from westbound Wilshire	90
Northbound-405 off-ramp to eastbound Wilshire	21
Northbound-405 on-ramp from eastbound Wilshire	90
Northbound-405 on-ramp from Santa Monica	7
Southbound-405 on-ramp from Santa Monica	7



How to reach us and stay involved

Do you have a question about the freeway improvements, want more information or wish to be added to our mailing list? Here's how you can reach us:

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